

CHAPTER 10

He couldn't believe how quickly the light disappeared. From the Glade proper, the forest didn't look that big, maybe a couple of acres. Yet the trees were tall with sturdy trunks, packed tightly together, the canopy up above thick with leaves. The air around him had a greenish, muted hue, as if only several minutes of twilight remained in the day.

5 It was somehow beautiful and creepy, all at once.

Moving as fast as he could, Thomas crashed through the heavy foliage, thin branches slapping at his face. He ducked to avoid a low-hanging limb, almost falling. Reaching out, he caught hold of a branch and swung himself forward to regain his balance. A thick bed of leaves and fallen twigs crunched underneath him.

10 All the while, his eyes stayed riveted on the beetle blade scuttling across the forest floor. Deeper it went, its red light glowing brighter as the surroundings darkened.

15 Thomas had charged thirty or forty feet into the woods, dodging and ducking and losing ground with every second, when the beetle blade jumped onto a particularly large tree and scooted up its trunk. But by the time Thomas reached the tree, any sign of the creature had vanished. It had disappeared deep within the foliage—almost as if it had never existed.

He'd lost the sucker.

20 "Shuck it," Thomas whispered, almost as a joke. Almost. As strange as it seemed, the word felt natural on his lips, like he was already morphing into a Glader.

A twig snapped somewhere to his right and he jerked his head in that direction. He stilled his breath, listened.

25 Another snap, this time louder, almost like someone had broken a stick over their knee.

"Who's there?" Thomas yelled out, a tingle of fear shooting across his shoulders. His voice bounced off the canopy of leaves above him, echoing through the air. He stayed frozen, rooted to the spot as all grew silent, except for the whistling song of a few birds in the distance. But no one answered his call. Nor did he hear any more sounds from that direction.

30 Without really thinking it through, Thomas headed toward the noise he'd heard. Not bothering to hide his progress, he pushed aside branches as he walked, letting them whip back to position when he passed. He squinted, willed his eyes to work in the growing darkness, wishing he had a flashlight. He thought about flashlights and his memory. Once again, he remembered a tangible thing from his past, but couldn't assign it to any specific time or place, couldn't associate it with any other person or event. Frustrating.

35 "Anybody there?" he asked again, feeling a little calmer since the noise hadn't repeated. It was probably just an animal, maybe another beetle blade. Just in case, he called out, "It's me, Thomas. The new guy. Well, second-newest guy."

He winced and shook his head, hoping now that no one was there. He sounded like a complete idiot.

40 Again, no reply.
He stepped around a large oak and pulled up short. An icy shiver ran down his back. He'd reached the graveyard.

The clearing was small, maybe thirty square feet, and covered with a thick layer of leafy weeds growing close to the ground. Thomas could see several clumsily prepared wooden crosses poking through this growth, their horizontal pieces lashed to the upright ones with a splintery twine. The grave markers had been painted white, but by someone in an obvious hurry—gelled globs covered them and bare streaks of wood showed through. Names had been carved into the wood.

50 Thomas stepped up, hesitantly, to the closest one and knelt down to get a look. The light was so dull now that he almost felt as if he were looking through black mist. Even the birds had quieted, like they'd gone to bed for the night, and the sound of insects was barely noticeable, or at least much less than normal. For the first time, Thomas realized how humid it was in the woods, the damp air already beading sweat on his forehead, the backs of his hands.

He leaned closer to the first cross. It looked fresh and bore the name Stephen—the n extra small and right at the edge because the carver hadn't estimated well how much room he'd need.

55 Stephen, Thomas thought, feeling an unexpected but detached sorrow. What's your story? Chuck annoy you to death?

He stood and walked over to another cross, this one almost completely overgrown with weeds, the ground firm at its base. Whoever it was, he must've been one of the first to die, because his grave looked the oldest. The name was George.

60 Thomas looked around and saw there were a dozen or so other graves. A couple of them appeared to be just as fresh as the first one he'd examined. A silvery glint caught his attention. It was different from the scuttling beetle that had led him to the forest, but just as odd. He moved through the markers until he got to a grave covered with a sheet of grimy plastic or glass, its edges slimed with filth. He squinted, trying to make out what was on the other side, then gasped when it came into focus. It was a window into another grave—one that had the dusty remnants of a rotting body.

65 Completely creeped out, Thomas leaned closer to get a better look anyway, curious. The tomb was smaller than usual—only the top half of the deceased person lay inside. He remembered Chuck's story about the boy who'd tried to rappel down the dark hole of the

Box after it had descended, only to be cut in two by something slicing through the air. Words were etched on the glass; Thomas could barely read them:

70

**Let this half-shank be a warning to all:
You can't escape through the Box Hole.**

Thomas felt the odd urge to snicker—it seemed too ridiculous to be true. But he was also disgusted with himself for being so shallow and glib. Shaking his head, he had stepped aside to read more names of the dead when another twig broke, this time straight in front of him, right behind the trees on the other side of the graveyard.

75

Then another snap. Then another. Coming closer. And the darkness was thick.

“Who’s out there?” he called, his voice shaky and hollow—it sounded as if he were speaking inside an insulated tunnel. “Seriously, this is stupid.” He hated to admit to himself just how terrified he was.

80

Instead of answering, the person gave up all pretense of stealth and started running, crashing through the forest line around the clearing of the graveyard, circling toward the spot where Thomas stood. He froze, panic overtaking him. Now only a few feet away, the visitor grew louder and louder until Thomas caught a shadowed glimpse of a skinny boy limping along in a strange, lilted run.
“Who the he—”

85

The boy burst through the trees before Thomas could finish. He saw only a flash of pale skin and enormous eyes—the haunted image of an apparition—and cried out, tried to run, but it was too late. The figure leaped into the air and was on top of him, slamming into his shoulders, gripping him with strong hands. Thomas crashed to the ground; he felt a grave marker dig into his back before it snapped in two, burning a deep scratch along his flesh.

90

He pushed and swatted at his attacker, a relentless jumble of skin and bones cavorting on top of him as he tried to gain purchase. It seemed like a monster, a horror from a nightmare, but Thomas knew it had to be a Glader, someone who’d completely lost his mind. He heard teeth snapping open and closed, a horrific clack, clack, clack. Then he felt the jarring dagger of pain as the boy’s mouth found a home, bit deeply into Thomas’s shoulder.

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Thomas screamed, the pain like a burst of adrenaline through his blood. He planted the palms of his hands against his attacker’s chest and pushed, straightening his arms until his muscles strained against the struggling figure above him. Finally the kid fell back; a sharp crack filled the air as another grave marker met its demise.

100

Thomas squirmed away on his hands and feet, sucking in breaths of air, and got his first good look at the crazed attacker.

It was the sick boy.

It was Ben.

QUESTIONS: The following statements are either true or false. Tick [✓] the correct option, then justify it using words as they appear in the text. Both parts are required for [1 mark]

1) Thomas managed to catch the beetle blade easily.

☐
☐

TRUE
FALSE

Justification:

.....

2) Thomas heard someone respond to his calls in the forest. (Line 1 to 34)

☐
☐

TRUE
FALSE

Justification:

.....

3) Thomas found a body cut in half in one of the graves.

☐
☐

TRUE
FALSE

Justification:

.....

4) Thomas screamed when Ben bit into his shoulder.

☐
☐

TRUE
FALSE

Justification:

.....

CHAPTER 38

Most of them slept outside in normal times, so packing all those bodies into the Homestead made for a tight fit. The Keepers had organized and distributed the Gladers throughout the rooms, along with blankets and pillows. Despite the number of people and the chaos of such a change, a disturbing silence hung over the activities, as if no one wanted to draw attention to themselves.

- 5 When everyone was settled, Thomas found himself upstairs with Newt, Alby and Minho, and they were finally able to finish their discussion from earlier in the courtyard. Alby and Newt sat on the only bed in the room while Thomas and Minho sat next to them in chairs. The only other furniture was a crooked wooden dresser and a small table, on top of which rested a lamp providing what light they had. The gray darkness seemed to press on the window from outside, with promises of bad things to come.
- 10 "Closest I've come so far," Newt was saying, "to hangin' it all up. Shuck it all and kiss a Griever goodnight. Supplies cut, bloody gray skies, walls not closing. But we can't give up, and we all know it. The buggers who sent us here either want us dead or they're givin' us a spur. This or that, we gotta work our arses off till we're dead or not dead."
- 15 Thomas nodded, but didn't say anything. He agreed completely but had no concrete ideas on what to do. If he could just make it to tomorrow, maybe he and Teresa could come up with something to help.
- Thomas glanced over at Alby, who was staring at the floor, seemingly lost in his own gloomy thoughts. His face still wore the long, weary look of depression, his eyes sunken and hollow. The Changing had been aptly named, considering what it had done to him.
- 20 "Alby?" Newt asked. "Are you gonna pitch in?"
- Alby looked up, surprise crossing his face as if he hadn't known that anyone else was in the room.
- "Huh? Oh. Yeah. Good that. But you've seen what happens at night. Just because Greenie the freaking superboy made it doesn't mean the rest of us can."
- Thomas rolled his eyes ever so slightly at Minho—so tired of Alby's attitude.
- 25 If Minho felt the same way, he did a good job of hiding it. "I'm with Thomas and Newt. We gotta quit boohooing and feeling sorry for ourselves." He rubbed his hands together and sat forward in his chair.
- "Tomorrow morning, first thing, you guys can assign teams to study the Maps full-time while the Runners go out. We'll pack our stuff shuck-full so we can stay out there a few days."
- 30 "What?" Alby asked, his voice finally showing some emotion. "What do you mean, days?"
- "I mean, days. With open Doors and no sunset, there's no point in coming back here, anyway. Time to stay out there and see if anything opens up when the walls move. If they still move."
- "No way," Alby said. "We have the Homestead to hide in—and if that ain't workin', the Map Room and the Slammer. We can't freaking ask people to go out there and die, Minho! Who'd volunteer for that?"
- 35 "Me," Minho said. "And Thomas."

QUESTIONS: Answer the following questions:

1) Where did Thomas, Newt, Alby, and Minho meet to continue their discussion?

.....

2) What did Newt say about giving up?

.....

3) What did Minho suggest the Runners do the next day?

.....

4) Who volunteered to stay out for days in the Maze?

.....

- Everyone looked at Thomas; he simply nodded. Although it scared him to death, exploring the Maze—really exploring it—was something he'd wanted to do from the first time he'd learned about it.
- 40 "I will if I have to," Newt said, surprising Thomas; though he'd never talk about it, the older boy's limp was a constant reminder that something horrible had happened to him out in the Maze. "And I'm sure all the Runners'll do it."
- "With your bum leg?" Alby asked, a harsh laugh escaping his lips.
- Newt frowned, looked at the ground. "Well, I don't feel good askin' Gladers to do something if I'm not bloody willing to do it myself."
- 45 Alby scooted back on the bed and propped his feet up. "Whatever. Do what you want."
- "Do what I want?" Newt asked, standing up. "What's wrong with you, man? Are you tellin' me we have a choice? Should we just sit around on our butts and wait to be snuffed by the Grievers?"
- Thomas wanted to stand up and cheer, sure that Alby would finally snap out of his doldrums.
- 50 But their leader didn't look in the least bit reprimanded or remorseful. "Well, it sounds better than running *to* them."
- Newt sat back down. "Alby. You gotta start talkin' reason."
- As much as he hated to admit it, Thomas knew they needed Alby if they were going to accomplish anything. The Gladers looked up to him.

55 Alby finally took a deep breath, then looked at each of them in turn. "You guys know I'm all screwed up. Seriously, I'm ... sorry. I shouldn't be the stupid leader anymore."

Thomas held his breath. He couldn't believe Alby had just said that.

"Oh bloody—" Newt started.

60 "No!" Alby shouted, his face showing humility, surrender. "That's not what I meant. Listen to me. I ain't saying we should switch or any of that klunk. I'm just saying ... I think I need to let you guys make the decisions. I don't trust myself. So ... yeah, I'll do whatever."

Thomas could see that both Minho and Newt were as surprised as he was.

65 "Uh ... okay," Newt said slowly. As if he was unsure. "We'll make it work, I promise. You'll see."

"Yeah," Alby muttered. After a long pause, he spoke up, a hint of odd excitement in his voice. "Hey, tell you what. Put me in charge of the Maps. I'll freaking work every Glader to the bone studying those things."

"Works for me," Minho said. Thomas wanted to agree, but didn't know if it was his place.

70 Alby put his feet back on the floor, sat up straighter. "Ya know, it was really stupid for us to sleep in here tonight. We should've been out in the Map Room, working."

Thomas thought that was the smartest thing he'd heard Alby say in a long time.

Minho shrugged. "Probably right."

75 "Well ... I'll go," Alby said with a confident nod. "Right now."

Newt shook his head. "Forget that, Alby. Already heard the bloody Grievors moaning out there. We can wait till the wake-up."

Alby leaned forward, elbows on his knees. "Hey, you shucks are the ones giving me all the pep talks. Don't start whining when I actually listen. If I'm gonna do this, I gotta do it, be the old me. I need something to dive into."

80 Relief flooded Thomas. He'd grown sick of all the contention.

Alby stood up. "Seriously, I need this." He moved toward the door of the room as if he really meant to leave.

"You can't be serious," Newt said. "You can't go out there now!"

"I'm going, and that's that." Alby took his ring of keys from his pocket and rattled them mockingly—Thomas couldn't believe the sudden bravery. "See you shucks in the morning."

85 And then he walked out.

It was strange to know that the night grew later, that darkness should've swallowed the world around them, but to see only the pale gray light outside. It made Thomas feel off-kilter, as if the urge to sleep that grew steadily with every passing minute were somehow unnatural. Time slowed to an agonizing crawl; he felt as if the next day might never come.

90 The other Gladers settled themselves, turning in with their pillows and blankets for the impossible task of sleeping. No one said much, the mood somber and grim. All you could hear were quiet shuffles and whispers.

Thomas tried hard to force himself to sleep, knowing it would make the time pass faster, but after two hours he'd still had no luck. He

95 lay on the floor in one of the upper rooms, on top of a thick blanket, several other Gladers crammed in there with him, almost body to body. The bed had gone to Newt.

Chuck had ended up in another room, and for some reason Thomas pictured him huddled in a dark corner, crying, squeezing his blankets to his chest like a teddy bear. The image saddened Thomas so deeply he tried to replace it, but to no avail.

100 Almost every person had a flashlight by their side in case of emergency. Otherwise, Newt had ordered all lights extinguished despite the pale, deathly glow of their new sky—no sense attracting any more attention than necessary. Anything that could be done on such short notice to prepare for a Griever attack had been done: windows boarded up, furniture moved in front of doors, knives handed out as weapons ... But none of that made Thomas feel safe.

105 The anticipation of what might happen was overpowering, a suffocating blanket of misery and fear that began to take on a life of its own. He almost wished the suckers would just come and get it over with. The waiting was unbearable.

The distant wails of the Grievors grew closer as the night stretched on, every minute seeming to last longer than the one before it.

110 Another hour passed. Then another. Sleep finally came, but in miserable fits. Thomas guessed it was about two in the morning when he turned from his back to his stomach for the millionth time that night. He put his hands under his chin and stared at the foot of the bed, almost a shadow in the dim light. Then everything changed.

115 A mechanized surge of machinery sounded from outside, followed by the familiar rolling clicks of a Griever on the stony ground, as if someone had scattered a handful of nails. Thomas shot to his feet, as did most of the others.

But Newt was up before anyone, waving his arms, then shushing the room by putting a finger to his lips. Favoring his bad leg, he tiptoed toward the lone window in the room, which was covered by three hastily nailed boards. Large cracks allowed for plenty of

120 space to peek outside. Carefully, Newt leaned in to take a look, and Thomas crept over to join him.

- 125 He crouched below Newt against the lowest of the wooden boards, pressing his eye against a crack—it was terrifying being so close to the wall. But all he saw was the open Glade; he didn't have enough space to look up or down or to the side, just straight ahead. After a minute or so, he gave up and turned to sit with his back against the wall. Newt walked over and sat back down on the bed.
- A few minutes passed, various Griever sounds penetrating the walls every ten to twenty seconds. The squeal of small engines followed by a grinding spin of metal. The clicking of spikes against the hard stone. Things snapping and opening and snapping. Thomas winced in fear every time he heard something. Sounded like three or four of them were just outside. At least.
- 130 He heard the twisted animal-machines come closer, so close, waiting on the stone blocks below. All hums and metallic clatter.
- Thomas's mouth dried up—he'd seen them face to face, remembered it all too well; he had to remind himself to breathe. The others in the room were still; no one made a sound. Fear seemed to hover in the air like a blizzard of black snow.
- 135 One of the Grievers sounded like it was moving toward the house. Then the clicking of its spikes against the stone suddenly turned into a deeper, hollower sound. Thomas could picture it all: the creature's metal spikes digging into the wooden sides of the Homestead, the massive creature rolling its body, climbing up toward their room, defying gravity with its strength. Thomas heard the Grievers' spikes shred the wood siding in their path as they tore out and rotated around to take hold once again. The whole building shuddered.
- 140 The crunching and groaning and snapping of the wood became the only sounds in the world to Thomas, horrifying. They grew louder, *closer*—the other boys had shuffled across the room and as far away from the window as possible. Thomas finally followed suit, Newt right beside him; everyone huddled against the far wall, staring at the window.
- Just when it grew unbearable—just as Thomas realized the Griever was right outside the window—everything fell silent. Thomas
- 145 could almost hear his own heart beating.
- Lights flickered out there, casting odd beams through the cracks between the wooden boards. Then a thin shadow interrupted the light, moving back and forth. Thomas knew that the Griever's probes and weapons had come out, searching for a feast. He imagined beetle blades out there, helping the creatures find their way. A few seconds later the shadow stopped; the light settled to a standstill, casting
- 150 three unmoving planes of brightness into the room.
- The tension in the air was thick; Thomas couldn't hear anyone breathing. He thought much the same must be going on in the other rooms of the Homestead. Then he remembered Teresa in the Slammer.
- 155 He was just wishing she'd say something to him when the door from the hallway suddenly whipped open. Gasps and shouts exploded throughout the room. The Gladers had been expecting something from the window, not from behind them. Thomas turned to see who'd opened the door, expecting a frightened Chuck or maybe a reconsidering Alby. But when he saw who stood there, his skull seemed to contract, squeezing his brain in shock.
- It was Gally.

QUESTION: To whom or to what do the underlined words refer? Answer using words as they appear in the text.

it scared him to death (line 37)

it sounds better than running to them. (line 50)

I'll freaking work every Glader to the bone studying those things. (line 66)

rattled them mockingly. (line 83)

CHAPTER 39

Gally's eyes raged with lunacy; his clothes were torn and filthy. He dropped to his knees and stayed there, his chest heaving with deep, sucking breaths. He looked about the room like a rabid dog searching for someone to bite. No one said a word. It was as if they all believed as Thomas did—that Gally was only a figment of their imagination.

"They'll kill you!" Gally screamed, spittle flying everywhere. "The Grievers will kill you all—one every night till it's over!"

5

Thomas watched, speechless, as Gally staggered to his feet and walked forward, dragging his right leg with a heavy limp. No one in the room moved a muscle as they watched, obviously too stunned to do anything. Even Newt stood mouth agape. Thomas was almost more afraid of their surprise visitor than he was of the Grievers just outside the window.

- 10 Gally stopped, standing just a few feet in front of Thomas and Newt; he pointed at Thomas with a bloody finger. “You,” he said with a sneer so pronounced it went past comical to flat-out disturbing. “It’s all your fault!” Without warning he swung his left hand, forming it into a fist as it came around and crashed into Thomas’s ear. Crying out, Thomas crumpled to the ground, more taken by surprise than pain. He scrambled to his feet as soon as he’d hit the floor.
- 15 Newt had finally snapped out of his daze and pushed Gally away. Gally stumbled backward and crashed into the desk by the window. The lamp scooted off the side and broke into pieces on the ground. Thomas assumed Gally would retaliate, but he straightened instead, taking everyone in with his mad gaze.
- 20 “It can’t be solved,” he said, his voice now quiet and distant, spooky. “The shuck Maze’ll kill all you shanks.... The Griever’s’ll kill you ... one every night till it’s over.... I ... It’s better this way....” His eyes fell to the floor. “They’ll only kill you one a night ... their stupid Variables ...”
- Thomas listened in awe, trying to suppress his fear so he could memorize everything the crazed boy said.
- 25 Newt took a step forward. “Gally, shut your bloody hole—there’s a Griever right out the window. Just sit on your butt and be quiet—maybe it’ll go away.”
- Gally looked up, his eyes narrowing. “You don’t get it, Newt. You’re too stupid—you’ve always been too stupid. There’s no way out—there’s no way to win! They’re gonna kill you, all of you—one by one!”
- 30 Screaming the last word, Gally threw his body toward the window and started tearing at the wooden boards like a wild animal trying to escape a cage. Before Thomas or anyone else could react, he’d already ripped one board free; he threw it to the ground.
- “No!” Newt yelled, running forward. Thomas followed to help, in utter disbelief at what was happening.
- 35 Gally ripped off the second board just as Newt reached him. He swung it backward with both hands and connected with Newt’s head, sent him sprawling across the bed as a small spray of blood sprinkled the sheets. Thomas pulled up short, readying himself for a fight.
- “Gally!” Thomas yelled. “What’re you doing!”
- The boy spat on the ground, panting like a winded dog. “You shut your shuck-face, Thomas. You shut up! I know who you are, but I don’t care anymore. I can only do what’s right.”
- 40 Thomas felt as if his feet were rooted to the ground. He was completely baffled by what Gally was saying. He watched the boy reach back and rip loose the final wooden board. The instant the discarded slab hit the floor of the room, the glass of the window exploded inward like a swarm of crystal wasps. Thomas covered his face and fell to the floor, kicking his legs out to scoot his body as far away as possible. When he bumped into the bed, he gathered himself and looked up, ready to face his world coming to an end.
- 45 A Griever’s pulsating, bulbous body had squirmed halfway through the destroyed window, metallic arms with pincers snapping and clawing in all directions. Thomas was so terrified, he barely registered that everyone else in the room had fled to the hallway—all except Newt, who lay unconscious on the bed.
- 50 Frozen, Thomas watched as one of the Griever’s long arms reached for the lifeless body. That was all it took to break him from his fear. He scrambled to his feet, searched the floor around him for a weapon. All he saw were knives—they couldn’t help him now. Panic exploded within him, consumed him.
- Then Gally was speaking again; the Griever pulled back its arm, as if it needed the thing to be able to observe and listen. But its body kept churning, trying to squeeze its way inside.
- 55 “No one ever understood!” the boy screamed over the horrible noise of the creature, crunching its way deeper into the Homestead, ripping the wall to pieces. “No one ever understood what I saw, what the Changing did to me! Don’t go back to the real world, Thomas! You don’t ... want ... to remember!”
- 60 Gally gave Thomas a long, haunted look, his eyes full of terror; then he turned and dove onto the writhing body of the Griever. Thomas yelled out as he watched every extended arm of the monster immediately retract and clasp onto Gally’s arms and legs, making escape or rescue impossible. The boy’s body sank several inches into the creature’s squishy flesh, making a horrific squelching sound. Then, with surprising speed, the Griever pushed itself back outside the shattered frame of the window and began descending toward the ground below.
- 65 Thomas ran to the jagged, gaping hole, looked down just in time to see the Griever land and start scooting across the Glade, Gally’s body appearing and disappearing as the thing rolled. The lights of the monster shone brightly, casting an eerie yellow glow across the stone of the open West Door, where the Griever exited into the depths of the Maze. Then, seconds later, several other monsters followed close behind their companion, whirring and clicking as if celebrating their victory.
- 70 Thomas was sickened to the verge of throwing up. He began to back away from the window, but something outside caught his eye. He quickly leaned out of the building to get a better look. A lone shape was sprinting across the courtyard of the Glade toward the exit through which Gally had just been taken.
- Despite the poor light, Thomas realized who it was immediately. He screamed—yelled at him to stop—but it was too late. Minhø, running full speed, disappeared into the Maze.

QUESTIONS: CHOOSE THE CORRECT ANSWER

1) How did Thomas feel when Gally pointed at him?

- A) Angry and ready to fight
- B) Speechless and surprised
- C) Happy and relieved
- D) Calm and indifferent

3) What happened when Gally jumped onto the Griever?

- A) The Griever immediately captured him
- B) The Griever dropped him to the ground
- C) He defeated the Griever
- D) He escaped the Griever's grasp

2) What did Thomas yell at Gally after he tore off the second board?

- A) "Gally, stop it!"
- B) "What're you doing!"
- C) "You're doing great!"
- D) "Leave us alone!"

4) Who ran into the Maze after Gally was taken?

- A) Thomas
- B) Newt
- C) Minho
- D) No one