

Chapter 10

The chapter revolves around Anne's defiant decision to marry Alan Ervin, a "normal" man, despite being part of a group with telepathic abilities. Initially, her friends dismiss the idea, believing her parents would oppose the match due to Alan's modest prospects as a blacksmith's son. However, Anne successfully convinces her parents, and the engagement becomes official. This development alarms her friends, who fear the implications of her marrying outside their group. Michael confronts Anne, arguing that such a union would be like tying herself to a "cripple," emphasizing the emotional and practical challenges of living with someone who cannot share their mental connection.

Anne angrily defends her choice, asserting her right to love and marry despite their differences. She argues that not all of them can marry within their group, and someone must take the risk of marrying a "normal" to avoid leaving others isolated. She accuses her friends of not fully understanding her perspective, as they are not in love themselves, except for David and Rosalind. Anne's defiance escalates as she cuts off telepathic communication with the group, refusing to engage further in their discussions. Her friends are left uncertain whether she is blocking them entirely or simply listening without participating.

The chapter delves into the group's shared anxiety about the inherent difficulties of marrying "normals." They reflect on the suffocating half-life they lead, constantly hiding their abilities. A marriage to someone without telepathy would mean perpetual secrecy, insecurity, and the risk of exposure. The emotional and intellectual gap between them and "normals" is portrayed as insurmountable, as their deep mental connections make relationships with outsiders feel shallow and unfulfilling. Anne, however, chooses to ignore these concerns, prioritizing her desire for a conventional life over the group's collective fears.

Rosalind, in particular, is deeply disturbed by Anne's decision, as she herself refuses to entertain relationships with "normals." The chapter highlights the growing tension within the group as they grapple with Anne's rejection of their shared identity. David seeks advice from Uncle Axel, who acknowledges the inevitability of such conflicts but offers no clear solution. The chapter ends on a bleak note, with Anne's rejection of her friends and their way of life, leaving the group fractured and uncertain about their future.

