

Chapter 22

The chapter opens with the group leaving a chapel, led by Rolf, as they carefully navigate a dark field. Theo reflects on his conflicting emotions—wonder, excitement, and irritation—while observing the group's dynamics. Despite his reservations about their plan, he feels bound to Julian and her unborn child, recalling his past guilt over another child's death. The group reaches Theo's car, and he considers contacting Xan, the Warden, but ultimately decides against it, recognizing their desperate need for his help.

Theo attempts to persuade Julian to let him negotiate with Xan, but Rolf dismisses the idea, insisting on their original plan to flee and find shelter. Miriam reinforces their lack of options, emphasizing their precarious situation. Theo sarcastically mocks their idealized vision of survival in a remote cottage, yet he acknowledges his inescapable commitment to them. His connection to Julian and the child, as well as his potential influence with authorities, solidifies his role in their journey.

Tensions rise between Theo and Rolf, culminating in a heated exchange where Rolf accuses Theo of elitism and cowardice. Theo counters by blaming Rolf for Gascoigne's capture and possible death, revealing underlying guilt and resentment. Miriam intervenes, urging them to focus on survival. They agree to head northwest into Wales, avoiding major roads. Theo suggests stopping at his friend Jasper's house to secure another car and supplies, a plan Rolf reluctantly accepts after questioning its feasibility.

As they approach Jasper's house, Theo insists on handling the negotiation alone, choosing Miriam as his companion due to her practical knowledge. Rolf's distrust lingers, but Theo prioritizes Julian's safety over their conflict. The chapter ends with Theo and Miriam entering Jasper's property, noting the open gate, hinting at an unexpected development. Theo remains acutely aware of his loyalty to Julian and the

child, despite the group's internal strife and the overwhelming odds against them.

