6

JOHN WYNDHAM: The Chrysalids

- 3 Either (a) How does Wyndham make the Aunt Harriet episode such a memorable and significant part of the novel?
- Or (b) How do you think Wyndham makes Sophie Wender such a tragic figure in the novel?
 - Or (c) Read this passage carefully, and then answer the questions that follow it:

77

The door shut with a thud. The machine started to vibrate and blow a great dusty wind across the clearing. Through the windows we could see Michael bracing himself against it, his clothes flapping. Even the deviational trees about the clearing were stirring in their webby shrouds.

The floor tilted beneath us. There was a slight lurch, then the ground began to drop away as we climbed faster and faster into the evening sky. Soon we steadied, pointed towards the south-west.

Petra was excited, and a bit over strength.

'It's awfully wonderful,' she announced. 'I can see for simply miles and miles and miles. Oh, Michael, you do look funny and tiny down there!'

The lone, miniature figure in the clearing waved its arm.

'Just at present,' Michael's thought came up to us, 'I seem to be feeling a bit funny and tiny down here, Petra, dear. But it'll pass. We'll be coming after you.'

It was just as I had seen it in my dreams. A brighter sun than Waknuk ever knew poured down upon the wide blue bay where the lines of whitetopped breakers crawled slowly to the beach. Small boats, some with coloured sails, and some with none, were making for the harbour already dotted with craft. Clustered along the shore, and thinning as it stretched back towards the hills, lay the city with its white houses embedded among green parks and gardens. I could even make out the tiny vehicles sliding along the wide, tree-bordered avenues. A little inland, beside a square of green, a bright light was blinking from a tower and a fish-shaped machine was floating to the ground.

It was so familiar that I almost misgave. For a swift moment I imagined 25 that I should wake to find myself back in my bed in Waknuk. I took hold of Rosalind's hand to reassure myself.

'It is real, isn't it? You can see it, too?' I asked her.

'It's beautiful, David. I never thought there could be anything so lovely. ... And there's something else, too, that you never told me about.'

'What?' I asked.

'Listen! ... Can't you feel it? Open your mind more. ... Petra, darling, if you *could* stop bubbling over for a few minutes ...'

I did as she told me. I was aware of the engineer in our machine communicating with someone below, but behind that, as a background to it, there was something new and unknown to me. In terms of sound it could be not unlike the buzzing of a hive of bees; in terms of light, a suffused glow.

'What is it?' I said, puzzled.

'Can't you guess, David? It's people. Lots and lots of our kind of 40 people.'

I realized she must be right, and I listened to it for a bit – until Petra's excitement got the better of her, and I had to protect myself.

We were over the land now, and looked down at the city coming up to meet us.

© UCLES & MOE 2012



10

5



15

20

30

35

45

'I'm beginning to believe it's real and true at last,' I told Rosalind. 'You were never with me those other times.'

She turned her head. The under-Rosalind was in her face, smiling, shiny-eyed. The armour was gone. She let me look beneath it. It was like a flower opening. ...

'This time, David –' she began.

Then she was blotted out. We staggered, and put our hands to our heads. Even the floor under our feet jerked a little.

Anguished protests came from all directions.

'Oh, sorry,' Petra apologized to the ship's crew, and to the city in 55 general, 'but it *is* awfully exciting.'

'This time, darling, we'll forgive you,' Rosalind told her. 'It is.'

(i) How does Wyndham bring out the thoughts and feelings of the characters in this passage?

(ii) How effective an ending to the novel do you think this is? Support your answer by reference to earlier parts of the novel.

We fidgeted. The ground was rough cement in patches and smooth almost everywhare, probably polished by many, many shuffling feet like ours.

when we were released into church for the morning sermon, Jenny taid, "Maybe if I come lato, I don't have to attend assembly."

go detention," I said. We sighed, sitting down on the hard benches in the chapel. At least it was cooler inside. Our school was a mission school, no nun teachers in

It was cooler inside. Our school was a mission school, no nun teachers in this day and age but regular teachers who got pregnant now and then, and teachers like Mrs. C. who had children, though we didn't want to imagine how she might have gotten them.

The monting (yawning) session started. As always, the Heverend talked into his Bible and gestured dramatically with his free hand. A few of us at the back watched Elien. She sat perfectly still for the first few minutes, then har head nodded more and more heavily. "Let us sing Hymn 160," the Reverend said. Ellen woke up long enough to stand, but, right into the first line of the hymn, she started nodding and almost fell over. Audrey, out of the kunchess of ther youth, gut out a hand to steady her. The rest of us thed to keep a straight lace.

School was the place to cultivate the art of getting out of things. Getting out of class before the bell rang – "Teacher, must go toilet, very high tide." Getting out of doing homework – "That chapter was done in my old exercise book. Really, i throw it away already." Getting out of classroom duties – "Plok up the bio rubbish, dust you can't see, floor is mey what."

Audrey said, "I have a way!"

"Hun?" I wanted her to elaborate, but E.T. was already in class, writing our sums on the blackboard.

"Yuck, cockroach!" someone said, Immediately, someone else shrieked, I saw something brown scuttling across the floor and stepped on it. It got mushed, "Yuckt" Ellen sald, I shrugged, I wash't afraid of spiders or lizards or rats either, dead or alive, I wash't even afraid of teachers.

"Come here." Mrs. Chew, alias E.T., gestured to me when we set down and took out our books. "Why didn't you complete the longitude and latitude problems in the Matins Lesu?"

> "Don't like them." I could teel everyone's eyes and ears on me. Mrs. Chew frowned. "You have to try."

> > [Turn over

50

-6

2014/01/O/N/12

2014/

