

# Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children



## INTRODUCTION

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF RANSOM RIGGS

Ransom Riggs was born on a farm in Maryland before growing up in Englewood, Florida. As a child, he attended Pine View School for the Gifted and began writing stories by hand on legal pads and an old typewriter. He also became interested in photography and film. He went on to study English literature at Kenyon College and film at the University of Southern California. After graduating, Riggs worked on short films while writing for the online magazine *Mental Floss*. He then wrote *The Sherlock Holmes Handbook* in conjunction with the release of the 2009 Sherlock Holmes film. Because of his passion for found photography, Riggs began writing a book using curious vintage photographs as a guide for his plot, resulting in *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (2011). Riggs ultimately published six books in the series, with the final installment released in 2021. Riggs also married author Tahereh Mafi in 2013 and had a daughter in 2017; they currently live in Irvine, California.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Abe's childhood takes place in the context of World War II's outbreak in Europe. Poland, where Abe grew up, was the first country invaded by the Nazis on September 1, 1939, and it fared worst in Hitler's campaign to exterminate all Jews. The book describes how Abe—who was Jewish—was the only member of his family to escape Poland before the invasion because his parents put him on a train to Britain, and he is the only member of his family to survive World War II. Abe's story reflects the reality that over 90 percent of Poland's Jewish population was killed in the Holocaust. Additionally, the book touches on Britain's conflict with Germany in the war. The date of the bombing in the book's setting—Cairnholm Island—is September 3, 1940. This connects to the prolonged bombing campaign called the Blitz, in which Nazi Germany dropped bombs on London and other military sites across Britain; the campaign lasted from September 1940 to May 1941. While Cairnholm is fictional, it could be inspired by the Gower Peninsula in Wales, where several military sites and manufacturing plants were a prime target for German bombing during the war.

### RELATED LITERARY WORKS

In interviews, Riggs has spoken about Ralph Waldo Emerson's works [Self-Reliance](#) and [Nature](#) as being highly influential to the book's philosophy. He particularly cites Emerson's quote, "The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he

knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried." This applies to Jacob's own journey of discovering his peculiar talent and his capacity for bravery and confidence. Emerson's writing features in the book directly in the epigraph and when Abe directs Jacob to find a letter in a copy of Emerson's selected works. Riggs also cites *The Likes of Us* and *Barnardo Boy*—two works that examine British orphanages in the early 20th century—as providing helpful context for Miss Peregrine's home. Additionally, *Miss Peregrine's* exists in a long lineage of young adult fantasy novels in which children experience fantastical or supernatural things which foster their coming of age. Older books in this vein include Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* series. Often these magical worlds mirror or expose difficult truths about the real world as well, particularly in contemporary young adult fiction. More recent examples include Patrick Ness's [A Monster Calls](#), Katherine Paterson's [Bridge to Terabithia](#), Eden Robinson's [Son of a Trickster](#), Neil Gaiman's [Coraline](#), and John Connelly's *The Book of Lost Things*.

### KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*
- **When Written:** 2008-2011
- **Where Written:** Los Angeles, California
- **When Published:** June 7, 2011
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary
- **Genre:** Young Adult; Fantasy
- **Setting:** Sarasota, Florida, present day; Cairnholm, Wales, present day and 1940
- **Climax:** Jacob leaves Cairnholm with the other peculiar children.
- **Antagonist:** Hollowgast, Wights
- **Point of View:** First person

### EXTRA CREDIT

**Picture Perfect.** *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* was originally intended to be a picture book, but Riggs's editor advised him to use his found photographs as the basis for a full narrative.

**Bizarre on the Big Screen.** The book was adapted into a film in 2016, directed by Tim Burton and starring Asa Butterfield as Jacob and Eva Green as Miss Peregrine.



## PLOT SUMMARY

Growing up in present-day Florida, six-year-old Jacob Portman idolizes his grandfather, Abe. Abe's past is fascinating: he grew up in a children's **home**, performed in a circus, and fought in World War II. Some of Jacob's favorite stories about his grandfather concern the home, where children with magical abilities lived freely in a kind of paradise, away from the rotting, tentacled monsters that were after them. Abe shows Jacob **photos** of the children: in them, one girl is levitating, and there's a boy who can turn invisible. As Jacob grows up, he is disappointed to realize that his grandfather's stories can't be true and that the photos must be fake; then he gets angry with his grandfather, particularly because he's been bullied at school for believing the stories. Later, Jacob's dad reveals the stories' origins: his grandfather was the only member of his family to escape the Nazi regime in Poland, finding shelter in a Welsh orphanage. When he learns this, Jacob is ashamed for envying his grandfather's life and doesn't ask about it again.

By the time Jacob is 15, he is pretty unhappy—he has few friends, doesn't get along well with his parents, and feels like he's being forced into a predetermined path where he'll have to work at his mom's family's drug store chain. But one day, he receives a terrified phone call from his grandfather, who says the monsters are after him. Abe has been declining mentally, and at first, Jacob thinks this is just another episode. But when Jacob arrives at his grandfather's house to check on him, he discovers Abe in the woods with huge gashes in his chest. Before he dies, he gives Jacob instructions: "Find the bird. In the loop. On the other side of the old man's grave. September third, 1940." He also mentions a letter. Jacob catches a glimpse of exactly the kind of monster his grandfather always described: rotting flesh, tentacles spooling out of its mouth, and terrifying.

Following his grandfather's death, Jacob is constantly anxious and has recurring nightmares about the monsters. Despite seeing a psychiatrist named Dr. Golan, he doesn't seem to get any better. He also fights with his parents, particularly his dad, who always felt that Abe was a distant father. One day, however, Jacob discovers the letter his grandfather was referring to, which was sent 15 years earlier from a woman named Miss Peregrine. Miss Peregrine ran the children's home that his grandfather lived in, located on an island off the coast of Wales. Jacob convinces his dad to take a trip to Wales over the summer so that he can find the children's home, and his dad agrees—particularly because his dad is an amateur ornithologist and wants to write a book about the bird life there.

On the island, which is very secluded and rustic, few people know about the children's home. Jacob soon discovers why: it's on the very edge of the island past a dangerous bog, it's half-destroyed, and it's largely overrun by nature. He learns that a

bomb was dropped on the home during World War II, but this confuses Jacob because the letter from Miss Peregrine is only 15 years old. He searches the house and finds more photos like the ones his grandfather always showed him. Then, suddenly, a set of children approach, asking for Abe—they are the children who appeared in the photographs. Jacob chases one girl through an old cairn (a tomb), but when he comes out the other side, he soon realizes he's been transported back to September 3, 1940. The girl, Emma (who can conjure fire with her hands), is suspicious of Jacob, thinking that he's a wight, and she and another boy named Millard (who's invisible) take him back to Miss Peregrine's home.

At the house, Jacob sees it in its proper glory, with many children with special abilities playing around the beautiful grounds. Miss Peregrine, the headmistress, explains that they are "peculiar," meaning they have magical talents. She is also a special peculiar known as an "ymbryne"—she can manipulate time and shapeshift into a bird. Miss Peregrine created a time loop for the children, so they only experience September 3, 1940, over and over, and they never age. The time loop not only protects them from the bomb, but from common people who think the unusual children are evil and might target them. Jacob, in turn, tells Miss Peregrine that his grandfather is dead. This upsets Emma deeply, as they were sweethearts when Abe lived at the orphanage. Jacob stays for dinner but returns to his time by going through the cairn once more, and he lies to his dad about what he found at the orphanage.

Over the next few days, Jacob goes back and forth between 1940 and the present, spending more time getting to know the children while also growing more adept at lying to his dad. Jacob enjoys playing and relaxing with the other kids, but he soon realizes how boring it would be to live one day over and over, never aging. Additionally, Jacob develops a budding romance with Emma while also learning about some of the more disturbing things about the house. For example, they keep the dead body of a boy named Victor in an upstairs room, while another boy, Enoch, has the peculiar ability to revive him by reanimating animal hearts. And back in the present, strange things start to happen: a mysterious birder appears, farmers realize that several sheep have been killed in the night, and the museum curator, Martin, is discovered dead in the ocean.

One day, another ymbryne named Miss Avocet arrives at the home, explaining that hollowgast and wights are planning a coordinated attack against the ymbrynes. Miss Peregrine explains to Jacob that hollowgast are peculiars who tried to use time loops to live forever. Their experiment went horribly wrong, causing a massive explosion, and they were left with rotting flesh and tentacles for tongues. Hollowgast can live for thousands of years and constantly hunger for peculiar flesh. Very few people can see them, but a few peculiars—Jacob and Abe included—can. Jacob realizes that this is what he saw the night Abe was killed—the things that still haunt his dreams.

When a hollowgast eats enough peculiars, it turns into a wight. Wights look human except for their eyes, which are completely white, and their sole purpose is to acquire more peculiars for hollowgast to eat. Miss Peregrine asks Jacob to keep a lookout for anything or anyone suspicious who might have arrived on the island.

At this, Jacob remembers the suspicious birder and Martin's dead body. With Jacob and Emma's help, Enoch revives Martin, who tries to describe what killed him. Just as they are interviewing Martin, the birder appears with a gun and reveals that he is Dr. Golan, Jacob's psychiatrist. He has been watching Jacob and Abe for years, hoping they would lead him to a place with more peculiars—and now Jacob has. Dr. Golan sets a hollowgast on the children, and though they're able to escape it, they soon discover that Dr. Golan has kidnapped Miss Peregrine and Miss Avocet. It seems that the hollows and wights are still hoping to use time loops to achieve true immortality.

Jacob, Emma, a girl with incredible strength named Bronwyn, and Millard then follow Dr. Golan to the nearby lighthouse, where he is keeping Miss Peregrine and Miss Avocet in a cage in their bird forms. As the children try to retrieve the birds, Dr. Golan shoots Millard and throws the birdcage from the lighthouse and into the ocean. Jacob is then able to grab Dr. Golan's gun and shoot him, and he's surprised by his own courage. He and Emma dive after the birdcage, but suddenly a U-Boat surfaces from the water and a wight grabs the cage. Still, Miss Peregrine was able to escape the cage in her bird form, and Emma and Jacob scoop her up and bring her back to shore.

Without Miss Peregrine to reset the time loop, the bomb strikes the children's home. Fortunately, the rest of the children escaped, but the house is completely destroyed, and Miss Peregrine seems stuck in her bird form. The children decide to go after Miss Avocet, hoping that another ymbryne might be able to fix their time loop. Jacob realizes that he wants to go with the children to protect them from the hollowgast—that they're his family now. He says goodbye to his dad and returns to 1940, knowing that he may never be able to go back to his own time period again. It's September 4th, 1940, for the first time in a long time, and Jacob and the other children feel more alive than ever.



## CHARACTERS

### MAJOR CHARACTERS

**Jacob Portman** – Jacob is the protagonist of the novel. Growing up in Sarasota, Florida, Jacob idolizes his grandfather, Abe, whom he believes had a very interesting life. He loves hearing his grandfather's stories about the children's **home** Abe lived in and the monsters he fought, and seeing **photos** of

the magical children who lived there. As Jacob grows, however, other kids bully him for believing in "fairy tales," and he grows resentful of his grandfather for the stories and himself for believing them. When his dad reveals that the stories are really about Abe escaping the Nazis as a child, Jacob grows ashamed for envying his grandfather's remarkable life. Still, Jacob is unhappy with his own life—he has only one friend, he struggles to get along with his parents, and he dreads spending his life working for his mom's drug store chain. Then, suddenly, Jacob's life shifts dramatically when his grandfather is killed by what seems like one of the monsters he described, and Jacob becomes anxious, plagued by nightmares, and isolated. Following clues his grandfather left him, Jacob eventually finds the magical orphanage in which his grandfather grew up and realizes that Abe was telling the truth all along. There, Jacob learns that he is peculiar—his special ability is that he can see the "monsters" (the hollowgast)—and he gets to know the home's children. Sparked by a desire to protect them from the dangerous hollows and wights, Jacob becomes friends with the kids, begins a romance with a peculiar named Emma, and gains courage and confidence in himself. Ultimately, Jacob finds a sense of belonging and purpose at the home, and when they're forced to leave, Jacob decides to go with them rather than returning to his life in Florida. This trajectory illustrates how Jacob has come of age, able to determine his own path and maintain his own idea of family.

**Abe Portman/Jacob's Grandfather** – Abe is Jacob's paternal grandfather. Abe is the only person in his family to have escaped the Nazis in Poland in the late 1930s; Miss Peregrine then found him in a refugee camp and brought him back to her children's **home** on Cairnholm, Wales. There, Abe got to know other peculiar children and became sweethearts with Emma. He protected the others because his peculiar ability was that he could see hollowgast. But after the bomb struck Miss Peregrine's home on September 3, 1940, Abe realized that he had a duty to fight the "monsters" and protect his people—both from the Nazis and the hollowgast. He then fought in World War II before relocating to Florida. There, throughout his life, he helped other peculiars hunt down the hollowgast, though this often meant that he was absent from Jacob's dad's life. Later in life, Abe tells Jacob all about the monsters and the children, showing Jacob old **photos** that he's kept, but Jacob eventually stops believing in his stories and assumes his grandfather is mentally declining. Ultimately, a hollowgast tracks Abe down, and because Jacob's dad took the key to his gun locker, he is unable to defend himself. Before he dies, he tells Jacob how to find the children's home to tell them what happened to him. Upon learning that the children's home and the magic is real, Jacob realizes how heroic his grandfather truly was.

**Emma Bloom/The Girl** – Emma is a peculiar who lives at Miss Peregrine's **home**; she can conjure fire with her hands and is a

fierce fighter. Emma was Abe's sweetheart at the home before he left to fight in the war, and she waited years for him to come back or bring her to America. She wrote him many letters, but eventually he stopped replying because he started his own family. At first, when Jacob arrives on the island, Emma accuses Jacob of being a wight because she doesn't want to accept that Jacob's arrival likely means that Abe has died. Later, she and Jacob start a romance as well, though he becomes somewhat uncomfortable when he worries that she's just using him as a replacement for Abe. Ultimately, however, Emma is able to let go of Abe, and she admires Jacob as his own person—particularly when he chooses to stay and help protect the other kids, rather than leave like Abe did.

**Miss Alma Peregrine** – Miss Peregrine is the caretaker of the **home** on Cairnholm. She is an ymbryne, meaning that she can manipulate time and transform into a bird. Miss Peregrine is fiercely protective of the children, but sometimes this leads to trouble. The children often feel restricted by having to remain inside the time loop on the island, and some (like Victor) feel so constricted that they put themselves in danger by trying to leave the loop. Miss Peregrine also hides information from Jacob; she worries that telling him that he is peculiar will be too much for him to handle, even though withholding this information ends up putting him in greater danger. Towards the end of the book, Dr. Golan kidnaps Miss Peregrine, and Jacob, Emma, and the other children prove their bravery and responsibility by rescuing her. As of the end of the book, she is unable to return to her human form, leaving the children to search for other ymbrynes to help them fix their time loop.

**Jacob's Dad** – Jacob's dad is an amateur ornithologist and a nature writer. Jacob has a difficult relationship with his dad, particularly because he feels that his dad doesn't love Abe in the way Jacob does. Jacob's dad explains that Abe was often absent and distant as a father, and Jacob sees how the struggles in their relationship affect his own relationship with his dad (since Jacob was able to connect with Abe). Separately, Jacob's dad often falls into a pattern with his writing: he gets very passionate about a project, but as soon as he hits a small problem, he gives up and then moves onto a different project, leaving him without a feeling of purpose or accomplishment. He is only able to do this because Jacob's mom's wealthy family supports him, but this leaves Jacob's dad still trying to find himself and prove that he can make his own path.

**Dr. Golan/The Birder** – Dr. Golan is Jacob's psychiatrist, who convinces him that his nightmares and anxiety are simply responses to the trauma of seeing his grandfather die after a violent attack. However, it's later revealed that Dr. Golan is also a wight and has taken on a series of personas in Jacob's life—including Abe's neighbor, Jacob's middle school bus driver, his family's lawn caretaker, and a mysterious birder who arrives on Cairnholm. In fact, Dr. Golan is the one who helped the hollowgast attack and kill Abe. Dr. Golan then uses Jacob to

find the other peculiar children, which also enables him to kidnap Miss Peregrine and Miss Avocet. Though Miss Peregrine escapes, Dr. Golan hands off Miss Avocet to other wights before Jacob shoots and kills him.

**Jacob's Mom** – Jacob's mom comes from a wealthy family that owns a chain of drug stores, and this creates problems between her, Jacob, and his dad. Jacob is sometimes frustrated with the way his mom throws money around as a substitute for happiness or meaningful relationships, and he is resentful of the fact that he is expected to become a part of the family business. Meanwhile, Jacob's dad struggles to find a purpose because he is able to rely on his wife's money. As a result, Jacob's mom often feels like she's taking care of "two needy children"—an overheard statement which deeply upsets Jacob.

**Millard Nullings** – Millard is a peculiar who lives at Miss Peregrine's **home**. Millard's peculiar ability is that he is invisible (though any clothes he puts on are not). This allows Millard to overhear conversations and hide in plain sight. Because the children relive the same day over and over, he is compiling a comprehensive account of every event and conversation that happens that day. In contrast to Emma, Millard is even-keeled and logical, but like the other children, he bravely goes after Dr. Golan when Miss Peregrine is kidnapped. In this pursuit, Dr. Golan shoots Millard and wounds him badly, but Millard survives.

**Bronwyn** – Bronwyn is a peculiar who lives at Miss Peregrine's. She and her brother Victor both have incredible strength, though Victor died when he tried to leave the island and a hollowgast killed him. While Bronwyn isn't the smartest, she is extremely loyal, and Miss Peregrine trusts her completely. She also proves instrumental when Jacob, Emma, and the other children pursue Dr. Golan and track down Miss Peregrine at the end of the book—she deals Dr. Golan critical blows and also cares for Millard when he's shot.

**Enoch** – Enoch is a peculiar who lives at Miss Peregrine's **home**. His ability is that he can take a preserved heart from one living being and use it to revive a dead being. Enoch typically uses this talent to take hearts from mice and place them in inanimate clay soldiers. He also occasionally revives Victor, and towards the end of the book, he revives Martin so the children can figure out what killed him. Enoch is often depicted as cruel, deliberately hurting the clay soldiers and toying with other people's emotions.

**Victor** – Victor is a peculiar who lives in Miss Peregrine's **home** and is Bronwyn's brother. Like Bronwyn, he possesses incredible strength. Jacob discovers Victor's dead body in a bedroom in the house; the children keep it so that Enoch can occasionally revive him. Emma later explains that Victor left the loop because he was becoming frustrated living the same day over and over again, and he was killed by a hollowgast as a result. When the children leave the home at the end of the

book, they bury Victor in the backyard.

**Miss Avocet** – Miss Avocet is an ymbryne who taught Miss Peregrine. Late in the book, Miss Avocet arrives on Cairnholm explaining that wights have kidnapped her peculiar children, along with her fellow ymbryne Miss Bunting. She deduces that the wights and hollowgast are targeting ymbrynes to attempt to manipulate time loops and gain immortality. Ultimately, she and Miss Peregrine are also captured by wights.

**Ricky** – Ricky is Jacob’s closest—and only—friend in Florida. Jacob helps Ricky with his homework, and in exchange Ricky protects Jacob from bullies at school. In reality, though, they don’t get along very well. Jacob often gets embarrassed due to his family’s wealth in comparison with Ricky’s family. When Jacob grows more anxious following his grandfather’s death, he and Ricky have a falling out.

**Horace** – Horace is a peculiar living at Miss Peregrine’s. His peculiar talent is that he has prophetic nightmares. When Miss Avocet arrives at Miss Peregrine’s, he has one of these nightmares, babbling about an apocalyptic event. Jacob later concludes that Horace’s dream reveals what will happen if the hollowgast and wights carry out their plan to try and become immortal.

## MINOR CHARACTERS

**Malthus** – Malthus is a hollowgast that kills Martin and that attempts to kill Jacob, Emma, and other peculiar children. Like all hollowgast, Malthus has rotting flesh and tentacles spouting from his mouth. Jacob is able to kill Malthus using a pair of large sheep shears.

**Dylan** – Dylan is a boy who lives on Cairnholm in the present day. He and his friend Worm prank Jacob when Jacob asks them to lead him to the **home**, bringing him to a shack full of sheep excrement before abandoning him.

**Martin Pagett** – Martin is a museum curator on Cairnholm island. Towards the end of the book, he is found dead in the ocean with severe wounds. When Enoch revives Martin, the children discover that he was killed by a hollowgast.

**Worm** – Worm is a boy who lives on Cairnholm in the present day. He and Dylan form a rap duo, and together they prank Jacob when Jacob asks them to lead him to the children’s **home**.

**Olive** – Olive is a peculiar who lives in Miss Peregrine’s. Her talent is that she can levitate, and often the other children have to tie her down to furniture or keep her on a rope outside so that she doesn’t float away.

**Fiona** – Fiona is a peculiar living at Miss Peregrine’s. She has the ability to grow and animate plant life—making different topiaries come to life or causing flowers to grow out of planters in a matter of seconds.

**Hugh** – Hugh is a peculiar who lives at Miss Peregrine’s. His

peculiarity is that he has bees living inside him, which swarm outside of him as well.

**Aunt Susie** – Aunt Susie is Jacob’s aunt, Abe’s daughter, and Jacob’s dad’s older sister.

**Kev** A bartender at the Priest Hole.

## TERMS

**Peculiar** – A peculiar is a person with special, magical abilities. Each peculiar has different abilities: for example, **Emma** can conjure fire in her hands, **Olive** levitates, and **Millard** is invisible. Peculiar children aren’t always born to peculiar parents, nor do peculiar parents always have peculiar children. For a long time, peculiars lived among “common folk,” meaning people who aren’t peculiars. Gradually, common people came to view peculiars as evil and often persecuted or killed them. This is why **Miss Peregrine** founded her home, in order to take in and protect young peculiars. Peculiars are also hunted by creatures called hollowgast, who have an intense desire to eat peculiars. Towards the end of the book, **Jacob** learns that he and his **grandfather** are both peculiar: they have the unique ability to see hollowgast.

**Hollowgast** – Hollowgast are former peculiars who tried to use time loops to live forever. Their attempt caused a massive explosion and left them to live in a state of “damnation”—while they can live for thousands of years, they have rotting skin and tentacles for tongues, and they constantly desire the flesh of peculiars. **Miss Peregrine** theorizes that they reversed their aging so severely that they went back to a time before they had souls, essentially turning themselves into devils. Most peculiars can only see hollowgast shadows, except when the hollowgast are eating (which is why hollowgast hunt mostly at night). **Jacob** and his **grandfather** have the ability to see them all the time, however, which is why other peculiars often rely on them for protection. When a hollowgast eats enough peculiars, it becomes a wight.

**Wight** – A wight is a type of hollowgast which has consumed many peculiars. Wights have no peculiar abilities and largely appear as human, except for their eyes, which are completely white. Their purpose in life is to help procure peculiars for hollowgast to eat. Late in the book, it is revealed that **Dr. Golan** is a wight.

**Ymbryne** – Ymbrynes are a type of peculiar who can manipulate time and shapeshift into birds. They also have a duty to care for young peculiars in need. **Miss Peregrine** is an ymbryne, creating a time loop on September 3, 1940, to protect the peculiar children from the bomb that would have hit their home that evening. The wights and hollowgast start to kidnap ymbrynes in the hope of using time loops to live forever, though their previous attempt to do this caused a massive explosion. **Miss Avocet** is also an ymbryne.



## THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



## COMING OF AGE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

Sixteen-year-old Jacob Portman has a difficult time growing up—he doesn't get along with his parents, he has few friends, and he dreads what he feels is his inevitable path: working for his family's drug store company. He constantly feels anxious, weak, and unremarkable. But when Jacob's grandfather Abe dies and Jacob visits the magical orphanage where Abe grew up, he begins to come out of his shell. He develops friendships with the "peculiar" children there, bravely puts himself at risk to protect them from evil magical threats, and gains more self-assurance as a result. At the end of the novel, Jacob even chooses to remain with the children rather than returning to live with his parents. As Jacob outgrows his family's expectations and his own self-doubt, the novel suggests that a key part of coming of age is finding the confidence to determine one's own path in life.

At the beginning of the novel, Jacob's childhood is marked by feelings of being inadequate, ordinary, and lacking in self-determination. Growing up, Jacob laments how "ordinary" and "unremarkable" his life is, particularly because he feels he has done "nothing to deserve" the ordinary life that he does have. These phrases suggest that Jacob lacks confidence in himself and his abilities; the fact that he doesn't feel he deserves it suggests that he has felt little control over his life as well. Jacob only has one friend, Ricky, whom he befriends only because he needs Ricky's protection from bullies at school. This not only shows that Jacob's lack of confidence has left him with few friends, but also that he tends to be picked on—things that would reinforce feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness. Jacob is also on a predetermined path set out by his parents: working at his mom's family's drug store chain, which he likens to "lock[ing] [him]self in a corporate cage." Overall, then, Jacob's teenage years contain an impending sense of doom and entrapment, suggesting that he doesn't just lack confidence, but also lacks a sense of hope or agency for his future.

After Jacob's grandfather dies, Jacob struggles even more to find confidence in himself, self-doubt plaguing him now that he has lost his closest mentor. Jacob's grandfather dies in Jacob's arms, and shortly after, Jacob begins having nightmares about the monster that he believes killed his grandfather. In the nightmares, Jacob's grandfather is frantically trying to get away from the monster and buy a gun from a vending machine, while

all Jacob has is a pink plastic BB gun that can't seem to fire. This dream reflects Jacob's insecurities about being unable to protect himself, like a weak, helpless child. Even as Jacob learns more and more about his peculiar abilities, Jacob's self-doubt recurs in a voice telling him that he's not good enough to protect himself the way his grandfather could. The voice says things like, "You're weak" and "You're a loser." Again, Jacob's inner voice stifles his self-confidence, and with his grandfather gone, he feels even more unprotected and helpless about his future.

However, as Jacob forges friendships and increasingly makes decisions about his own future, the story illustrates that a crucial part of growing up lies in having the confidence to determine one's own path. Jacob travels to Cairnholm Island, where his grandfather grew up, and meets the magical children who have been frozen in a time loop for over seventy years. He takes the initiative to get to know them and even starts a relationship with a girl named Emma—for example, by picking her up to help her reach an apple on a tree. This demonstrates how Jacob is beginning to gain confidence to make friends and foster relationships in a way he never has before. Towards the end of the book, Jacob kills the monster that plagued his nightmares. He thinks, "All the time I'd spent being afraid, I never dreamed I could actually *kill* one." This is a major shift for Jacob, as he matures in realizing that he *can* kill the monsters of his childhood, and as a result, he gains even more confidence in himself. This idea is represented most literally when Jacob stands up to Dr. Golan, his psychiatrist, who actually turns out to be another evil being called a wight. When Jacob is able to get Dr. Golan's gun away from him, Dr. Golan at first makes fun of Jacob. Knowing Jacob's old nightmares, Dr. Golan taunts Jacob that he would never have the confidence to shoot him. But when Jacob sees Dr. Golan going after Emma, he is able to find it within himself to shoot and kill Dr. Golan. With this action, Jacob conquers his old insecurities; he completes his journey of growing up. Finally, rather than return to his previous, ordinary life with his parents, Jacob instead chooses to explore the unknown with his new friends, leading them as they seek out a new home. This ending underscores Jacob's journey from anxious, self-doubting kid to self-assured young adult. His coming-of-age tale is marked by a new confidence and the ability to determine the life he wants to live.



## MAGIC, BELONGING, AND PROTECTION

*Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* aptly centers on a **home** for children called "peculiar" who possess magical abilities like conjuring fire with their hands, levitation, or invisibility. The teenage protagonist Jacob learns about this home because his orphaned grandfather Abe lived there in the late 1930s. Peculiar are often outcasts among "common folk" and actively persecuted by monsters called "hollowgast"; it is this

mistreatment which leads them to form communities to defend themselves. In endowing the children with magic, the novel ultimately suggests that the children's differences are actually what make them special and enable them to find belonging and protection in a world that often targets them.

The book establishes how the children's "peculiarities" and differences single them out and place them in danger. When Miss Peregrine explains to Jacob what peculiars are, she notes that in recent centuries, "common folk," or non-peculiar people, turned against peculiars. She states, "The Muslims drove us out. The Christians burned us as witches. Even the pagans of Wales and Ireland eventually decided that we were all malevolent faeries and shape-shifting ghosts." These historical examples illustrate how people often fear differences and target others for being different. Even in the modern age, Miss Peregrine emphasizes, "peculiar offspring of common parents are often abused and neglected in the most horrific ways." Again, any differences that the children have can make them immediate outcasts, even among the people who are supposed to love them. As if that weren't bad enough, the children are also persecuted by evil beings called hollowgast and wights—creatures that were at one time peculiar but whose souls have been completely corrupted. The hollows have an intense desire to feast on peculiar flesh so that they can become higher beings called wights, and so these monsters represent another way in which the peculiars are persecuted simply for being who they are.

But even though magic sets them apart, the book underscores how magic also provides the children with a sense of belonging and community. When Jacob first arrives at Miss Peregrine's home, he sees that it is "exactly the paradise [his] grandfather had described," providing the children with a safe haven away from the outside world. So, while magic sets them apart, it is also what has brought them together to form their idyllic community. Jacob personally experiences this community as well. While he has largely felt like a loner and an outsider in Florida, a girl at the home named Emma tells him that he "belong[s] here," with the other children. She admits Jacob is peculiar, too, and it is this quality that enables him to build friendships and become a part of their adopted family. Jacob finds such a deep sense of belonging, in fact, that he chooses to stay with the peculiar children rather than return to his old life. In this way, the book emphasizes that the magic has provided Jacob with a new community, as he knows his parents could never fully understand the magic or his decision to leave home.

The children's differences also protect them, demonstrating how magic doesn't only make them outcasts, but it is actually what makes them special and helps them survive. Jacob is the clearest example of this idea: his peculiarity is that he can see the hollowgast that are coming after them, whereas other people can't. While this makes "common folk" believe that Jacob is crazy and makes them want to avoid him, it helps him

provide the other peculiar children with protection from the monsters. The same is true of many of the other children. Enoch's ability to revive dead people is what helps them figure out that the hollowgast and wights have arrived on Cairnholm Island; Millard's invisibility prevents him from being seen and captured by the wights; Emma's ability to conjure fire and Bronwyn's strength help them fight a wight named Dr. Golan, who threatens them with a gun. In all of these examples, the children's magic is what saves the day, showing how it makes them special and provides protection even as it causes others to target them.

It is also worth noting that the book makes some parallels between the children's experiences and Jewish people's experiences during the war, as Abe was also Jewish and escaped the Nazis in Poland. Before Jacob recognizes that his grandfather's tales about the children are true, Jacob thinks that the children were all Jewish and that the monsters chasing them were not hollowgast but Nazis. He states, "The peculiarity for which they'd been hunted was simply their Jewishness. [...] What made them amazing wasn't that they had miraculous powers; that they had escaped the ghettos and gas chambers was miracle enough." This parallel further reinforces the point that differences can both paint targets on people's backs and make them unique, providing them with the tight bond of community.



## FAMILY

Throughout the novel, Jacob learns that "family" can mean many different things. He adores his grandfather, while he and his parents struggle to maintain good relationships. One of the difficult things about family is that it can often come with pain: for example, Jacob's dad struggled to relate to Jacob's grandfather growing up, and Jacob inherits nightmares about monsters from his grandfather. At the same time, Jacob finds a different kind of family when he discovers the kids at Miss Peregrine's, who adopt him into their group and whom he quickly grows to love, but who also derail his life significantly and force him to make a difficult choice about his life path. By showing these different aspects of family, the book illustrates how complicated families can be, as they are often both the sources of pain and conflict as well as love and support.

Jacob's biological family—particularly his relationships with his dad and grandfather, and his dad's and Abe's relationship—illustrates how families can provide a great deal of love and support but can also be sources of deep conflict. Growing up, Jacob idolizes his grandfather and wants to believe in his tales about the magical children's **home** in which he grew up. But as Jacob becomes older and surmises that his grandfather's stories cannot be true, he grows more distant from his grandfather. At times, Jacob even believes that his grandfather may have been both a liar and an adulterer, which

pains Jacob greatly. By book's end, Jacob realizes that his grandfather didn't tell him about being peculiar so that Jacob could have an "ordinary life," but he still struggles with the idea that his grandfather wasn't fully honest with him. This arc illustrates how he's both grateful to his grandfather but also frustrated about the things his grandfather withheld. Jacob and his dad also struggle to get along, particularly when Jacob's dad accompanies Jacob to Cairnholm (where the children's home is located) to help Jacob understand his grandfather's history. They fight frequently because Jacob's dad resents Jacob for having a better relationship with Abe than he did. Jacob feels like a "seventy-year-old hurt [has] somehow been passed down to [him] like some poisonous heirloom." By taking something that often has positive connotations like an heirloom and making it "poisonous," Jacob illustrates how the positive aspects of family—like inherited love and support—can also come with inherited pain. Reflecting on the pain in his father's and grandfather's relationship, Jacob surmises that Abe wanted a family, but that he was so scared of losing people after being orphaned that he struggled to bond with Jacob's dad. Additionally, Jacob's dad doesn't believe his father's stories and thinks that Abe's mental acuity is slipping when he starts talking about monsters chasing him. In this way, Jacob's dad and Abe both hurt each other even as they want desperately to maintain a loving relationship.

Jacob's adopted family—the children at Miss Peregrine's **home**—also generate both love and conflict in Jacob's life. As Jacob spends more and more time with the children at Miss Peregrine's, he understands how fond he is of them—building a set of friends in a way that he has never been able to before, and even starting a romantic relationship with a girl named Emma. The kids help him learn more about his grandfather and his history, and when Jacob begins to protect them from outside threats like evil wights and hollows, one of them even tells Jacob, "welcome to the family." They allow Jacob to realize that family can be any group of people that are bonded by mutual love and support, as the children are. However, even Jacob's newfound family can provoke difficult decisions. They leave Jacob with a choice: to leave behind everything he knows to live with them, or to return to his parents. Jacob is tormented by the question, deeply wanting to protect the children and Emma, but unsure if he wants to give up his normal, present-day life in order to do so. This suggests that building a family in and of itself can lead to conflict, because any bond of love will also inevitably come with hard decisions and sacrifices.

Both biological and adopted families have their joys and challenges for Jacob, and he ultimately grapples with whether to remain with his parents or venture out with the other children. Ultimately, Jacob's choice to live with his chosen family doesn't necessarily mean he's turning his back completely on his biological family—as he reconnects with his

grandfather's history, it's clear that his biological family continues to be important to him even as he forges a new path among fellow peculiars.



## MORTALITY AND MEANING

Mortality takes on a unique quality in *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, as the peculiar children in the titular **home** are trapped in a "time loop," meaning they experience the same day over and over again and never age. While at first Jacob sees how the place is a kind of paradise, with the children perpetually playing and relaxing, Jacob gradually realizes how maddening this kind of life would be. His grandfather Abe understood this, which is why he chose to leave the time loop and live out a full life, having a family and ultimately dying. Additionally, the antagonists of the novel—the evil hollowgast and wights—search for a way to stop their aging even outside of time loops, but as a result they became soulless, rotting creatures who feed on peculiars. In highlighting the boredom and degradation in immortality, the book suggests that only by living out one's full life—even knowing it will end—can a person truly find meaning and value in it.

Initially, Jacob recognizes the advantages of never aging, showing how immortality can seem attractive. The children inhabit one perfect day over and over again, playing, putting on magic shows, and enjoying the sun, the beach, and each other. Jacob sees the beauty in this "strange little heaven," recognizing how happy it makes him, particularly because he and the others have no responsibilities. This establishes how the time loops can be incredibly appealing to inhabit. Moreover, remaining in the time loop comes with a degree of protection for all of the children, because they are invisible in time: only peculiars and wights can pass through the entrance to the time loops, and the entrance is hard to find. In this way, immortality also shields them from conflict with the "common folk" and hides them from the evil beings trying to kill them, giving them another reason why living in the time loop is enticing. They not only get to enjoy a perpetual, idyllic childhood, but they're also sheltered from life's difficulties and dangers.

Despite the time loop's advantages, the book challenges the idea that such a life is truly perfect by showing how boring and restrictive it would be to live the same day over and over and never age. When Jacob considers whether to remain with the children, he worries about the fact that as soon as the children leave the time loop for too long, they will age extremely rapidly, until they become the age that they're supposed to be (most would be between 80 and 100). He thinks, "Yes, it was beautiful and life was good, but if every day were exactly alike and if the kids really couldn't leave [...] then this place wasn't just a heaven but a kind of prison, too." In this way, Jacob recognizes how confining it would feel to live in the time loop, even though outwardly the time loop might give the appearance of freedom.

The children keenly feel the ramifications of this confinement, too. Prior to Jacob's arrival, one of the children, Victor, said he was "going mad" on the island and decided to leave, until a hollowgast found and killed him. Abe, too, did not want to stay, and instead chose to live in Florida, even though it meant that he eventually did die. In this way, the book suggests that even faced with the very real threat of death, peculiars struggle to live at Miss Peregrine's because of the oppressive boredom and limitation of not getting to live a full life. Later, when wights threaten to invade the island, Miss Peregrine insists that the children cannot even leave the house, and Jacob notes that the kids begin to "go a little nuts," with some becoming very mischievous and others moping constantly. Frustrated, Emma and several other children decide to set out to confront the wights and hollows; Emma says that "living like this might just be worse than dying." In this way, the book emphasizes that a life of confinement isn't really a meaningful life at all, even if it means avoiding death.

The hollowgast and wights represent another commentary on the problems with immortality, as their quest to never die leads them to a horrific version of life. The hollowgast were once peculiar, but they conducted an experiment with time loops in order to gain true immortality. Their experiment failed: while they did succeed in getting to live for thousands of years, it caused them to transform into hollowgast—invisible, rotting, tentacled shadow creatures whose only desire is to feast on the flesh of other peculiars. Miss Peregrine explains that the hollowgast's desire to transform themselves into gods went against the very laws of nature and shouldn't have been attempted. In this way, the book suggests that attempting to avoid death completely is morally wrong. When the hollows do eat enough peculiars, they become wights, who appear human. But wights also have no memories and find no real meaning in life other than to act as scouts to procure peculiars for other hollows. In describing the hollows and wights as "devils" who are "damned" to a soulless life, the book highlights how immortality comes with a life devoid of meaning.

In its conclusion, the book reinforces the idea that life can have meaning only when it accepts death. With Miss Peregrine trapped in her bird form, the time loop cannot reset, and the children are forced to leave the island. But even though they have lost some of their protection, they have also gained a degree of freedom and meaning. Jacob describes how "Some of them claimed they could feel the difference; the air in their lungs was fuller, the race of blood through their veins faster. They felt more vital, more real." Only through aging and knowing that they won't live indefinitely—that real change, adventure, and even danger are unavoidable—does life become "more real" and more meaningful to the children.



## TRUTH VS. DECEPTION

Throughout the book, characters often lie or withhold the whole truth from one another: Jacob's grandfather doesn't tell Jacob that they both possess magical abilities, Jacob often lies to his dad about his whereabouts when he's on Cairnholm Island, and Miss Peregrine and the children often hide the truth about the dangers threatening them at the magical children's **home**. Even when lies are meant to protect people, they often have severe consequences like breaking trust or putting people in danger anyway. To make matters worse, the book's antagonists—evil beings called hollowgast and wights—often deceive and manipulate others to fulfill their plans to kill all peculiar people. More subtly, a habit of lying, or simply withholding the full truth, can make it harder for others to accept reality in the long run, like when Jacob doesn't believe his grandfather's stories about Miss Peregrine's. It is only when full truths come to light that characters are able to find peace with and build trust in each other. In this way, the book suggests that sometimes lying *seems* necessary to avoid conflict or protect others, but that ultimately there is greater value and virtue in telling the truth directly.

Even though some characters have good reasons for lying or want to protect others, ultimately the book illustrates how damaging those lies can be. When Jacob and his dad travel to Cairnholm island, Jacob constantly lies about where he's going and who he's with—to the point where it becomes "depressingly easy." He does this because he doesn't want his dad to worry about his being alone there, but it comes at the cost of his dad trusting him. Later in the book, when Jacob is deciding whether to stay with the peculiar children or go back to Florida with his parents, he wants to explain everything to his dad, but he feels like he can't. Talking to his dad is "out of the question" because he worries that his dad will only think that he's lying or saying something crazy. In this way, the book demonstrates that lying—even for good reason—is very damaging to relationships in the long run. Meanwhile, Miss Peregrine lies to Jacob and withholds information about the dangers on Cairnholm Island because she worries that telling him the full truth about what the children face might scare Jacob away. However, because he doesn't know the kind of threats he faces, he only narrowly escapes the hollows and wights by sheer luck. Even though her lies are meant to protect Jacob, they actually have the opposite effect by placing him in greater danger.

The book also emphasizes that a habit of telling lies or partial truths can be harmful because it makes people less willing or able to accept the whole truth later on. As he grows up, Jacob doubts his grandfather's stories about the magical children's home and the monsters that his grandfather says are after him. However, when Jacob is 15 years old and his grandfather starts panicking about the monsters coming to find him again, Jacob

and his dad don't believe Abe and instead simply think that he is mentally declining in his old age. Because Abe never told Jacob the full story about their status as peculiars, Jacob dismisses Abe's fears, leaving Abe even more vulnerable to the hollowgast. Later, after Abe is killed by the monster, Jacob thinks over and over, "If only I'd believed him," illustrating how perceived lies ended up having tangible—even dire—consequences for Abe. Jacob also struggles to tell his dad the truth because he knows he's undermined his own credibility so frequently. When he finally decides to tell the truth about what he's been up to on Cairnholm—explaining that he made friends on the other side of the island—Jacob's dad grows furious with him and yells at him, thinking that Jacob is still lying about what he's been doing. This illustrates another problematic aspect of lying—habitual lying makes the truth seem less believable, leading to more conflict.

In the end, the book illustrates how characters are only able to make peace with or support each other when the full truth is revealed, demonstrating the value in being honest. Knowing the full truth about Miss Peregrine's home, the hollowgast, the wights, and Jacob's own peculiar identity is incredibly valuable to Jacob. It allows him to recognize that he isn't going crazy in seeing monsters; moreover, it makes him more willing and able to protect the other children from the hollowgast. Being completely open and honest about the threats a person faces, then, is much more beneficial to everyone than lying in order to protect them. Similarly, when Jacob finally accepts his grandfather's stories about Miss Peregrine's and discovers the truth of his grandfather's history, he is able to make peace with his grandfather's partial truths. He is "moved by this new idea of [his] grandfather, not as a paranoid gun nut or a secretive philanderer or a man who wasn't there for his family, but as a wandering knight who risked his life for others." Only in understanding the full truth—even after his grandfather's death—is Jacob able to fully appreciate his grandfather's sacrifices and heroism, underscoring the truth's value. Jacob finds a degree of closure by telling his dad the truth as well. At the end of the book, Jacob comes fully clean to his dad about Miss Peregrine's home; Emma, Olive, and Millard even show up to prove that Jacob wasn't lying about making friends. While Jacob's dad thinks he might be dreaming, he and Jacob are able to reconcile to an extent—something that only the full truth could bring about.

Finally, some of the characters who lie most frequently include the wights, like Jacob's psychiatrist, Dr. Golan. Dr. Golan has taken on many different personas over the course of Jacob's life; this deception enables him to kill Abe and to track down the other peculiar children through Jacob. Because deception is a major tool for the wights, the book reiterates that lying is villainous and manipulative—it serves evil causes, not virtuous ones.



## SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



### THE HOME

Miss Peregrine's home symbolizes the conflict between protection of the peculiar children (especially from outside threats) and excessive restriction. Initially, when Jacob arrives at Miss Peregrine's home (in the 1940s) and sees all the children playing, he views it as a "paradise." The home is a haven for the kids, allowing them to hide from the wights and hollowgast, as well as from prejudiced ordinary people. Jacob finds the home's atmosphere freeing and begins spending more and more time there.

However, over time, Jacob comes to see how restrictive the home is, noting that the children have endless time but can do little of importance—particularly because the time loop around the home prevents them from aging. One boy, Victor, even decided to leave the home because he was "going mad," and as a result, he was killed by the wights. While this vindicates Miss Peregrine's concern and demonstrates the home's necessity, it also shows how the home's restrictions are so harsh that they can backfire. Miss Avocet's arrival only exacerbates this conflict, because her warning about an impending wight attack prompts Miss Peregrine to put the children on extreme lockdown inside the home. The children grow restless, with Emma stating that "living [cooped up] like this might just be worse than dying." The situation suggests that the house's protection is helpful to a point, until it becomes *too* restrictive, effectively trapping the kids.

The book's conclusion reinforces this idea that the house, while idyllic, is also "a prison." Without Miss Peregrine to reset the time loop, a German bomb strikes the home, and the children are forced to set out in search of another ymbryne. While losing the house has cost them a measure of protection, the children feel freer at the same time, and as a result, "they felt more vital, more real." The ending suggests that losing protection is sometimes worth it to gain freedom.



### PICTURES

Pictures represent Jacob's connection (or lack of connection) to the past. Abe initially shows Jacob photos of the kids at Miss Peregrine's as a way of connecting Jacob with Abe's own childhood (particularly because Jacob is also peculiar, though he doesn't know it at the time). Abe uses pictures as a conduit for stories about growing up at the children's home. But as Jacob grows older and refuses to believe that the photos are real, he also rejects his former sense of connection to his grandfather's past, believing that his

grandfather was largely exaggerating the stories and lying about his upbringing.

Ultimately, Jacob recognizes that the pictures *are* connected to his grandfather's past. As he sorts through an old trunk in Miss Peregrine's **home**, he discovers similar pictures and then meets some of the children who appear in the photos. In doing so, he not only realizes Abe's stories were true, but he also renews his personal connection to his grandfather's past, even entering the world depicted in the photos as he learns more about his own identity as a peculiar.

At the end of the book, the children don't take any photo albums with them as they set out from the house. Instead, Bronwyn takes Miss Peregrine's camera and takes new pictures as they set out on three boats from the island. Jacob comments that perhaps he might one day "have [his] own stack of yellowed photos to show skeptical grandchildren," suggesting that he intends to use future photos as a connection to his own past.



## QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Quirk Books edition of *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* published in 2013.

### Prologue Quotes

☝☝ When I was six I decided that my only chance of having a life half as exciting as Grandpa Portman's was to become an explorer. He encouraged me by spending afternoons at my side hunched over maps of the world, plotting imaginary expeditions with trails of red pushpins and telling me about the fantastic places I would discover one day. At home I made my ambitions known by parading around with a cardboard tube held to my eye, shouting, "Land ho!" and "Prepare a landing party!" until my parents shooed me outside. I think they worried that my grandfather would infect me with some incurable dreaminess from which I'd never recover—that these fantasies were somehow inoculating me against more practical ambitions—so one day my mother sat me down and explained that I couldn't become an explorer because everything in the world had already been discovered. I'd been born in the wrong century, and I felt cheated.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Abe Portman/Jacob's Grandfather, Jacob's Mom, Jacob's Dad

**Related Themes:**   

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 12-13

### Explanation and Analysis

In the book's opening chapter, Jacob explains how, as a child, he always wanted to be an explorer—that is, until his parents shot down the idea. This illustrates how Jacob's childhood, even at six years old, is marked by the idea that he has to follow a set path determined by his parents, leaving him with little agency to pursue his own dreams. While his grandfather encourages him to be independent and find confidence and joy, his parents instead stifle his self-determination and guide him to more "practical ambitions." This is what makes the end of the book so poignant: after meeting the peculiar children, gaining confidence, and leading them to find a new home, Jacob has fulfilled his childhood ambition, becoming an explorer setting out on a grand adventure. Here, however, his parents are leading him away from that confident, independent version of himself.

This underscores one of the ways in which families can be complicated. Jacob's parents want what's best for him, but this is not necessarily what Jacob believes is best for himself. They even lie out of a desire to protect him from "incurable dreaminess," saying that everything in the world has already been discovered. But as a result, his dreams are dashed. This is one of the reasons why Jacob has a much better rapport with his grandfather—his grandfather encourages a more magical version of life, while his parents focus on the mundane.

☝☝ I guess he'd seen it coming—I had to grow out of them eventually—but he dropped the whole thing so quickly it left me feeling like I'd been lied to. I couldn't understand why he'd made up all that stuff, tricked me into believing that extraordinary things were possible when they weren't. It wasn't until a few years later that my dad explained it to me: Grandpa had told him some of the same stories when he was a kid, and they weren't lies, exactly, but exaggerated versions of the truth—because the story of Grandpa Portman's childhood wasn't a fairy tale at all. It was a horror story.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Abe Portman/Jacob's Grandfather, Jacob's Dad

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 20-21

### Explanation and Analysis

When Jacob turns seven, he stops believing in the “fairy tales” that his grandfather tells him, particularly after he starts to get bullied in school for believing in magic. When he confronts his grandfather about this, his grandfather immediately drops the subject. This is a major turning point in Jacob and his grandfather’s relationship; first, it again emphasizes the complicated nature of family—families sometimes bring more pain than joy. Jacob is frustrated, because as much as he idolizes his grandfather, he also feels like he’s been lied to.

And Jacob’s grandfather, for his part, also feels a sense of betrayal. Even though Jacob doesn’t know that he’s peculiar until the end of the book, rejecting the “fairy tales” is a rejection of what Abe and Jacob share, and the fact that Abe dropped it so quickly—given that readers later discover Abe was telling the truth—indicates how hurt he is by Jacob’s words. There is deep love between both of them, but at the same time, they cause each other deep pain.

Second, this quote sets up the problem with lying—or even the perception that someone is being dishonest. Because Jacob believes that Abe was lying or exaggerating about the fantastical home and the magical children, it undermines the trust in their relationship and makes it more difficult for Jacob to believe Abe going forward. This will have dire consequences when a hollowgast is after Abe, showing that dishonesty, even when well-intended, is a bad idea.

☛ Like the monsters, the enchanted-island story was also a truth in disguise. Compared to the horrors of mainland Europe, the children’s home that had taken in my grandfather must’ve seemed like a paradise, and so in his stories it had become one: a safe haven of endless summers and guardian angels and magical children, who couldn’t really fly or turn invisible or lift boulders, of course. The peculiarity for which they’d been hunted was simply their Jewishness. They were orphans of war, washed up on that little island in a tide of blood. What made them amazing wasn’t that they had miraculous powers; that they had escaped the ghettos and gas chambers was miracle enough.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Abe Portman/Jacob’s Grandfather, Jacob’s Dad

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 21

### Explanation and Analysis

When Jacob is growing up, his dad explains that many of Jacob’s grandfather’s stories are exaggerations of what he actually experienced in the midst of World War II. Jacob’s grandfather was the only member of his Jewish family to survive the Holocaust, escaping on a train from Poland to Britain at the outbreak of the war. Here, Jacob believes that Abe’s stories are simply an extended metaphor for the difficulties Jewish children faced growing up in Europe. And while it doesn’t turn out to be entirely true—not all of the children at Miss Peregrine’s home were Jewish—it does contain a great deal of parallels to what the peculiar children had to face.

Like Jewish children, peculiar children were persecuted for their differences. Likewise, the book provides a parallel between the hollowgast (the monsters who need to feast on peculiar flesh) and the Nazis (who made it their mission to exterminate the Jewish people). However, it is also the children’s differences that make them “miraculous.” Those differences allow them to build a community where they belong and find protection. In this way, this comparison emphasizes a major point of the book: that the children’s “peculiarities” are actually what make them special in a world that often tries to target them for those same differences.

### Chapter 2 Quotes

☛ I’m crouched in the corner of my grandfather’s bedroom, amber dusk-light retreating from the windows, pointing a pink plastic BB rifle at the door. An enormous glowing vending machine looms where the bed should be, filled not with candy but rows of razor-sharp tactical knives and armor-piercing pistols. My grandfather’s there in an old British army uniform, feeding the machine dollar bills, but it takes a lot to buy a gun and we’re running out of time. Finally, a .45 spins toward the glass, but before it falls it gets stuck. He swears in Yiddish, kicks the machine, then kneels down and reaches inside to try and grab it, but his arm gets caught. That’s when they come, their long black tongues slithering up the windows, looking for a way in. I point the BB gun at them and pull the trigger, but nothing happens.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Abe Portman/Jacob’s Grandfather, Dr. Golan/The Birder

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 44-45

**Explanation and Analysis**

After Jacob's grandfather is killed by a hollowgast, Jacob has nightmares every night about the monster. His dream encapsulates much of the anxiety that he's been feeling about growing up, layered with a great deal of symbolic meaning. First, the "amber-dusk light" retreating from the windows conveys the hopelessness that Jacob feels about his situation, which is darkening. This contrasts with later passages in the book, particularly when Jacob is at Miss Peregrine's home, that note the brightening sunlight as Jacob grows more confident and optimistic in his life.

The fact that Jacob's grandfather is unable to buy a gun or is running out of time reflects what happened to him in the moments before his death, when he wasn't able to get a weapon to defend himself from the hollowgast. He is defenseless, and Jacob is running out of time to help his grandfather, suggesting that Jacob feels like he can only watch helplessly as the adult in the room tries to get the situation under control.

Next, Jacob's pink plastic BB gun is emblematic of his childhood, where he feels like he's using a toy while the adults are looking for actual guns. The fact that he can't fire the gun symbolizes his lack of confidence—he feels powerless to help his grandfather and believes he lacks the ability to take on the hollows himself. All of these descriptions establish Jacob's starting point of insecurity and lack of self-determination, in contrast with the end of the book, where he is able to pull the trigger and shoot Dr. Golan, literally facing his worst anxieties.

**Chapter 3 Quotes**

☹☹ For the first time in months, I fell into a deep, nightmare-free slumber. I dreamed instead about my grandfather as a boy, about his first night here, a stranger in a strange land, under a strange roof, owing his life to people who spoke a strange tongue. When I awoke, sun streaming through my window, I realized it wasn't just my grandfather's life that Miss Peregrine had saved, but mine, too, and my father's. Today, with any luck, I would finally get to thank her.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Abe Portman/Jacob's Grandfather, Miss Alma Peregrine, Jacob's Dad

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 76**Explanation and Analysis**

The night Jacob and his dad first arrive on the island, Jacob falls into a deep sleep for the first time in a long time as he looks forward to exploring Miss Peregrine's home. First, the passage demonstrates that now that Jacob has been able to determine what he wants to do—to come to Cairnholm and explore his grandfather's history—Jacob has less anxiety and has mitigated some of his nightmares. This reflects how, because he is maturing and gaining independence, he can then grow more confident and optimistic as a result; the sunlight streaming through the window when Jacob wakes symbolizes this positive turn in his life.

Additionally, the book underscores how the home represented a haven for Abe and the other children, which had consequences not only for Abe, but also for Jacob and his father. Jacob is about the age that his grandfather was when he arrived, and he explicitly makes a connection between their situations, foreshadowing how Jacob will also find protection at Miss Peregrine's home. The book's repetition of the word "strange"—a "strange land," a "strange roof," and a "strange tongue"—emphasizes this idea. While "strange" in phrases like this usually means "new" or "foreign," it is also a synonym for "peculiar," reminding readers that the home provided a refuge for the peculiar children to find belonging based on their shared experience of being different.

**Chapter 4 Quotes**

☹☹ It was true, of course, what my dad had said: I did worship my grandfather. There were things about him that I needed to be true, and his being an adulterer was not one of them. When I was a kid, Grandpa Portman's fantastic stories meant it was possible to live a magical life. Even after I stopped believing them, there was still something magical about my grandfather. To have endured all the horrors he did, to have seen the worst of humanity and have your life made unrecognizable by it, to come out of all that the honorable and good and brave person I knew him to be—that was magical. So I couldn't believe he was a liar and a cheater and a bad father. Because if Grandpa Portman wasn't honorable and good, I wasn't sure anyone could be.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Jacob's Dad, Abe Portman/Jacob's Grandfather, Emma Bloom/The Girl

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 92

### Explanation and Analysis

After Jacob's first day exploring Cairnholm and finding few answers about his grandfather's past, Jacob and his dad discuss Jacob's grandfather. Jacob is devastated to learn that Jacob's dad suspected Abe was "a liar and a cheater," because it exposes the difficulties within their relationship and within their family as a whole. First, it shows how devastating deception can be. Because Abe *wasn't* cheating on Jacob's grandmother—Emma was writing to him, but he no longer reciprocated her feelings. And when he took long trips away, it was to hunt down hollowgast, which he couldn't tell the rest of his family. But because he obscured the truth about his trips, it undermined their trust in him—and now, subsequently, has undermined Jacob's trust in him as well. This illustrates the value of telling the truth, because even when a person lies to try and protect people, the mere suggestion that someone is lying can slowly erode trust.

This also exposes the complicated nature of family. Jacob loves—even "worship[s]"—his grandfather. But because of this, Jacob's grandfather also has the ability to devastate his grandson by not living up to Jacob's expectations, even making Jacob believe that no one could be good in the world if his grandfather wasn't. The same is true with Jacob's father: all he wanted was to love Abe and be loved, but because they never found a way to forge a true connection, they only ended up hurting each other.

“I wonder if it doesn't explain something, though. Why he acted so distant when you were little.” Dad gave me a sharp look, and I knew I needed to make my point quickly or risk overstepping. “He'd already lost his family twice before. Once in Poland and then again here—his adopted family. So when you and Aunt Susie came along...”

“Once bombed, twice shy?”

“I'm serious. Don't you think this could mean that maybe he wasn't cheating on Grandma, after all?”

“I don't know, Jake. I guess I don't believe things are ever that simple.” He let out a sigh, breath fogging the inside of his beer glass. “I think I know what all this really explains, though. Why you and Grandpa were so close.”

“Okay...”

“It took him fifty years to get over his fear of having a family. You came along at just the right time.”

I didn't know how to respond. How do you say *I'm sorry your father didn't love you enough* to your own dad? I couldn't, so instead I just said goodnight and headed upstairs to bed.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman, Jacob's Dad (speaker), Abe Portman/Jacob's Grandfather, Aunt Susie

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 101

### Explanation and Analysis

As Jacob and his dad discuss Abe's childhood, Jacob's dad reveals how difficult it was for him to receive the fallout of Abe's wartime trauma while he was growing up. For both Abe and Jacob's dad, this passage illustrates how families can share a great deal of love, but can also pass down a great deal of pain. Abe clearly loved both of his families—his biological family and the adopted family that he found at Miss Peregrine's home. But losing both of those families also brought heartbreak, which he couldn't overcome until he connected with Jacob.

This, in turn, complicated life for Jacob's dad as well. Jacob's dad clearly loved his father, otherwise he would not have been so keen on needing Abe's approval and love. But at the same time, Abe's distance made Jacob's father doubt that his love was truly reciprocated.

Lastly, this also creates trouble between Jacob and his own father. Because while they also want to love and support each other, the fact that they see these situations so differently—and seem unable to bridge the divide or truly comfort each other, like when Jacob feels that he can't

reach out to his father to tell him that Abe loved him—puts them at a distance as well. Through these three characters, the book illustrates the myriad ways in which family can be a source of both unconditional love and deep, generations-long conflict.

## Chapter 5 Quotes

“I couldn’t stop myself, so I thought about all the bad things and I fed it and fed it until I was crying so hard I had to gasp for breath between sobs. I thought about how my great-grandparents had starved to death. I thought about their wasted bodies being fed to incinerators because people they didn’t know hated them. I thought about how the children who lived in this house had been burned up and blown apart because a pilot who didn’t care pushed a button. I thought about how my grandfather’s family had been taken from him, and how because of that my dad grew up feeling like he didn’t have a dad, and now I had acute stress and nightmares and was sitting alone in a falling-down house and crying hot, stupid tears all over my shirt. All because of a seventy-year-old hurt that had somehow been passed down to me like some poisonous heirloom, and monsters I couldn’t fight because they were all dead, beyond killing or punishing or any kind of reckoning. At least my grandfather had been able to join the army and go fight them. What could I do?”

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Abe Portman/Jacob’s Grandfather, Jacob’s Dad

**Related Themes:**   

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 108

### Explanation and Analysis

When Jacob explores Miss Peregrine’s home for the second time, he looks around Abe’s old bedroom and considers all the pain that Abe and his family have endured because of the events that took place in that room. This passage touches on many of the major themes—the first of which is the idea that magic, while making the children different and therefore vulnerable to intolerance, also gave them a place in which they belonged—the children’s home. And though Jacob doesn’t yet realize it, it is precisely their magical abilities that protected them from the outside world, even as it made them targets.

Additionally, Jacob’s thoughts underscore the idea that families can be complicated. Though he loves his father and

grandfather and they loved him and one another, the remark that a “seventy-year-old hurt had somehow been passed down to [him] like some poisonous heirloom” indicates that in addition to the love that was passed down through his family, there is also a great deal of pain that has been passed down as well.

Lastly, this passage addresses some of Jacob’s insecurities, and in so doing, it hints at how some of the impending conflict will help him mature and overcome those insecurities. Jacob’s sadness here stems from his own mind, as he feeds and feeds these sad thoughts so much that he makes himself cry. Once again he feels helpless, unsure of how to face the ancient monsters his grandfather faced and unable to join the army and fight them directly. This hints at how part of Jacob’s coming of age involves fighting his insecurities and facing the monsters of his nightmares—the hollowgast—which will ultimately spark his confidence and bravery, in contrast to this moment of weakness.

## Chapter 6 Quotes

“But the larger world turned against us long ago. The Muslims drove us out. The Christians burned us as witches. Even the pagans of Wales and Ireland eventually decided that we were all malevolent faeries and shape-shifting ghosts.”

“So why didn’t you just—I don’t know—make your own country somewhere? Go and live by yourselves?”

“If only it had been that simple,” she said. “Peculiar traits often skip a generation, or ten. Peculiar children are not always, or even usually, born to peculiar parents, and peculiar parents do not always, or even usually bear peculiar children. Can you imagine, in a world so afraid of otherness, why this would be a danger to all peculiar-kind?”

“Because normal parents would be freaked out if their kids started to, like, throw fire?”

“Exactly, Mr. Portman. The peculiar offspring of common parents are often abused and neglected in the most horrific ways.”

**Related Characters:** Miss Alma Peregrine, Jacob Portman (speaker)

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 154

### Explanation and Analysis

When Jacob arrives at Miss Peregrine's, the headmistress explains why it's necessary for the home to exist. She illustrates that people who have any differences are often singled out, discriminated against, and mistreated for those differences, in the way that the peculiar children are—even drawing on real-life historical examples to prove the point that people who were thought “peculiar” or different were often targets of persecution. This mistreatment even stemmed from people who were supposed to love the children, like their parents. And so, in this way, the other peculiar children become their new families because their own families disown, abuse, or neglect them. This suggests that adopted families can be just as crucial and supportive—or sometimes even more so—than biological family members.

Earlier in the book, the novel drew a connection between Jewish children and the peculiar children because they were both targeted for their differences. But here it also draws parallels with other kinds of differences among people—any different abilities, challenges, or identities that might distinguish children from those around them or from their families. These parallels again reinforce how cruel it is to abuse or neglect children, especially for anything that simply makes them different.

☛ Then it was my turn. I was sixteen, I told them. I saw a few kids' eyes widen. Olive laughed in surprise. It was strange to them that I should be so young, but what was strange to me was how young *they* seemed. I knew plenty of eighty-year-olds in Florida, and these kids acted nothing like them. It was as if the constance of their lives here, the unvarying days—this perpetual deathless summer—had arrested their emotions as well as their bodies, sealing them in their youth like Peter Pan and his Lost Boys.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Olive

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 170

### Explanation and Analysis

When Jacob spends the day with the peculiar children, they are amazed to learn that Jacob is so young, while he in turn is amazed that they are so old. This quote thus introduces some of the discussion surrounding mortality and meaning that runs throughout the book. Even though the children

essentially live an immortal life, they do so by constantly reliving the same day over and over, freezing them in time in the way that Jacob describes here. Because they never age, they aren't able to find the meaning in life that stems from growing up, changing, and knowing that life will end. While Jacob's story is meaningful because he is maturing and progressing, the fact that the children don't age suggests that their lives, as they exist now, aren't as meaningful.

Comparing the children to Peter Pan and the Lost Boys is a particularly salient comparison, which the book has already hinted at because *Peter Pan* was on the bookshelf at the children's home when Jacob first discovered the house. Like the peculiars, Peter Pan and the Lost Boys don't age, and in Peter's story, this is represented in a bittersweet or even tragic way. Wendy, another character who lives in London but who joins Peter in Neverland for a period of time, chooses not to stay with Peter, knowing that it would be more meaningful for her to grow up.

By the end of the book, the peculiar children fulfill this idea. Only by growing up, and by facing the fact that they might someday die, do the children find more meaning in life. Whereas life in the home is fun but repetitive and stagnant, living and exploring the world outside Miss Peregrine's home becomes a true adventure for them.

☛ Falling asleep, my thoughts drifted to the peculiar children and the first question they'd asked after Miss Peregrine had introduced me: *Is Jacob going to stay with us?* At the time I'd thought, *Of course not.* But why not? If I never went home, what exactly would I be missing? I pictured my cold cavernous house, my friendless town full of bad memories, the utterly unremarkable life that had been mapped out for me. It had never once occurred to me, I realized, to refuse it.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Miss Alma Peregrine

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 181

### Explanation and Analysis

The first night after meeting the peculiar children, Jacob considers for the first time that he might be able to determine his own future. This is a major shift in thinking for Jacob, who has, up until this point, felt an impending sense of doom because he believed that his future was completely

decided for him, and that he would have to work at his mom's family's drug store chain. Jacob views this version of his life with trepidation, because to him it is of a piece with his "cold cavernous house" and his "friendless town." All of these are aspects of his childhood that have left him feeling powerless to change his life, and, as such, without confidence.

Here, however, Jacob starts to realize that he can reclaim some of that agency. As he gains friends and realizes that they want him to stay with them, Jacob gains confidence. This in turn bolsters his belief that he can take control of his own life. The fact that he feels like his "unremarkable life" has been "mapped out" for him is particularly notable, because this language calls back to Jacob's interest in exploring as a child. His life as it stands is safe and predictable, making him unhappy. But without the "map," Jacob is free to explore, fulfilling his initial dream of exploration and allowing him to determine his own path instead. This is a key part of his coming of age, and one that he will continue to foster as the book goes on.

## Chapter 8 Quotes

☛ Yes, it was beautiful and life was good, but if every day were exactly alike and if the kids really couldn't leave, as Miss Peregrine had said, then this place wasn't just a heaven but a kind of prison, too. It was just so hypnotizingly pleasant that it might take a person years to notice, and by then it would be too late; leaving would be too dangerous.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Miss Alma Peregrine, Abe Portman/Jacob's Grandfather, Victor

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 213

### Explanation and Analysis

The more time Jacob spends with the peculiar children, the more Jacob realizes that even though their lives appear idyllic from the outside, they also have immense drawbacks. In this passage, the book underscores how even though the home has protective qualities, its protection also comes with intense restriction. This is why Jacob calls it a "prison"—because the children have endless time but can do little of consequence, causing them to grow restless.

The passage foreshadows Jacob's later discoveries about

his grandfather and Victor, both of whom decided that the home's protection wasn't worth the restriction and decided to leave—essentially making the protection moot, because leaving is, as Jacob notes, "too dangerous" for those who've lived such sheltered lives.

The book again adds to the overall idea that the children's lives, though they are immortal, do not have as much meaning as they might have in the outside world. Even though it is "hypnotizingly pleasant," it is this fact that makes it so dangerous—it lulls the kids into a state of perpetual enjoyment, but one that doesn't allow them to savor the growth that results from overcoming hardships. Jacob suggests here that part of what makes life meaningful, then, is living it out knowing that it *will* end, which is something the peculiar children can't really do.

☛ I considered the idea. The sun, the feasts, the friends... and the sameness, the perfect identical days. You can get sick of anything if you have too much of it, like all the petty luxuries my mother bought and quickly grew bored with.

But Emma. There was Emma. Maybe it wasn't so strange, what we could have. Maybe I could stay for a while and love her and then go home. But no. By the time I wanted to leave, it would be too late. She was a siren. I had to be strong.

"It's him you want, not me. I can't be him for you."

She looked away, stung. "That isn't why you should stay. You belong here, Jacob."

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman, Emma Bloom/The Girl (speaker), Abe Portman/Jacob's Grandfather, Jacob's Mom, Jacob's Dad

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 244

### Explanation and Analysis

One day, while Jacob is at the children's home spending time with Emma, she asks him to stay with them in the home rather than return to his own time period. Jacob's response to this question explores several of the book's primary themes. First, it reinforces the idea that just because the children have immortality doesn't necessarily mean that their lives are more meaningful. Jacob ties their situation to his mother's, who flippantly spends money but who doesn't actually gain meaning or happiness out of material pleasures because they are so common in her life. This

suggests that perpetual contentment or security doesn't necessarily make for a purposeful life, as Jacob's dad proves as well—he's financially secure, but he has little direction and is unhappy as a result.

Jacob also understands that part of what he would gain from a life on the island is a new adopted family—one that makes him feel better about himself and helps him gain confidence. At the same time, by calling Emma a "siren," Jacob indicates that he knows this vision of life is seductive, but that it would ultimately be unfulfilling because none of these relationships or pursuits would go anywhere. (Sirens were figures in Greek mythology that lured sailors to shipwreck with their sweet singing.)

Finally, Emma's response reinforces the idea that magic provides Jacob with a greater sense of belonging. In telling him that he belongs there, she suggests that Jacob is peculiar too, and as such, he can be a part of their family. She later reveals that the thing that has always made him different and an outcast among his peers and family—believing in his grandfather's stories and being able to see the monsters—is the thing that makes him peculiar like them.

## Chapter 9 Quotes

☝☝ She turned serious. "They don't know where to find us. That and they can't enter loops. So we're safe on the island—but we can't leave."

"But Victor did."

She nodded sadly. "He said he was going mad here. Said he couldn't stand it any longer. Poor Bronwyn. My Abe left, too, but at least he wasn't murdered by hollows."

I forced myself to look at her. "I'm really sorry to have to tell you this..."

"What? Oh no."

"They convinced me it was wild animals. But if what you're saying is true, my grandfather was murdered by them, too. The first and only time I saw one was the night he died."

**Related Characters:** Emma Bloom/The Girl, Jacob Portman (speaker), Victor, Abe Portman/Jacob's Grandfather, Bronwyn

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 247-248

## Explanation and Analysis

After Jacob discovers Victor's dead body in the children's home, he asks Emma about what happened to him—and he discovers that Victor left the loop because he was going crazy cooped up in the home and was subsequently killed by a hollowgast. This illustrates how the home is a symbol of protection, but it is also a place of confinement for the peculiar children. While the home is a haven, its restrictions—of not being able to age, of not being able to leave the island—can be devastating to the children's health in other ways.

In this way, the book suggests that the home's protection has its limitations. If it is so confining that people feel they have to leave in order to feel fulfilled and free and have meaningful lives, then the promise of immortality and protection that the home offers is actually a burden. This is not only what happened to Victor, but as Jacob notes, it is also what happened to his grandfather when he decided to leave the children's home. Victor and Abe found more meaning in pursuing life outside the children's home, even though they knew that death was possible, and it eventually caught up to both of them. This suggests that life has more profound meaning when one accepts the inevitability of death, and that the benefits of protection in the home do not outweigh the restrictions that detract from a meaningful life.

☝☝ I was moved by this new idea of my grandfather, not as a paranoiac gun nut or a secretive philanderer or a man who wasn't there for his family, but as a wandering knight who risked his life for others, living out of cars and cheap motels, stalking lethal shadows, coming home shy a few bullets and marked with bruises he could never quite explain and nightmares he couldn't talk about. For his many sacrifices, he received only scorn and suspicion from those he loved.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Abe Portman/Jacob's Grandfather, Miss Alma Peregrine, Jacob's Dad

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 255

## Explanation and Analysis

When Miss Peregrine reveals more about Abe's life and the sacrifices he made to help other peculiars fight hollowgast and wights, Jacob shifts his thinking about his grandfather.

Earlier in the book he had already adjusted his conception of Abe when Jacob's dad raised questions about Jacob's grandfather's fidelity to his grandmother. Because Jacob's grandfather was not fully honest with Jacob's father, it led Jacob's dad to be skeptical of Abe, which undermined their relationship. This illustrates the problems with not being fully open with other people and why the truth is so important. Only in understanding the full truth about his grandfather, as Jacob does in this passage, is Jacob able to recognize his heroism and the sacrifices that he made.

Moreover, this quote illustrates again the different reasons that families can be so complicated. Now knowing the full truth about Jacob's grandfather's bravery, Jacob understands why his dad and Abe had such a difficult time relating to each other. Jacob's grandfather also felt responsible for his chosen family—the peculiars. As a result, Jacob's grandfather often seemed distant, while Jacob's dad resented Abe for it. Their experience suggests that while both biological and chosen families can be vital to a person, it's often difficult to balance one's obligations to both.

restrictive as to make life essentially meaningless for them because they cannot progress. However, the solution that the hollowgast find here, the book suggests, is not a proper alternative.

The book has already illustrated why the idea of immortality is so appealing—Jacob finds safety and comfort in being at the home, inside the time loop, and free from all responsibility. The game that the children play, “Raid the Village,” also demonstrates that they have a great deal of liberty because their actions have little consequence. But when Miss Peregrine explains that the hollowgast are “disaffected peculiars with dangerous ideas” who “perverted” the time loops, it immediately suggests that those who decided that they wanted to try and master time are associated with harmful and even villainous ideas. And finding true immortality does not actually give their life purpose, as they become soulless monsters. In portraying them this way, the book suggests that attempting to avoid death completely is both morally wrong and ultimately devoid of meaning.

Some years ago, around the turn of the last century, a splinter faction emerged among our people—a coterie of disaffected peculiars with dangerous ideas. They believed they had discovered a method by which the function of time loops could be perverted to confer upon the user a kind of immortality; not merely the suspension of aging, but the reversal of it. They spoke of eternal youth enjoyed outside the confines of loops, of jumping back and forth from future to past with impunity, suffering none of the ill effects that have always prevented such recklessness—in other words, of mastering time without being mastered by death.

Others might call the state of being they subsequently assumed a kind of living damnation. Weeks later there began a series of attacks upon peculiars by awful creatures who, apart from their shadows, could not be seen except by peculiars like yourself—our very first clashes with the hollowgast. It was some time before we realized that these tentacle-mawed abominations were in fact our wayward brothers, crawled from the smoking crater left behind by their experiment. Rather than becoming gods, they had transformed themselves into devils.

**Related Characters:** Miss Alma Peregrine (speaker), Jacob Portman

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 258-259

### Explanation and Analysis

When Miss Peregrine finally tells Jacob about the hollowgast and the threat they pose, she explains their origins in trying to master time and death. First, these ideas again reinforce the problems that the peculiar children have been facing at the home. Even though they technically do not age, their inability to leave the time loops is so

**Related Characters:** Miss Alma Peregrine (speaker), Jacob Portman, Enoch, Dr. Golan/The Birder

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 259-260

### Explanation and Analysis

As Miss Peregrine gives more background on the hollowgast, she highlights how their quest for true immortality actually rendered them soulless monsters. The hollowgast's failed experiment suggests that attempts to live forever will only lead people to a horrific distortion of life. Just as the peculiar children's lives are largely meaningless because they cannot grow, the hollowgast experience an even worse version of this idea—by avoiding death, they destroy any vestige of meaningful life inside

them. It's particularly notable that the hollowgast were once peculiar, and in seeking true immortality they became "living damnation[s]" and "abominations"; "devils" rather than "gods." In this way, the book emphasizes that trying to achieve immortality ends up backfiring in a grotesque way.

In essence, as Miss Peregrine notes, they are trying to be gods, controlling their own lives in such a way so that they never die—and later in the book Dr. Golan states that he wants to use this power to rule over common, non-peculiar people. But the book has already suggested that characters who try and give themselves god-like status are usually not wholly good. Enoch is another character who has that kind of power, and as a result he is often portrayed as sinister, torturing clay soldiers that he has animated simply because he has the ability to grant and take away life. In this way, the book creates a parallel between the hollows and Enoch, showing how the ability to control life and death is not a virtuous characteristic for the peculiars or anyone else. Instead, it turns them into beings with little purpose other than to commit their evil deeds.

communicated by the fact that he wants some "tidbit of parental advice" and wants to be able to go back to that unremarkable version of himself. But now, he realizes that his relationship with his dad has crossed a threshold from which he cannot return, just as he cannot return to his innocent childhood after having learned so much about the peculiar children and his grandfather.

Second, the passage demonstrates the issues with Jacob's perpetual lying streak. Up until this point, he has been constantly lying and stretching the truth about what he's been up to at the children's home. And now that Jacob wants to tell his father the entire truth about what's happening, he instead chooses to talk about nothing, presumably because Jacob knows that his father won't believe him. Having lied so much up to this point, including about his having imaginary friends, it seems impossible that his dad would take fantastical-sounding stories very well. In this way, the book emphasizes that lying is problematic because of the way it undermines trust and makes it harder to believe a person in the future.

☝ I wanted to explain everything, and for him to tell me he understood and offer some tidbit of parental advice. I wanted, in that moment, for everything to go back to the way it had been before we came here; before I ever found that letter from Miss Peregrine, back when I was just a sort-of-normal messed-up rich kid in the suburbs. Instead, I sat next to my dad for awhile and talked about nothing, and I tried to remember what my life had been like in that unfathomably distant era that was four weeks ago, or imagine what it might be like four weeks from now—but I couldn't. Eventually we ran out of nothing to talk about, and I excused myself and went upstairs to be alone.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Jacob's Dad, Miss Alma Peregrine

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 268

### Explanation and Analysis

After Jacob has learned about the peculiar children, the hollows and wights, and the evil beings that might be arriving on the island to go after the peculiar children, Jacob returns to the present to find his dad drunk at the Priest Hole. This moment captures two key aspects of Jacob's journey thus far in the book. First, it shows how much he has already matured. Whereas his childhood was marked by a lack of self-determination, agency, and confidence, now Jacob is much more self-sufficient. This is particularly

## Chapter 10 Quotes

☝ *Are you joking? You couldn't even protect yourself in high school! You had to bribe that redneck to be your bodyguard. And you'd wet your pants if you so much as pointed a real gun at anyone. No, I wouldn't.*

*You're weak. You're a loser. That's why he never told you who you really were. He knew you couldn't handle it.*

*Shut up. Shut up.*

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Abe Portman/Jacob's Grandfather, Ricky

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 271

### Explanation and Analysis

When Jacob is considering whether to return to his family in the present or to stay with the peculiar children, he wonders whether he can live a similar kind of life like the one his grandfather had. However, in response, a self-deprecating voice begins explaining to Jacob why he's not in a position to be able to defend himself, unlike his grandfather. This exchange, in which Jacob calls himself "weak" and a "loser," illustrates how, as much as Jacob has already matured on the island, he still lacks some of the confidence that he will ultimately gain by the end of the

book. Particularly with his grandfather gone, Jacob feels unprotected and rather helpless, and this is impeding his ability to grow up and make his own decisions about the future.

Additionally, this passage illustrates the value of the truth and the true toll of lying. Because Jacob's grandfather wasn't completely open with him about the monsters that lurked in his life, Jacob often doubted his grandfather and their trust flagged, particularly after Abe's death. At the same time, this passage demonstrates that Abe's withholding information—even though it was meant to protect Jacob—even detrimentally affects Jacob's vision of *himself*. He believes, because of his grandfather's deception, that he wasn't worthy of knowing the truth, causing him to have even less confidence. In this way, the book illustrates yet another reason why it's important to have honest relationships, because lying or deception is never worth the damage that occurs when a person discovers those lies.

☝ Emma stood up and shut the door. "She won't kill us," she said, "those things will. And if they don't, living like this might just be worse than dying. The Bird's got us cooped up so tight we can hardly breathe, and all because she doesn't have the spleen to face whatever's out there!"

**Related Characters:** Emma Bloom/The Girl (speaker), Jacob Portman, Miss Alma Peregrine, Miss Avocet

**Related Themes:**   

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 282

### Explanation and Analysis

After Miss Avocet arrives and Miss Peregrine confines the children to the home, making them unable to leave at all, Jacob and several other peculiars—including Emma, Bronwyn, and Enoch—determine that they have to do something in order to protect themselves from what seems like an inevitable wight attack. The fact that Emma is defying Miss Peregrine, who has always been their mentor and caretaker, is notable. It illustrates how even though Emma is essentially an immortal being, she—like Jacob—is also finding the confidence to make her own decisions for the first time in her life. She is technically in her 80s, but up until now, she has been content to listen to whatever Miss Peregrine says. Now, Emma has gained the confidence and the maturity to make her own choices.

Moreover, Emma's statements emphasize that even though the restrictions being placed on them at the home are meant for their safety, these restrictions, in reality, are having the opposite effect that they are meant to. Immortality means nothing to Emma if she and the other peculiars can't pursue things or enjoy activities that are meaningful to them. The idea of making progress in one's life—even knowing that a person might die—is what makes life meaningful in the first place. In this way, the book suggests that only living out a full life—not one that prioritizes safety over any other experience—can a person be satisfied.

☝ *I killed it, I thought. I really killed it. All the time I'd spent being afraid, I never dreamed I could actually kill one!*

It made me feel powerful. Now I could defend myself. I knew I'd never be as strong as my grandfather, but I wasn't a gutless weakling, either. I could *kill* them.

I tested out the words. "It's dead. I *killed* it."

I laughed. Emma hugged me, pressing her cheek against mine. "I know he would've been proud of you," she said.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman, Emma Bloom/The Girl (speaker), Abe Portman/Jacob's Grandfather, Malthus

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 307

### Explanation and Analysis

When Jacob kills the hollowgast Malthus, he is overcome with pride at his achievement. For so long, Jacob was plagued by insecurity that he would never be able to stand up to the hollowgast—particularly when these creatures had plagued his nightmares for so long. After idolizing his grandfather, it's clear that Jacob never thought he could truly measure up. Even in this same chapter, Jacob's inner voice tormented him by telling him that he was too weak and too much of a loser to be able to kill the hollowgast and live the kind of life that he wanted to lead.

Yet here, all of that has changed. Jacob has found a new confidence, both spurred by and then reinforced by friends like Emma and the other peculiar children. She also knows how important Abe was to Jacob, and so her statement that Abe would have been proud is crucial because it shows that Jacob can not only measure up to his grandfather's legacy, but he can also stand tall in his own way. He can be "powerful." Even though he is "test[ing] out the words" in

surprise, Jacob has earned them with his brave deeds and choices (like luring Malthus away from Emma so that Jacob could face the hollow himself). Emma's statement acknowledges the momentousness of the occasion, as Jacob is finally able to defend himself and the people he cares about after years of feeling helpless and isolated. He is finally coming of age.

☛☛ "Is this what you want?" Golan shouted. "Go ahead, burn me! The birds will burn, too! Shoot me and I'll throw them over the side!"

"Not if I shoot you in the head!"

He laughed. "You couldn't fire a gun if you wanted to. You forget, I'm intimately familiar with your poor, fragile psyche. It'd give you nightmares."

I tried to imagine it: curling my finger around the trigger and squeezing; the recoil and the awful report. What was so hard about that? Why did my hand shake just thinking about it? How many wights had my grandfather killed? Dozens? Hundreds? If he were here instead of me, Golan would be dead already, laid out while he'd been squatting against the rail in a daze. It was an opportunity I'd already wasted; a split-second of gutless indecision that might've cost the ymbrynes their lives.

**Related Characters:** Dr. Golan/The Birder, Jacob Portman (speaker), Emma Bloom/The Girl, Miss Alma Peregrine, Miss Avocet, Abe Portman/Jacob's Grandfather

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 324

### Explanation and Analysis

When Jacob and Emma finally confront Dr. Golan, Jacob points a gun at the man—who threatens to toss Miss Peregrine and Miss Avocet into the ocean in a bird cage. Jacob's hesitation ties back to his old insecurities—particularly his nightmares about his inability to protect his grandfather because he doesn't have the confidence to face his fears. Just like in the dream Dr. Golan references, Jacob seems unable to shoot Dr. Golan, potentially costing Miss Peregrine and Miss Avocet their lives. By facing down Dr. Golan (who knows Jacob's insecurities in detail), Jacob is literally confronting his anxieties, as he worries that he doesn't have the maturity or bravery to stand up to his nightmares.

Yet at the same time, Jacob is comparing his 16-year-old self to his adult grandfather, who, when Jacob knew him, had already been through a war and then spent his life

hunting the hollowgast and wights. Part of Jacob's coming of age process is in developing the confidence to know that he can do what needs to be done, even if he is afraid of what might happen. And Jacob is able to overcome his fears of weakness—he does shoot Dr. Golan shortly after this exchange, when the wight threatens to kill Emma as well. In this way, the book demonstrates that Jacob has come of age—he has gained the confidence to conquer his own insecurities and complete his journey of growing up.

## Chapter 11 Quotes

☛☛ I decided I was done lying. "I'm fine, Dad. I was with my friends."

It was like I'd pulled the pin on a grenade.

"YOUR FRIENDS ARE IMAGINARY!" he shouted. He came toward me, his face turning red. "I wish your mother and I had never let that crackpot therapist talk us into bringing you out here, because it has been an unmitigated disaster. You just lied to me for the last time! Now get in your room and start packing. We're on the next ferry!" [...]

I wondered for a moment if I would have to run from him. I pictured my dad holding me down, calling for help, loading me onto the ferry with my arms locked in a straightjacket.

"I'm not coming with you," I said.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman, Jacob's Dad (speaker), Jacob's Mom, Dr. Golan/The Birder, Emma Bloom/The Girl, Olive, Millard Nullings

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 344

### Explanation and Analysis

When Jacob decides to venture out with the peculiar children to save Miss Avocet, he tells his dad that he has been spending time with friends—which enrages his dad because Jacob has lied so often about what he's been doing on Cairnholm. This exchange illustrates how damaging Jacob's lies and deceptions have been, to the point where his dad no longer trusts Jacob even when he's telling the truth. This has been an enormous rupture in their relationship, and Jacob coming clean about it is a key step in repairing it, even though it makes his father angry at first. It is only when Olive, Emma, and Millard visit Jacob's dad that he finally accepts the truth. This suggests that only when

the full truth comes out can characters get full resolution and rebuild relationships—but a foundation of lies makes it much harder, if not impossible.

Moreover, this passage illustrates just how much Jacob has matured. He is making his own choices here rather than listening to his father, mother, or Dr. Golan and letting them determine his every move. His fear that his father will send him home on the ferry in a straightjacket echoes this idea. Jacob no longer needs the restrictions that come with dependent childhood; instead, he needs his own agency as the young adult he has become.

☛ We were quiet but excited. The children hadn't slept, but you wouldn't have known it to look at them. It was September fourth, and for the first time in a very long time, the days were moving again. Some of them claimed they could feel the difference; the air in their lungs was fuller, the race of blood through their veins faster. They felt more vital, more real.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Miss Alma Peregrine

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 351

### Explanation and Analysis

This passage, which occurs in the book's final pages, takes place after Miss Peregrine has been kidnapped and seems unable to turn back into a human from her bird form—which disrupts the time loop. With this unprecedented disaster, the house becomes vulnerable to the bombing, and the children return to find their home destroyed. The house has always been a symbol of both protection and restriction, and now, without the house, the peculiar children feel this even more keenly. They have lost their immortality—for the first time in a long time, it is September fourth and their lives are progressing—but at the same time, they feel much more liberated: “more vital, more real,” knowing that it will someday end. They feel this quite viscerally, as the book uses language that refers to their bodies—their lungs, their veins—to suggest that now that their bodies are actually aging, they feel more alive because they know their lives and their bodies will not last forever.

Jacob's decision to join the peculiar children also underscores Jacob's journey from anxious, self-doubting kid

to self-assured young adult. He has become the explorer that he always wanted to be, choosing his own path and setting out with the children for a new adventure. Moreover, while the book is largely Jacob's coming of age story, in many ways it's also the children's coming of age story as a whole, as they find their own confidence and determine their own path rather than letting Miss Peregrine control their lives indefinitely.

☛ In the next boat, I saw Bronwyn wave and raise Miss Peregrine's camera to her eye. I smiled back. We'd brought none of the old photo albums with us; maybe this would be the first picture in a brand new one. It was strange to think that one day I might have my own stack of yellowed photos to show skeptical grandchildren—and my own fantastic stories to share. Then Bronwyn lowered the camera and raised her arm, pointing at something beyond us. In the distance, black against the rising sun, a silent procession of battleships punctuated the horizon.

We rowed faster.

**Related Characters:** Jacob Portman (speaker), Bronwyn, Miss Alma Peregrine, Miss Avocet

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:**  

**Page Number:** 352

### Explanation and Analysis

In the book's final passage, the children set out to save Miss Avocet, who has been taken captive by the wights. The passage is full of symbolic meaning, providing a mirror to the beginning of the novel, in which Abe related to Jacob through photos. Through most of the novel, photos represented a connection to the past, illustrating that the children were stuck in the home like snapshots, never moving forward, never changing. But now, Jacob views the photos as a connection to the future, as they document the passage of time instead of the stagnant past.

The fact that Jacob refers to his future grandchildren also reflects the importance of the choice that he and the other children are making: they know that they will get older; they no longer have immortality. But being able to do that gives their lives meaning, as they find poignancy in being able—like Jacob—to think about the things that will make life worthwhile in the future, like grandchildren. This is the choice that Abe made when he left: to have children and

grandchildren and find meaning in that progress in his life, even though it also meant that he would someday die.

The final words in the book also emphasize the journey that Jacob and the other peculiar children have gone on. The peculiar children emerge into the world with some

trepidation—facing the dark ships on the horizon. But at the same time, they are sailing into the rising sun, reflecting their optimism, confidence, and the potential for a meaningful and bright future even in the face of danger.



## SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

## PROLOGUE

Jacob's life can be split into two parts: before extraordinary things started happening to him, and after. The first extraordinary event in his life involved his grandfather, Abe Portman, whom Jacob always found fascinating and whom he admired for having an amazing life. His grandfather spoke several different languages, lived in an orphanage, fought in the army in World War II, and performed in circuses—all facts which are incredible to Jacob, who has never traveled outside Florida.

When Jacob is six, he figures the only way to have an exciting life like his grandfather is to become an explorer, and he spends much of his childhood poring over world maps and planning expeditions. He often pretends to sail ships or discover land. His parents worry that his grandfather will “infect [him] with some incurable dreaminess,” and so his mom tells Jacob that he can't become an explorer because everything has already been discovered.

As Jacob gets older, he realizes that many of his grandfather's stories aren't true. For example, his grandfather said he was born in Poland but then was sent to Wales at 12 because “monsters were after him.” When Jacob asks about the monsters, his grandfather describes tentacled beasts that stank and hunched over. He also tells tales about life in the Welsh orphanage, which aimed to keep the children safe from the monsters. Everyone was protected by a “wise old bird,” he said.

At seven years old, Jacob starts to question his grandfather about the children's **home**, asking why the monsters wanted to hurt them. Jacob's grandfather explains that they were “peculiar”—one girl could fly, one boy had bees that lived inside him, and there were two siblings who were very strong. Jacob's grandfather pulls out an old cigar box with **photographs** of the kids. One depicts a suit with no person in it, a child named Millard who could turn invisible; another picture shows a levitating girl. In another, a skinny boy named Victor lifts a massive boulder over his head.

*The book opens by referencing the extraordinary experiences Jacob will have over the course of the book. It also alludes to Jacob's eventual coming of age, including the idea that Jacob is able to escape the ordinary life he had growing up and subsequently lead a more extraordinary life—like the one led by his grandfather, who has had a big influence on Jacob.*



*This passage foreshadows the book's conclusion, in which Jacob—with his grandfather's help—is able to choose his own path and explore the wider world. In contrast, here, Jacob's childhood involves his parents essentially trying to determine his future for him, rather than allow him to embrace the “dreaminess” that his grandfather instills in him (something they describe as an unwanted “infection”).*



*Jacob's grandfather's stories begin to sound like fairy tales as Jacob grows up. Jacob even assumes that his grandfather is lying, which sows mistrust and thereby damages their relationship later on. Jacob's loss of trust in his grandfather's stories demonstrates how even the perception of dishonesty can be detrimental to a relationship.*



*At this point, the truth about Jacob's grandfather's stories isn't yet clear, but the photos suggest that these kids were somehow special and uniquely set apart from the “monsters” that wanted to hurt them. In using a euphemistic word like “peculiar,” the book suggests more broadly that people are often targeted for their differences or “peculiarities,” but that these differences can actually make them special, build bonds between them, and protect them.*



The last **photo** is the weirdest: it shows the back of someone's head, which reveals another face. Jacob thinks the face is painted on, but his grandfather insists that the paint is just for show and the boy actually had two mouths. Jacob's grandfather is very earnest, and so Jacob believes him for a few years because he *wants* to, just like other kids his age want to believe in Santa Claus.

After a few years, however, other kids start making fun of Jacob for believing in fairies, and one boy even pulls Jacob's pants down over it. That same afternoon, when Jacob's grandfather picks him up from school, Jacob insists that he doesn't believe in his fairy stories anymore. Jacob's grandfather is confused, explaining that his stories weren't about fairies. Jacob counters that they are fairy tales for "babies," and that he knows the **photos** and stories aren't real. Jacob's grandfather lets the matter drop, and Jacob feels like he's been lied to.

Years later, Jacob's dad explains the truth: his grandfather's stories aren't lies, exactly, but exaggerations—the true stories are much more horrific. At 12 years old, Grandpa Portman was the only member of his family who escaped Poland before World War II broke out. The rest of his family would all be dead by the time he turned 16, killed by monsters in military uniforms rather than those with rotting skin and tentacles.

The children's **home**, by contrast, felt like a magical paradise to Jacob's grandfather. The children didn't really have fantastical abilities—"the peculiarity for which they'd been hunted was simply their Jewishness." What made them incredible was that they were able to escape the horrors that plagued so many of their families and neighbors. Hearing this, Jacob doesn't ask for any more monster stories; he's ashamed that he envied his grandfather for having an interesting life, considering the truth. Instead, Jacob tries to feel lucky for the "safe and unextraordinary" life he's had—until something extraordinary happens when he is 15.

*On some level, Jacob knows that his grandfather's stories are exaggerations or lies. In noting that Jacob clings to a childlike belief in his grandfather for a few years, the book foreshadows how this will become a point of contention between them in the future, suggesting that the perception of dishonesty will hurt their relationship.*



*This passage illustrates the origin of some of Jacob's confidence issues, as his connection to anything different or "peculiar" makes him feel singled out, too. The fact that he is bullied at school reinforces his feelings of inadequacy—feelings which only grow over the years. Moreover, Jacob's rejection of the photos symbolizes his dismissal of his grandfather's past. The subsequent silence between them illustrates how family dynamics can both come with great bonds of love but also deep pains of rejection, as Abe is hurt that Jacob doesn't believe him.*



*Jacob's dad's explanation ties peculiarity with the history of the Jewish people during the Holocaust. The "monsters" that Abe discusses bear parallels to Nazi soldiers, who persecuted Abe and his family simply based on their "peculiarity," which is the fact that they were Jewish.*



*Here the book reinforces the parallel between the peculiar children and Jewish people escaping the Nazi regime. Aside from any real magic that Abe might have possessed, there was also "magic" in being able to escape, find other people like him, form a community, and protect each other given their differences. Additionally, Jacob's reiteration that his life is "safe and unextraordinary" again suggests Jacob's lack of confidence and his dissatisfaction with his life, suggesting that he doesn't feel like he's had much agency in it—at least until he's 15.*



## CHAPTER 1

The afternoon before the first extraordinary event, Jacob is building a replica of the Empire State Building out of boxes of adult diapers at the store where he works—until Shelley, the manager, explains that the sale is on a different brand than the one Jacob is using. Annoyed that Shelley told him the wrong brand to use, he starts over and sends the tower tumbling. Jacob knows that Shelley would have fired him on the spot—he has been trying to get fired all summer—but she can't fire him because his uncles own the store. And Jacob can't quit, because working at Smart Aid as a first job is a family tradition, leaving him and Shelley at an impasse.

Just as Shelley reacts, someone comes on the PA system explaining that Jacob has a call coming in. Jacob goes to the employee lounge and picks up the phone. On the other line, Grandpa Portman frantically asks where his key is. Jacob is confused about what his grandfather means, and Grandpa Portman explains that the monsters are after him after all these years; he needs something to fight them with.

This isn't the first time Grandpa Portman has sounded like this—he's been declining mentally for some time. But this summer, the monsters Grandpa Portman invented are starting to haunt him, becoming far too real. Jacob's parents are thinking of putting him in a nursing home. Jacob tries to calm his grandfather, explaining that he killed the monsters in the war. Jacob's grandfather disagrees, warning Jacob not to come home or else he'll be in danger. Grandpa Portman once again states worriedly that he has to find his key.

The key opens a locker in Jacob's grandfather's garage, and it contains a large number of guns and knives. His grandfather loved them, frequently going on hunting trips. He sometimes even slept with them; Jacob's dad has a **photo** of Grandpa Portman sleeping with a pistol in his hand. Jacob's dad explained that he did this because, after the war, he never truly felt safe. But now he's becoming paranoid, so Jacob's father took the key, worried about letting Grandpa Portman access the guns. Jacob lies and says he doesn't know where the key is, but Grandpa Portman figures that Jacob's dad took it.

*Jacob's experience at the Smart Aid establishes how little control he has over his own life. He feels that his path at the Smart Aid, and consequently throughout the rest of his life, has been predetermined by his family's expectations of him. In response to his limited choices, he behaves childishly by knocking down the tower of boxes—his attempts to get fired suggest that there's little else he can do to change his circumstances.*



*Jacob's plodding day is suddenly interrupted, hinting that his predictable life is about to change in a big way. Jacob has resigned himself to believing that Grandpa Portman's stories aren't true, but Grandpa's urgent—and very literal-sounding—problem challenges that belief.*



*Because of Grandpa Portman's perceived decline and Jacob's settled bias against believing the "monsters" are real, Jacob is slow to accept that there could be any truth to his grandfather's frantic warnings. Jacob's reaction suggests that whenever there's a perception of untruthfulness, trust between people is weakened.*



*This is a prime example in the book of how lies—even those that are meant to be protective—can have dangerous consequences. Jacob lies to his grandfather about where the key is, and as a result, his grandfather feels even more panicky and upset. Additionally, the fact that Jacob's grandfather has built his life around so many guns and fighting off "monsters" illustrates that his grandfather constantly feels targeted for his differences.*



Jacob calls his dad to explain what happened. Jacob's dad asks him to check on Grandpa Portman because he can't get off work. Jacob's dad volunteers at a bird rescue and is an aspiring nature writer. He can only afford to call these "jobs" because Jacob's mom's family owns a chain of drugstores. Jacob assures his dad that he can stop by the house, hoping that despite the increasing frequency of these incidents, his parents won't put Grandpa Portman in a nursing home.

Jacob tells Shelley he has a family emergency and calls his friend Ricky for a ride. Ten minutes later, Jacob finds Ricky outside, smoking on the hood of his car. They're friends as part of an "unofficial brains-for-brawn trade agreement." Jacob is the "brains"—he helps Ricky with his English homework—while Ricky, the "brawn," helps Jacob not get beat up at school. Ricky is Jacob's best friend, but only because he is Jacob's only friend.

As Jacob and Ricky drive home, Jacob worries about Grandpa Portman, wondering if he might be streaking naked in the street or waving a rifle around. They get lost in Jacob's grandfather's neighborhood, where the houses all look the same, until Jacob recognizes a few landmarks and finds his grandfather's street. As they drive to the end of the street, Jacob notices one of his grandfather's neighbors, who is watering his lawn. Jacob sees with a shock that the man's eyes are completely white—he had not realized that his grandfather had a blind neighbor.

Jacob rings his grandfather's doorbell, but no one answers, so Jacob retrieves a spare key from a nearby bush and tells Ricky to wait out front. When Jacob enters, he sees that the house looks like it's been vandalized. Jacob understands that his grandfather has really lost his mind. Jacob searches the house but can't find his grandfather, until he sees a beam of light shining at the edge of the woods behind the house. When Jacob finds a flashlight on the ground near the woods, he envisions nightmare scenarios of his grandfather being eaten by an alligator.

Jacob calls for Ricky, who comes around the side of the house and immediately notices a slice in the screen door. They wonder if an animal might have done it, and Ricky fetches a gun from his car. As Ricky is doing so, Jacob feels inexplicably compelled to walk into the forest, led only by instinct. He trudges through thick vines and roots, following a recently made path.

*This passage highlights Jacob's struggles with his family—particularly with his dad. The implied tension between Jacob's parents, and the more obvious tension between them and Grandpa Portman, suggests that family can be loving and supportive, but also difficult and complicated. Moreover, the book illustrates how Jacob's dad has never fully come into his own because of his wife's money. Like Jacob, he is stuck in a kind of immaturity, with little agency or sense of purpose.*



*Jacob's friendship with Ricky provides insight into Jacob's life at school. The fact that Ricky is his only friend—and that he is only friends with Ricky because he needs Ricky's protection—shows not only that Jacob's lack of confidence has left him with few friends, but also that he is often picked on. These dynamics add to his sense of inadequacy and powerlessness in his teenage years.*



*Jacob's worries about his grandfather illustrate how complicated family can be. Jacob idolizes his grandfather, but his grandfather's old age and infirmity now come with more difficult responsibilities for Jacob. Additionally, the fact that Jacob notices his grandfather's "blind" neighbor foreshadows Jacob's eventual realization that his grandfather's stories aren't as exaggerated as he'd thought.*



*Jacob continues to doubt his grandfather's stories about the monsters, choosing to believe instead that his grandfather is simply losing his mind. This shows how the perception that his grandfather has been exaggerating—both in the stories about his childhood and now with his fear of the monsters—has distorted Jacob's relationship with his grandfather.*



*Despite Jacob's fear, he is willing to walk into the forest alone in order to protect his grandfather—even appearing to have an instinct for when someone he cares about is in trouble. This passage shows both Jacob's devotion to his family and his willingness to put himself at risk for others, despite his frequent lack of confidence.*



Suddenly, Jacob sees his grandfather face down in the bushes, his legs sprawled out and his arm twisted. His shirt is soaked with blood and he's missing a shoe. Jacob thinks he's dead but then sees that he's breathing. Rolling his grandfather over, Jacob sees in shock that his grandfather's face is pale and there are gashes across his stomach. Jacob calls out to Ricky, spotting the letter opener in his grandfather's hand; he was clearly trying to defend himself with it. Jacob attempts to lift his grandfather but is unable, so he simply waits for Ricky.

*This incident illustrates some of the devastating consequences even of perceived lies. Because Jacob and his dad didn't believe Jacob's grandfather about the impending danger he was facing, they left him essentially unable to defend himself from that threat. This provides the book's first major example of how lies—or simply believing that someone isn't telling the truth—can have harmful consequences.*



While Jacob waits, Grandpa Portman starts mumbling, shifting between English and Polish. He warns Jacob to go to “the island” where he'll be safe. Jacob doesn't understand, but he agrees. Jacob's grandfather tells him to “Find the bird. In the loop. On the other side of the old man's grave.” He talks about September 3, 1940, “Emerson,” and “the letter.” As his grandfather dies, Jacob tells him he loves him.

*Grandpa Portman's death reinforces the dire consequences of not being believed. Additionally, while Grandpa Portman's final words are cryptic, they clearly give Jacob an important job to do that's somehow critical both for Grandpa's sake and his own.*



Just then, Ricky arrives and, seeing the scene, begins to panic. Ignoring him, Jacob lifts the flashlight and for one moment sees a face with dark eyes, rotten flesh, and several eel-like tongues. Jacob shouts, and the thing disappears. Ricky fires off a few shots, but he doesn't get a view of the thing. Jacob can hear Ricky talking, but his voice is far away and Jacob blacks out.

*As Jacob sees one of the horrific monsters his grandfather described for the first time, Jacob realizes that his grandfather was telling the truth, and that not believing him has had dire consequences. The encounter with the monster is a huge shock, undermining Jacob's sense of reality.*



## CHAPTER 2

Jacob spends the next several months repeating his story to many adults, and he's haunted by terrible nightmares, particularly of the creature he saw. He's convinced it killed Grandpa Portman and that it will return to kill him, too. For several weeks, Jacob refuses to leave the house, sleeping in the laundry room because it has no windows. He blames himself for what happened, wondering how it might have gone differently if he believed his grandfather about the monsters. It doesn't help that no one believes Jacob's story, even though he knows it sounds crazy.

*Here Jacob recognizes the gravity of not believing his grandfather. Because Jacob didn't believe him, he feels that he contributed to Abe's death, illustrating the value and virtue of telling the truth. On top of that, Jacob now has another connection to his grandfather—others don't believe his stories, just as they didn't believe his grandfather's. The combination of grief and distress takes a toll on Jacob.*



When a policeman interviews Jacob and insinuates that Jacob needs to “see someone,” Jacob flips him off, sparking a severe fight with his mom and dad. Jacob yells that they are glad Grandpa Portman is dead and that he was the only one who loved his grandfather. Later, Jacob describes the monster to a sketch artist; Jacob wonders if it's simply an attempt to placate him, especially when the artist tries to give Jacob the sketch.

*Here Jacob's fight with his parents illustrates how complicated family relationships can be. While he got much joy from and gave support to his grandfather, Jacob also feels the pain of losing him—and the pain of feeling like his parents don't care as much about his grandfather's death as he does.*



Even Ricky doesn't believe Jacob about the monster, and he was there. The policemen conclude that a feral dog killed his grandfather, which angers Jacob. One day, when Jacob is sitting on his roof deck with Ricky, Ricky tells Jacob that if he keeps talking about monsters, they'll "put [him] away." Jacob gets angry and makes a joke about Ricky's mom. Ricky gets annoyed in turn, shoving Jacob roughly and then leaving. They don't see each other for months afterward.

Jacob's parents take Jacob to a psychiatrist named Dr. Golan. In only two sessions, Dr. Golan convinces Jacob that the monster was a product of his imagination and the trauma of his grandfather's death. He calls it "acute stress reaction." Even with this diagnosis, Jacob still suffers from terrible nightmares and panic attacks. Dr. Golan tries to prescribe Jacob several different medications, but they make him feel "fat and stupid," and they don't even work. Jacob starts lying to Dr. Golan, pretending to be fine, but Dr. Golan sees past this.

Every night, Jacob has the same dream: he's crouching in his grandfather's bedroom with a pink plastic BB gun. His grandfather is also there, frantically trying to buy guns from a vending machine, but he can't pay in time. Then the monsters enter, and Jacob's gun can't fire. His grandfather is yelling instructions—the last words that he said to Jacob. Dr. Golan makes Jacob repeat the dream each session, but Jacob is no closer to understanding it or his grandfather's last words. He feels that he owes it to his grandfather to decipher them.

Jacob tries to investigate what "the loop" means—perhaps a street in his grandfather's neighborhood—whenever "Emerson" could be, or what the date might mean. Dr. Golan encourages Jacob to keep searching, but Jacob only grows frustrated at getting nowhere and still having terrible dreams. Jacob gives up when Dr. Golan tells him to go back to "the scene of [his] trauma." He returns to his grandfather's house, which his family is cleaning out before selling it.

The house makes Jacob sad rather than scared, and he quickly gets down to business emptying the house. He lobbies hard for things like *National Geographic* magazines or keeping his grandfather's bowling shirts, but his dad always refuses. Jacob angrily accuses his father of trying to get rid of the stuff so that Jacob will forget what happened, and his dad gets angry in turn, eventually storming out of the room.

*Here Jacob again experiences a sense of difference between himself and others (the fact that Jacob believes in the monsters while others do not). It sets him apart from other people, to the point where they might even "put [him] away" (presumably into a psychiatric institution) because they think he's losing his mind. Jacob loses whatever sense of belonging and protection he had from Ricky because they no longer see the world the same way.*



*In Jacob's fragile state, he accepts Dr. Golan's account of what he experienced, showing that it's possible to deceive oneself under stress. But the fact that Dr. Golan sees right through Jacob's lies suggests that lying is rather pointless. Additionally, Jacob's sessions reinforce the lack of agency in his life, because his medication and so much of what he can do is determined by another adult.*



*Jacob's nightmare is clearly symbolic—Abe is unable to buy the guns, reflecting the way his dad prevented Abe from being able to use his guns to defend himself. Jacob's inability to fire the pink plastic BB gun reflects Jacob's insecurities, as he feels childish and unable to protect himself or others, completely helpless to the monsters.*



*Just as Jacob keeps reliving his helplessness in his dreams, his feelings of inadequacy surge again when he seems unable to decipher his grandfather's mystery. Because of this, Jacob is unable to build the confidence in himself to know that he can solve the mystery and overcome these nightmares.*



*Jacob's fight with his dad reflects the complicated nature of family. Though it's not clear why his father is reluctant to hang onto Grandpa Portman's stuff, Jacob interprets it as his father's way of manipulating his feelings. Rather than helping Jacob cope with his grief, this only deepens it.*



Jacob then goes to his grandfather's bedroom and notices the old cigar box with the **photos** Jacob knows so well. Beneath the ones he's seen are more photos that seem obviously doctored: a girl stuck in a bottle, another floating child, a dog with a boy's face on it, a young contortionist doing an extreme backbend, and a pair of twins dressed in very strange costumes. Jacob understands why his grandfather didn't show him these photos: they would have frightened him too much. Jacob wonders if his grandfather's last words are similarly fake, just to fill his life with nightmares and paranoia. Jacob closes the box, returns to the living room, and gives his dad and aunt Susie the box to throw away.

At Jacob's next appointment with Dr. Golan, Jacob wonders if the sessions are a waste of time because he continues to be plagued by nightmares. Dr. Golan says it sounds like Jacob is quitting, and Jacob doesn't strike him as a quitter. Jacob corrects Dr. Golan and says that if he believes that, he doesn't know Jacob very well.

That weekend is Jacob's 16th birthday, and his parents have been dropping unobvious hints that they're throwing a party for him. Jacob has pleaded with them to skip the party, but his parents worry that he's becoming lonely. In reality, Jacob knows that his mom will take any excuse to throw a party. And so, when Jacob returns home from his frustrating session with Dr. Golan, Ricky and a bunch of family (to whom Jacob rarely speaks) are there to surprise him. Jacob is tired and upset, but he tells his mom that he's fine because he doesn't want to disappoint her.

As Jacob's mom plays hostess, Jacob and Ricky greet each other coldly. They haven't spoken since their fight on the roof. Before they can talk, Jacob's uncle, Bobby, pulls him aside to ask how he's doing, revealing that Jacob's mom said he's getting better. Bobby then invites Jacob to come to Tampa that summer to see how the family business works and to spend time with the family. Jacob would rather do anything else than live with his uncle and bratty cousins—and he doesn't want to join the "corporate cage" of Smart Aid just yet. So, he tells his uncle that Dr. Golan might not think it's a good idea right now.

*Again, Jacob's belief that his grandfather was lying about the children's home is a harmful one, because it then colors his entire perception of his relationship with his grandfather and makes him reevaluate other things that his grandfather said—like his final words—as potential lies or manipulations as well. Additionally, the photos represent a connection to both Jacob's grandfather's past and the magic he loved so much. Jacob's decision to throw them away indicates Jacob's rejection of both of those things in this moment.*



*Jacob's statement here illustrates his lack of confidence, which has plagued him all his life. Even when others express confidence in him, like Dr. Golan, Jacob corrects them and indicates that he has no confidence in himself to follow through.*



*Jacob's thoughts surrounding his birthday party underscore the complicated nature of family. While Jacob's parents love him and want to celebrate him, Jacob is hesitant to have a party and grows frustrated with the fact that they've once again ignored what he wants. The heart of Jacob's conflict with his mom also becomes relevant here, as she finds ways to spend excessive amounts of money in a way that embarrasses Jacob.*



*Jacob's exchange with his uncle here reinforces his lack of self-determination. Jacob's teenage years contain an impending sense of doom about his future as he feels like he's going to be trapped in the "corporate cage" of working for his mom's company. He doesn't have the freedom to determine his own life path, which further undermines his hope for the future.*



Jacob's mom then insists that he open his presents in front of everyone. He opens the smallest first, which is a key to his parents' four-year-old car—they are getting a new one, so he can have the old one. Jacob is embarrassed to get such an expensive gift in front of Ricky, whose car costs less than Jacob's monthly allowance when he was 12. Jacob then opens another: a digital camera he really wanted the previous summer. Jacob is amazed, and his dad says that Jacob can take the **pictures** for a new bird book he's working on. His mom asks sarcastically what happened to the previous bird book, which embarrasses Jacob's dad.

Jacob quickly moves on, reaching for another present. As Jacob opens it, his Aunt Susie says it was from his grandfather. The room grows quiet, and Jacob opens it to find an old hardcover book: *The Selected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. No one else knows about his grandfather's last words, and he looks at Susie in disbelief. She says that his grandfather wrote his name in the front of the book, so she thought he wanted Jacob to have it. Jacob reads the inscription: "To Jacob Magellan Portman, and the worlds he has yet to discover."

Afraid he might start crying, Jacob gets up to leave, and a letter slips out of the book. In disbelief, he says that he doesn't feel well and runs into his room. He opens the letter quickly and deciphers the loose handwriting. It is addressed to his grandfather, from "Headmistress Alma Lefay Peregrine," explaining that they still think of him often on the island. Little has changed there, but it is calm. She asks for a recent **picture** if he has one and writes, "E misses you terribly." The writer also includes an old snapshot of herself, silhouetted and smoking a pipe like that of Sherlock Holmes.

Jacob knows immediately that this is the letter his grandfather left for him to find. The return address indicates that it was sent from Wales, from a place called Cairnholm Island. Jacob also realizes that his grandfather once told him about a "bird who smoked a pipe," and seeing the **picture**, he wonders if that means Miss Peregrine—whose name is that of a bird. He wonders if his grandfather's caretaker is still there, old and withered.

*Jacob's presents start to hint at the larger question in the book of what makes a meaningful life. If a person gets whatever they want when they want it, the book hints, the pleasure of those things becomes less meaningful over time. Additionally, giving Jacob the camera not only ties Jacob to the author of the book, who is interested in photography and chose to frame his narrative around found photographs, but also reinforces Jacob's connection to his grandfather, whose photos were so important to him.*



*The book—which relates back to his grandfather's last instructions to "find Emerson"—is another critical turning point for Jacob's journey in self-determination. The inscription—which gives Jacob's middle name as Magellan—is also significant. Magellan was a famous 16th century Portuguese explorer, and so it ties Jacob once more to a sense of adventure and a desire to explore new worlds. In this way, the inscription indicates that the book will act as a conduit for Jacob to find the worlds his grandfather has described and determine his own path in discovering them.*



*Here, Jacob begins to recognize that perhaps his grandfather wasn't lying entirely about the children's home, as he sees the letter from Miss Peregrine, the headmistress of the home. Additionally, including a picture symbolizes Jacob's renewed connection to and interest in his grandfather's past.*



*Jacob's grandfather's stories—and his grandfather's last words, for that matter—were not entirely deceitful or meant to torment Jacob, as he suspected at a low point. As he sees the truth in what his grandfather said, he begins to regain more faith in his grandfather. And as Jacob follows the clues that his grandfather left for him, he feels a greater sense of accomplishment and confidence, demonstrating how Jacob is starting to grow up.*



The envelope's postmark is 15 years old. Jacob thinks if Miss Peregrine was around 25 when she was running a children's **home** in 1939, she'd be in her late 90s now—so it's possible she could still be alive. He thinks that there might be people there who knew Grandpa Portman as a kid, who knew more about his life and his secrets.

Convincing Jacob's parents to let him spend part of his summer off the coast of Wales isn't easy. He doesn't want to tell them about Grandpa Portman's last words, so he just says that he wants to learn more about the family history. A few things turn in his favor: Uncle Bobby gets cold feet about Jacob living in his house, so that's no longer an option. Jacob's dad also learns that Cairnholm Island is a renowned bird habitat, and so he gets more excited about the idea of Jacob going there. Most crucially, Jacob talks to Dr. Golan about it, who encourages his parents to let Jacob go, saying that a trip there could help Jacob work through the trauma of his grandfather's death.

After Dr. Golan signs off, everything happens very quickly: Jacob and his dad plan to go for three weeks in June, and his mom is very excited about it. Jacob overhears her on the phone, glad to have three weeks without "two needy children." Jacob is hurt, but he doesn't say anything because he loves his mother. Rather, he loves her in the way that people are supposed to love their moms, not because he thinks he'd otherwise like her very much—particularly because of the way she throws money around.

Jacob tries to find out if Miss Peregrine is still alive, but he can't find anything on the internet, and very few people on Cairnholm have phones. He only finds one number for the whole island, and when it connects on the other end, there's a huge amount of noise and a man yelling into the phone asking who it is. Before Jacob can say anything, the line goes dead. All Jacob wants to do is figure out his grandfather's mystery and return to his "unextraordinary life."

## CHAPTER 3

On the ferry, Jacob and his dad peer through the fog at Cairnholm. It's cold and wet even though it's June, and they've spent 36 hours traveling already. The island appears bleak and is guarded by a massive flock of birds, which thrills Jacob's dad. Jacob, on the other hand, notices the many shipwrecks beneath them. One of the crewmen points to a passing wreck and says that it was sunk by a German U-Boat during World War II. He reckons that the U-Boats sank half the British navy.

*Spurred by the discovery that his grandfather was telling the truth, Jacob now wants to set out in search of even more pieces of the truth because he believes his grandfather might not have been lying about Miss Peregrine's home. This illustrates how truth and trust go hand in hand.*



*This passage demonstrates how Jacob, even at the beginning of his journey, is slowly starting to gain more agency. He is able to determine his own future by planning a trip to Cairnholm to find Miss Peregrine's home. And even though he does have to get permission from the adults in his life, this is a key first step in Jacob gaining confidence in himself and seeking to follow his own path.*



*While Jacob's mom supports Jacob, he also expresses that he probably wouldn't like her very much if she weren't his mother because of her relationship to her wealth. This represents another complicated aspect of biological family: that sometimes the pain of family lies in knowing that if a person weren't family, they might be very lovable.*



*Even though Jacob wants to return to his "unextraordinary life," it's clear that that life currently makes him unhappy. Furthermore, the novel hints that once Jacob discovers what's waiting for him on Cairnholm, he might not have the option of getting his "unextraordinary life" back.*



*The German U-Boats (submarines used during World War I and II) are a reminder of the past persecution that Jacob's grandfather faced from the Nazi regime, and how he found protection and belonging on the island as the British navy tried to fight off the submarines. This passage also paints a bleak picture of the island, setting an ominous tone for what Jacob will face there.*



Soon after, the ferry docks, and Jacob and his dad journey into the little town, which isn't as picturesque as it looked from afar. Diesel generators power the island, and the whole place looks a bit dilapidated and abandoned. Jacob and his dad try to find their bed and breakfast—a humble place called the Priest Home—but everyone they ask seems confused. They walk into a little museum to ask directions, and the curator there directs them to a place called the Priest *Hole*.

Jacob's dad then asks the curator about the old children's **home**, but the man doesn't quite know what they're talking about. He says he might know the place they mean: it's on the other side of the island, past the bog and through the woods. He warns them not to go alone, because if they stray from the path, they could easily go over a cliff. Jacob's dad makes Jacob promise not to go there alone, and Jacob does, reluctantly.

Jacob and his dad then find the Priest Hole, which looks more like a pub. Inside, the bartender introduces himself as Kev and leads them up to their rooms. He gives them oil lamps for when the generators stop running at 10 p.m. Kev also tells Jacob and his dad that if they need to make a phone call, they have the only landline on the island. Jacob realizes that this is the phone line he got through to before he left. Curious, Jacob asks Kev what a priest hole is. Kev explains that when being Catholic was punishable by death, the place provided shelter for priests. He gestures to a door in the floor, which leads to a crawl space where the priests hid.

That night, Jacob and his dad attempt to go to bed early, but the noise downstairs prevents them until the generators go out at 10 p.m. Suddenly plunged into silence and darkness, Jacob falls into a deep, peaceful slumber, dreaming not of the monsters but instead about his grandfather as a boy, finding refuge at Cairnholm. Jacob realizes that this place didn't just save his grandfather's life, but also his dad's life and his life, too.

In the morning, Jacob and his dad have breakfast and discuss their plan: they'll go birdwatching first, then set out to find the children's **home**. They walk away from the town as the fog clears, and Jacob sees how beautiful the hills and fields look in the light. He feels "energized and hopeful" there. He and his dad head down to a rocky beach to observe the birds, and Jacob quickly realizes that his dad could spend the whole day there. Jacob asks his dad to let him find someone to take him to the children's home, and though Jacob's dad knows Jacob's mom wouldn't be happy about this plan, he agrees to let Jacob go.

*Jacob and his dad's trip seems to rest on very uncertain footing, making it seem unlikely that Jacob will discover the answers he's seeking on Cairnholm. But their perseverance shows Jacob's determination to solve the mystery of his grandfather's life, as well as Jacob's dad's care for his son despite their occasional strain.*



*Again, Jacob feels limited by his dad. He wants to be able to explore the island, just as he always wanted to explore new worlds as a child. But now that he finally has the chance, he's still being held back by his father, preventing him from truly growing up and finding agency.*



*This passage expands on the idea that differences can make people vulnerable to persecution, as Catholic priests were persecuted by Protestant rulers in England in the 16th century. But the Priest Hole also illustrates the value of community in providing a place of belonging and protection for those with such differences—anticipating something Jacob will discover elsewhere on the island.*



*Jacob's dream is significant in several ways. First, it illustrates that part of Jacob's anxiety has stemmed from his lack of agency. Now that he has been able to determine where he wants to go and what he wants to do, he dreams more peacefully. Additionally, he sees the importance of the island, in that it gave people who were different—like his grandfather—a place of refuge and thus hope for the future—even for future generations.*



*Again, being on the island is a huge boost to Jacob's confidence. In being able to determine what he wants to do, he feels "energized and hopeful." And as a result of this new energy and confidence, he's then able to convince his father to give him more independence than he might have had back home.*



Kevin isn't at the bar, so Jacob goes into a nearby fish store to ask after someone who can take him. The shop owner offers up a boy named Dylan, who is about Jacob's age. He leaves the shop with Dylan and a pair of rubber boots from the fishmonger, but anytime he tries to make small talk with Dylan, Dylan ignores him. On the way out of town, they run into one of Dylan's friends, a boy who wears a tracksuit and fake gold chains and calls himself Worm. Worm explains that he and Dylan are the best rapping duo in Wales, starting up a beat and rapping a few lyrics to prove his point. Jacob doesn't know how to react to this, so he just says that he prefers music with singing and more of a melody, which Worm dismisses.

Jacob, Dylan, and Worm wind over pastures, up hills, and through dense fog. Jacob even loses the other boys for a minute in the fog, but they wait for him to catch up. Soon after, they leave the path and find a small, boarded up house. Jacob knocks, and the unlatched door opens at his touch. He steps through into the darkness and quickly realizes that he is standing shin-deep in excrement. The other boys cackle outside, and Jacob is furious.

Jacob asks to go to the real house, and Dylan and Worm grow uneasy—Dylan thought Jacob was joking. Pointing up the path, Dylan tells Jacob to keep going past the bog and through the woods, and he can't miss it. Jacob says that they're supposed to go with him, but Worm says that this is as far as they can go, disappearing into the fog. After a few seconds, Jacob decides that he'll go on alone, despite his dad's instructions.

A bog stretches in front of Jacob as far as he can see, and there's a path that looks like it's been untouched for months or years. Jacob struggles past the bog, and suddenly the trees part—he can see the **house** clearly atop a hill. While his grandfather always described the house as a cheerful place, it looks cold and monstrous to Jacob, with broken windows, oddly angled walls, and trees invading the sides of the house. Jacob wonders how anyone could actually live there, but he knocks just the same. When there's no answer, he circles the house looking for another way in and finds an open doorway with vines hanging across it. It terrifies Jacob, but he's traveled too far to turn back.

Just inside the door, Jacob finds rotting coats and scattered toys. He's nervous, testing his weight gingerly on the staircase, worried that something might jump out at him. Upstairs, he finds rooms with missing walls, and he doesn't know how to reconcile this with the image of the **house** his grandfather painted. It is impossible that anyone could still be living there, and he leaves feeling no closer to answers than when he came.

*Jacob's awkward interactions with Dylan and Worm illustrate how much Jacob finds difficulty in forming new friendships. He seems to lack confidence in his interactions, even though it's clear that he wants to relate to others and forge connections. This is another artifact of his childhood, where his lack of confidence made him insecure and a target of bullying; now, because of this, it's difficult for Jacob to figure out how to make friends.*



*Jacob's interactions with Dylan and Worm continue to highlight Jacob's struggles to find friends and how those struggles harm his confidence. Seeing him as an outsider, Dylan and Worm pick on him easily. This is particularly ironic, given the fact that Jacob is searching for a place that always protected Abe and gave him a sense of belonging, whereas Jacob hasn't been able to find that wherever he goes.*



*Despite the fact that Dylan and Worm are really trying to undermine Jacob's confidence, it's clear that the mission Jacob's grandfather gave him is inspiring his bravery. It emboldens him to face his fear of going past the bog alone, even though he knows his dad wouldn't approve.*



*Jacob's grandfather always described the home as a paradise—a magical place where he felt that he belonged. The fact that Jacob first sees it in its dilapidated state echoes the fact that Jacob hasn't yet been able to find the "magic" and protection in a community that makes him feel welcome. Jacob again shows his burgeoning bravery in going into the house even though he's afraid. Unlike in the nightmares, he isn't paralyzed by fear; instead, Jacob's actions show that he is gaining confidence in himself.*



*Even though Jacob is bravely exploring the house, he's still afraid of what he might find there. Additionally, the scattered toys and rotting coats suggest the idea of remaining in a childhood state for too long—something Jacob feels is true in his own life, and an idea that will be explored later in the story.*



## CHAPTER 4

After leaving the **house**, Jacob scrambles his way back through the woods and bog. He sees when he returns that the sun is setting; he's spent the whole day going to and from the house. He finds his dad in the pub and explains what happened, conveniently leaving out details about Dylan and Worm bailing before Jacob got there. He explains the house is dilapidated, but he still wants to ask around to find out what happened to it. Jacob's dad asks if he feels closer to understanding his grandfather, and Jacob isn't sure.

Jacob's dad says that *he* gave up trying to understand Jacob's grandfather a long time ago. He explains that Grandpa Portman didn't know how to be a dad, and he dealt with it by being gone all the time. Jacob thinks back to a story he knows, when his father was four or five and had never been trick or treating. Grandpa Portman promised to take him when he got off from work, and Jacob's grandmother bought a big pink bunny costume for his dad. Jacob's dad waited from 5 p.m. until nightfall, but his grandfather never came home. His grandmother took a **picture** of this incident, much to his father's embarrassment.

Jacob's dad explains that he doesn't want Jacob to get hurt; he doesn't want Jacob to have one image of his grandfather and then to discover who he might really have been. Jacob's dad and Aunt Susie often thought his grandfather might have been cheating on his grandmother. They once found a letter addressed to him which read, "I love you, I miss you, when are you coming back." They tore it up and flushed it down the toilet. Jacob is upset, and Jacob's dad apologizes, knowing Jacob worships his grandfather. Furious, Jacob says his father is wrong about his grandfather and he's going to prove it.

Jacob gets up and leaves, knowing that he *does* worship his grandfather. His stories meant that it was possible to live a magical life. To come out of the horrors of war as an "honorable and good and brave person [...] *that* was magical." He doesn't want to think that his grandfather was an adulterer or a bad father.

*Even though Jacob established that he struggled with his grandfather's lies—or what he perceived as lies—he still decides to lie to his dad here because he wants to protect his dad from worrying. Yet this begins a pattern that will repeat throughout the book, where Jacob will continue to lie and undermine the trust that's been built between himself and his father as a result.*



*This passage captures the complicated nature of family, and also why lying—or omitting the truth—can be so painful. All Jacob's dad wanted was love and support from his father, and though Jacob's grandfather loved his family, his unexplained absences also added a layer of pain to Jacob's dad's childhood. Because of incidents like the forgotten Halloween, Grandpa Portman gained a reputation for not telling the truth or being reliable.*



*This passage illustrates how undermining trust with lies can be detrimental to relationships. Mistrust made Jacob's dad doubt his father's fidelity, and in turn, it colors Jacob's own perception of who his grandfather might have been. Even though his grandfather might not have been having an affair, there wasn't enough of a foundation of trust in their family to talk about it.*



*This passage encapsulates Jacob's relationship with his grandfather. Not only does Jacob's grandfather provide a window into a more magical version of the world, but he made Jacob believe that it's possible to be "honorable and good and brave." So the possibility that Grandpa Portman wasn't everything Jacob believed—especially morally—undermines his belief in what's possible in life, not just in terms of magic, but of personal character.*



Jacob returns to the little museum, looking around the different displays and gasping at one of a blackened corpse. The curator then comes in, impressed that Jacob took the shock so well. The curator introduces himself officially as Martin Pagett, and Jacob asks about the corpse. Martin explains that he's called the "Old Man"—he's 2700 years old but was only 16 years old when he died. He was found in the bog, which is why his body is so well preserved. Martin says that it is likely the corpse went to his death willingly, as his people believed that bogs were gateways to the realm of gods. Martin dramatically recites a few lines of poetry that he wrote about the corpse, and Jacob applauds.

Jacob then asks about the people that lived in the children's **home**, and Martin explains that no one has lived there since World War II. Cairnholm had a gun battery at the far tip of the island, which made it a military target. One of the Germans' bombs went off track and hit the children's home. Jacob is confused, thinking that that can't be right. It explains the house's condition, but the letter from Miss Peregrine, postmarked from Cairnholm, was sent just 15 years ago. Martin explains that his Uncle Oggie is 83 and might be able to tell Jacob more about it.

Ten minutes later, Jacob meets Oggie, who's wearing a blazer and pajama bottoms, rocking in an easy chair in his living room. Oggie says he remembers the children's **home**—the kids who lived there were "odd." They weren't regular orphan children, and many of them didn't speak English. Jacob explains that many of them were refugees. Oggie goes on, talking about what it was like during the war, particularly the night of the bombing. He says that it was like "giants stamping across the island." The date of the bombing was September 3, 1940.

Hearing the date, Jacob is startled—it's the date his grandfather stated before he died. Martin asks if anyone survived the blast, and Oggie says that there was just one—a young man not much older than Jacob. He came into town without a scratch on him, asked for the next boat to the mainland, and said he wanted to kill the monsters who murdered his people. Jacob says that the young man was his grandfather before excusing himself to walk back to the pub, wanting to digest what he heard. He imagines his grandfather the morning after the bomb, realizing that even after escaping Germany, there was no escaping the monsters.

*Martin's story about the "Old Man" introduces the theme of mortality. In particular, the fact that the bogs were considered gateways to the realm of the gods introduces the idea that when people strive for immortality, they might end up losing their life altogether. The so-called "Old Man," for example, went to his death at a young age—the same age Jacob is—suggesting that the pursuit of immortality might ultimately be a waste.*



*Here the story introduces the symbolic link between the children's home and protection. While the home was devastated by German bombs during World War II, it was always meant to provide refuge for the children from those outside threats. But Jacob's confusion about the home's fate and Miss Peregrine's letter suggests that the home's protection might have been more than physical—in other words, there's a mystery here that Jacob can't yet explain.*



*Oggie's reaction to the children illustrates some of the difficulties they faced due to their uniqueness. This again ties the "peculiar" children to refugees and Jewish children during this time. While Jacob assumes that Oggie is alluding to the children's Jewish refugee status, Oggie also hints that there were other things that made these kids stand out.*



*Jacob's realization here hearkens back to Abe's own coming of age and self-determination. Whereas prior to the bombing his childhood was marked by running away from the "monsters," Abe subsequently wanted to do something to protect himself and others. This is why he joined the army—both to help protect the people who shared his differences and to determine his own path rather than live in fear of the monsters.*



Jacob finds his dad in the pub and explains what he discovered. His dad grows angry that Jacob's grandfather never brought this up. Jacob reasons that perhaps his grandfather was distant because he had already lost two sets of family and was protecting himself emotionally. Jacob's dad says that Jacob came along at the right time: just when his dad got over the fear of having a family. Jacob doesn't know what to say or if he should apologize that his grandfather didn't love his dad enough.

That night, Jacob tosses and turns once more. He can't stop thinking about the letters, wondering if the one his dad and Aunt Susie found was also from Miss Peregrine. Jacob thinks that either his grandfather was corresponding with a dead person, or someone was using Miss Peregrine's identity to hide something—perhaps an affair. Jacob has so many questions, and he doesn't know how to find answers.

That morning, Jacob wakes to see a large bird atop his dresser. He calls to his dad, and as his dad comes in the bird flies out Jacob's open window. They discover a feather on the ground, and Jacob's dad remarks that it's rare for peregrines to get so close to humans. The name of the bird startles Jacob, who tries to convince himself that it's a coincidence. At breakfast, Jacob concludes that he owes it to himself to make one more trip to the **house**, a lot of which he didn't explore. He hopes that he might find a **photo** album or diary, even though he's terrified of what else he might find there.

## CHAPTER 5

The next morning is a beautiful day in the town, but the dense fog still lingers on the path to the children's **home**. Jacob trudges once more through the mud and rain; he wonders as he passes the bog how many corpses might lie underneath. By the time he reaches the home, he has been walking through a downpour, and he wrings out his clothes on arrival.

Jacob looks around the ground floor but finds little—the bottom floor has been completely overrun by nature. So, he gingerly climbs the rickety stairs and finds some rooms that seem to be in good shape. There are wooden toys, crayons, dollhouses, and bookshelves with [Peter Pan](#) and [The Secret Garden](#). He discovers desks and realizes that this must have been a classroom.

*Jacob's dad's words illustrate how difficult families can be, particularly in examining his and Abe's relationship growing up. Jacob recognizes that his father and Abe both wanted to love each other, but were unable to find a proper connection because of their emotional wounds. In turn, their lack of connection seems to have impaired Jacob's own relationship with his dad.*



*Jacob struggles with how to think about his grandfather because he feels like he doesn't understand the full truth of his grandfather's life. In this way the book suggests that the truth is vital for a healthy relationship—a lack of openness raises questions and doubts sooner or later.*



*Jacob's desire to return to the house and find photographs demonstrates his renewed desire to connect to his grandfather's past, in contrast to the earlier scene following his grandfather's death, in which he threw out the photographs in his Abe's home. Moreover, the peregrine feather hints at the bird's importance to the story going forward.*



*Even the simple act of going to the home shows how Jacob is becoming more mature, independent, and less fearful. He no longer feels like he needs anyone to accompany him along the path, and he manages his fear of the corpses and the bog.*



*The titles of the books are thematically relevant, foreshadowing the children's experiences in the home. Peter Pan and the Lost Boys are characters who do not age, living in a kind of perpetual paradise which some of the characters—like Wendy—are not suited for. And The Secret Garden has a character, Colin, who is hidden away because of his disability—a difference which the adult characters feel makes him unsuitable to interact with others.*



Jacob then goes through another set of doors and realizes that this room must have been Miss Peregrine's bedroom. He wonders what she was thinking and feeling the night of the bombing. Jacob starts to feel strange, as though he's being watched, and he wanders into the next room, which has a few small beds in the corner. Somehow, he knows that it was his grandfather's room. He examines an empty suitcase before sitting on the bed, exhausted.

Thinking about all that his grandfather went through—the nightmares he might have had, the pain of his family's deaths—Jacob starts to cry. He thinks about the children who died in the **house** because a pilot simply pushed a button. Jacob thinks about how this affected his own dad, who felt his father didn't love him. He thinks about his own trauma, a "seventy-year-old hurt that had somehow been passed down to [him] like some poisonous heirloom."

When Jacob stops crying, he notices another trunk with a giant padlock on it. He tries a variety of methods to break it, knowing he'll likely not be able to find a key. Then he has an idea: if he can push the trunk off the staircase landing, it will likely break, and he could get inside without worrying about the padlock. Painstakingly, Jacob shuffles the heavy trunk down the hall before sending it over the landing, causing a tremendous crash and a cloud of dust. But he realizes that the trunk has fallen through the rotting floor to the basement. Jacob can just make out the trunk, which did splinter, sending **photographs** flying everywhere. But then he realizes he has to go down to the basement to investigate it.

The basement is pitch black and smells like chemicals. Using his phone screen as a flashlight, Jacob sees a wall of shelves with preserved organs: brains, hearts, lungs, and eyes. Jacob panics and staggers away, wondering what kind of place this actually was. Gradually Jacob finds the shattered trunk, and he collects the **photos**. To him, it looks like an old family album, but the photos have the same odd quality as the ones his grandfather had, like they all came from the same compilation. One is a picture of a girl looking into a reflecting pool with two girls staring back, or a young man whose body is encased in bees.

*Even before meeting anyone at the home, Jacob demonstrates that he already feels a connection and sense of belonging there. The atmosphere makes him feel closely tied to his grandfather, foreshadowing the many parallels between their coming of age stories.*



*Here Jacob's thought about the "poisonous heirloom" that he has inherited illustrates how positive aspects of family, like inherited love and support, or meaningful objects, can also come with inherited pain. Abe's suffering was passed down to Jacob's dad, and now to Jacob as well.*



*Jacob's determination to open the trunk and attempt to find any information he can—and the fact that he eventually does find more photographs—illustrates his desire to reconnect with his grandfather's past and particularly to find out the truth about what happened in his grandfather's childhood. Jacob is learning the value of understanding the truth, particularly because his relationship had become so fraught with mistrust of his grandfather.*



*Not only does Jacob want to find out the truth about his grandfather and the children's home, but at the same time, he has to face down fears in order to do so. Whereas before, Jacob was wracked by fear and anxiety, here he musters the courage to investigate the basement and the trunk. Additionally, the preserved organs hint at the theme of mortality, especially at the notion of toying with life and death.*



Jacob remembers what his grandfather said about a boy with bees living inside him and concludes that his grandfather's **pictures** came from this same trunk. It means that the photos really *had* come from the **house**, but Jacob still wonders whether the fantastic stories could actually be true. Suddenly, there's a loud crash, and Jacob drops all the photos in shock. As he picks them up, he hears voices and footsteps. He doesn't make a sound, terrified of who it might be, but something comes loose next to him and rolls away, attracting the voices' attention.

In the silence, a girl says, "Abe? Is that you?" A light glows above Jacob, and he sees half a dozen kids peering down through the floor: all faces he recognized from the **photographs**. He looks up at a girl in a white dress who seems to have a ball of fire cradled in her hand. All Jacob can do is stare, knowing that this is what his grandfather sent him to look for. But as he sees the girl's expression, he can tell that *he* is not what *they* are looking for.

Suddenly, the children start to scatter, and by the time Jacob shouts for them to wait and stumbles back upstairs to the ground floor, they have vanished. He runs outside and catches a glimpse of the girl in white running as fast as she can. Jacob chases her through the woods into the open bogland, until she runs straight into the bog. Jacob has no choice but to follow her steps as she disappears into the mist. He tries to call out to her, explaining who he is, but the fog dampens the sound.

The girl's footprints lead Jacob to a cairn—an ancient tomb for which Cairnholm is named. He climbs into it, finding firmer ground, and continues to follow her footsteps. The tomb stretches into a dark and narrow tunnel, forcing Jacob to walk hunched over like a crab. He calls out to the girl, explaining that he means no harm. He pulls out his phone once more to use as a light and realizes that he's at the end of the tunnel and that it's completely empty. She's not there.

Jacob concludes, dumbfounded, that there probably never was a girl, or other children. He imagined them, conjuring them up from the **pictures**, and then blacked out. Any other explanation is impossible: the kids died many years ago, and if they didn't, they wouldn't have looked the same now. He imagines Dr. Golan analyzing his reaction. Jacob then turns back, crawling out of the tunnel. He realizes then that he's seen this exact view before: in a photograph in Martin's museum. He's shocked that anyone thought this wasteland was a door to heaven. Tired of the riddles and the games, Jacob decides he wants to go home. He wants to let go of his grandfather's obsession.

*Here Jacob starts to discover the truth, and he realizes that his grandfather wasn't lying about the photos coming from the house. In turn, this makes Jacob reevaluate other things his grandfather said. But this sudden, staggering possibility, coupled with the startling sounds of people nearby, is too much to absorb all at once.*



*The peculiar children's introduction proves that Abe was not lying, causing Jacob to completely reevaluate everything his grandfather has said. This belated vindication shows why a foundation of trust and truth is so important; without such a foundation, it's hard to build strong bonds among people. This moment also suggests further parallels between Jacob and his grandfather, as Jacob is essentially his grandfather's age when Abe left and apparently resembles him.*



*This passage hints at how magic provides the children with a sense of belonging: at the moment, Jacob is an outsider among them, and the children flee from him as if from a threat, suggesting that their peculiarities make them unwelcome in the broader world.*



*Even as the girl tries to avoid Jacob, he matches her step for step with a newfound confidence, even following her into a tomb. This suggests that in the short time he's been in Wales, Jacob has gained more confidence to forge his own path. Moreover, the somewhat surreal quality of the cairn recalls the description of the bog and the tombs earlier, that it seems like a passage to a different realm.*



*In this moment, Jacob feels betrayed by his grandfather and mistrustful of his own mind, believing that he has conjured visions of the children out of his grandfather's pictures. The fact that he thinks of Dr. Golan in this moment shows how related this mistrust is to his anxiety—that he doesn't know exactly where these supposed imaginings are coming from and thinks he's powerless to do anything about them. This also demonstrates a lack of confidence in himself, almost leading him to abandon his search.*



When Jacob emerges from the tunnel, he's shocked to find that it's now clear as day, with sunlight and blue sky, and it's much warmer. He treks back to the town and sees that the ground isn't muddy at all, but it is covered in a lot of animal excrement. He wonders how he didn't notice this earlier, but he realizes when he gets back into town that the tractors carting in fish and other goods have been replaced by carts pulled by horses and mules. Jacob also notices that every person is looking at him strangely—though he attributes this to the fact that his lower half is covered in mud.

When Jacob gets inside the Priest Hole and climbs the stairs, the bartender stops him—but it isn't Kev. Jacob says he's going up to his room, and the man asks if the place looks like a hotel. Jacob starts to explain, confused, that he and his dad have the rooms upstairs. The man denies knowing anything about it. The men around the pub all stare at Jacob. Seeing his jacket, they remark that he must be in the army—or else he's a spy. They start to threaten him, and Jacob runs as fast as he can away from the pub.

As Jacob flies down the street, he wonders if he's losing his mind. He ducks into an alley, where he finds an outhouse to hide in while he collects himself. But when he emerges, someone grabs him by the hair and puts a knife to his throat. To his surprise, it's the girl. She's in the same white dress from before, and Jacob realizes that she's quite pretty. She asks Jacob who he is and what he wants, and he explains that he just wants to talk and ask about the **home**. His grandfather, Abe Portman, sent him.

At this, the girl is shocked. She insists that he's lying and asks him to open his eyes. He stares as wide as he can, but she tells him to open his "real eyes." He assures her that he's not what she thinks, showing her the letter from Miss Peregrine. She's furious, telling him she doesn't want to hear another word. Suddenly, the men from the pub run down the street, shouting, and Jacob explains that the girl isn't the only one who wants to kill him. She then grabs him by the collar and says he's her prisoner now, and he agrees to follow her.

*The sunnier skies on the other side of the tunnel suggest that a mysterious shift has occurred, something that's hinted at even further by the animals pulling carts rather than tractors. Separately, the fact that Jacob gets strange looks illustrates the book's argument that anyone different (because Jacob is wearing modern clothes) is often singled out by society.*



*Again, the book reinforces the idea that any differences can immediately single a person out and make them a target. In Jacob's case, it's the fact that he is wearing strange clothes, which causes them to conclude that he must be a spy. This connects to the idea that the peculiar children's abilities separate them as well, and is what causes them to form their own separate community.*



*This exchange demonstrates that Jacob is still struggling to come into his own and find confidence in himself, because his immediate reaction to what's going on is believing that he is going insane. He has undermined his belief in himself so greatly that he no longer trusts what he sees in front of him.*



*There's obviously a misunderstanding between Jacob and the girl, who thinks that Jacob is someone or something that he isn't, and the fact that she doesn't believe that he is harmless puts him in further danger. Already outrunning the men who think he's a spy, Jacob is now at the strange girl's mercy.*



The girl leads Jacob through another alley into a small cottage, where there's no one inside except a dog. The girl keeps her knife out as the men's voices fade. Jacob looks around the cottage, which seems very old-fashioned. Seeing a calendar on the wall, Jacob realizes that the month listed is September 1940. The first two days on the page have been crossed out: it's September 3. Jacob is stunned, and then he remembers his grandfather's last words again: his grandfather told him to go "on the other side of the old man's grave." And he had done exactly that, passing through the cairn. At this realization, Jacob blacks out again.

When Jacob wakes, his hands are tied to the cooking range. He keeps his eyes shut as much as possible so he can eavesdrop on a conversation that's happening. The girl and another person, a young man, are arguing, saying that Jacob must be a wight—that no relative of Abe's would be as clueless as he is. Just then, the dog comes over to lick Jacob's face, forcing him to open his eyes. He doesn't see the other person, but a voice offers him some water and a cup floats towards him. When Jacob accepts the cup, he brushes an invisible hand and is shocked. The boy introduces himself as Millard Nullings and the girl as Emma.

Emma glares at Millard for revealing their names, but just then Emma and Millard realize that men are searching the houses. Millard consults a leather-bound notebook and says that they can leave out the front door in a minute to escape. When dozens of engines seem to sound off, they untie Jacob and lead him to the door. Emma takes Jacob's arm and tells him to walk calmly out the door, putting the knife in her pocket.

The street outside has tons of townspeople watching overhead as Nazi fighter planes pass by. Jacob and Emma cross the street casually, but one of the men from the pub notices them, and they start to run away. Millard calls out to meet him at the pub in five and a half minutes exactly. When they arrive at the pub, Emma orders a whiskey, and the bartender pours it for her. Then, the bartender recognizes Jacob and starts to attack him, but Emma pours her drink out on the bar and lights it with her hands, creating a wall of flame that the bartender tries desperately to put out.

Emma then pulls Jacob down into the priest hole in the floor; they shuffle into the crawl space and Emma kicks the back wall out, which falls open into a back alley. Millard, still a disembodied voice, greets them. Jacob asks how he knew about the planes, and Millard explains that the same thing happens every day—they're in a time loop. Emma says Jacob clearly isn't from their world and that he must be a wight, but Jacob assures her he is not.

*Jacob realizes that he's been able to follow his grandfather's instructions, if accidentally, illustrating that more and more Jacob is starting to determine his own path. He's gotten there by following his intuition and showing courage, suggesting that even with mysteries yet to be solved, Jacob is starting to come of age.*



*Jacob receives another shocking introduction to the peculiar children's abilities when he realizes that Millard is invisible. And in hearing about "wights," though Jacob doesn't fully understand what that means yet, Jacob begins to understand that there are magical threats that the children need to protect each other from, just as there are non-magical ones.*



*Here Millard demonstrates how the children's magic has sheltered them, as he seems to possess some special ability to know everything that is about to happen. In this way, the magic that makes them different (and vulnerable) is also what protects them from the threats that they encounter.*



*Emma demonstrates another example of how the children's magic protects them from outside threats. While Jacob's difference is what singles him out to the bartender and the other patrons at the Priest Hole, putting him in danger, it is precisely Emma's differences—that is to say, her magical abilities—which help protect her and Jacob when she lights the bar on fire.*



*The fact that Emma and Jacob are able to escape through the Priest Hole reminds readers of another example of people being targeted for their differences, like the Catholic priests in earlier centuries. Similarly, the children must hide themselves from the outside world, cloaking themselves in a time loop for protection.*



## CHAPTER 6

Jacob, Emma, and Millard walk towards the forest, and Jacob wonders when he's going to come out of this strange fever dream that he's having, walking next to a girl who makes fire and an invisible boy. Soon, they reach the **house**, and Jacob sees it in pristine condition—it's a beautiful sight now that it's not destroyed. Emma ties Jacob's hands before they go in and makes him take his shoes off, or else Miss Peregrine will be very angry.

Inside the **house**, everything is in order: it's cheerful and comfortable, with nice furniture and curious faces peeking around corners to see Jacob. Emma goes to retrieve Miss Peregrine and Jacob wanders to the window, noticing all of the children—almost all of whom he recognizes—playing with each other or hanging out under the trees. It's a paradise, just as Jacob's grandfather said. Jacob thinks that if he's dreaming, he doesn't want to wake up. Jacob sees the levitating girl retrieve a ball that got stuck in a tall bush shaped like a centaur. Another girl touches the bush, which comes to life. Millard says they're showing off because they know they have an audience. Jacob asks what they are, and Millard says they're "peculiar," asking if Jacob is, too. Jacob says he doesn't think so.

Emma returns and pulls Jacob further into the **house** into a sitting room, where Miss Peregrine waits. She is dressed all in black with lace gloves, a formal blouse, and her hair pinned in a bun. Miss Peregrine greets Jacob by name, which startles Emma. The headmistress is shocked to see that Emma tied Jacob up, explaining that he is a guest and Abe's grandson. Jacob is thrilled that she was expecting him, and Emma grumpily unties Jacob.

Miss Peregrine requests an audience with Jacob in private, and Emma leaves. The headmistress also tells Millard to leave, making sure she hears his footsteps down the hall; the door shuts behind him. Miss Peregrine asks Jacob why it took so long for him to visit them, and Jacob replies that he didn't know where they were. Miss Peregrine explains that she's been watching him—she was the bird in his room in the morning.

*Seeing the house for the first time in its pristine condition, Jacob (and readers) understand that it is a haven for the children—a place where they can belong, unlike in the dangerous outside world. Now that Jacob sees the home in its full glory, the book implies that he, too, belongs there and can find protection there.*



*Here Jacob's description suggests that the house is both literally magical and also "magical" in the sense of being miraculous—providing the children with a community where they belong. Here Millard reveals that they are "peculiar," a word which highlights their differences from other people. But the word comes with the connotation that they have abilities which enable them to protect themselves and support each other. In this way, the book illustrates that the children's differences are what make them special and bring joy in their lives, not just what make them outcasts.*



*Miss Peregrine's warm greeting for Jacob is a turning point, as Jacob starts to be welcomed as a member of the family rather than being treated like an outsider, suggesting that he, too, could potentially belong at the children's home like Abe did.*



*In this passage, the book hints at further ways in which the peculiars' magical abilities provide them with protection, allowing people like Miss Peregrine or Millard to spy on others without their knowing. Again, their abilities are what enable them to survive in a world which poses many dangers to them.*



Then, Miss Peregrine asks what Jacob was searching for in the **house**. When he explains, she realizes how little his grandfather told him about his old friends. Jacob admits that he always thought his grandfather's stories were just fairy tales. Miss Peregrine intuits that his grandfather is dead, which Jacob confirms. She gets angry, explaining that she warned Abe not to leave the house. Jacob assures her that he lived a long and fulfilling life, and he wasn't very sharp anymore. She asks Jacob not to tell the other children yet because it would upset them, and he agrees.

Jacob then admits he has questions of his own, but before he can ask any, Miss Peregrine pauses and opens the door. There, Emma is hunched over, sobbing. She runs out of the room and Miss Peregrine grows frustrated, knowing how deeply the news would upset Emma—she and Abe were sweethearts at the **home**. Jacob realizes that this is why Emma didn't want to believe that Jacob was Abe's grandson, because he would only be bringing news that would upset her.

Miss Peregrine brings Jacob to the library, explaining that there are “peculiar spirits” that sometimes crop up in the human species. They exist all over the world, but in diminishing numbers. The ones who remain live in hiding, though they used to live openly with regular people as shamans or mystics. But then modernity and religion often led to persecution, because many people viewed peculiars as evil.

It's difficult for peculiars to form communities because peculiar children do not always have peculiar parents, and peculiar parents do not always have peculiar children. Peculiar children are often “abused and neglected in the most horrific ways”—sometimes they are even killed. So, people like Miss Peregrine founded places where young peculiars could live separately from common people.

Miss Peregrine then explains how time works there. One of Miss Peregrine's skills is that she can manipulate time—she is known as an ymbryne. She can create temporal loops in which peculiar people can live forever. They only occupy one day: September 3, 1940. She created this loop because otherwise, the bomb would have killed them all. There are other ymbrynes, all of whom take the shape of birds (birds are time travelers), and they each live in different time periods. She shows Jacob a few pictures of her friends, particularly Miss Avocet, who taught her and many of the other ymbrynes.

*Here Miss Peregrine demonstrates that the house is a symbol of protection, enabling the children to survive the threats they face. However, Jacob's rebuttal hints at the fact that just because the children live a safe life doesn't necessarily mean it's a fulfilling one. As Jacob notes, Abe was able to live a long and fulfilling life outside of the children's home, gaining meaningful experiences that the children who remained haven't yet had, despite the fact that they are technically just as old as Abe was.*



*This is another way in which manipulating the truth is harmful in the story. Emma places herself in denial, insisting to herself that Jacob's arrival doesn't mean that Abe has passed away. Not only that, but she was also in denial about the fact that Abe might one day return to her. This self-delusion only made it more difficult for Emma to accept the truth in this moment.*



*Here Miss Peregrine makes it explicit that being different and having a “peculiar spirit” has made those people targets among ordinary humans. She uses real-world examples to illustrate how even historically, in real life, people who are different have been persecuted.*



*Here Miss Peregrine emphasizes that being different has made the peculiars targets even among the people who are supposed to love them the most. This is why found, or chosen, family can be so important, because the children's biological families often rejected or “abused and neglected” them instead of loving them unconditionally.*



*Miss Avocet's abilities to manipulate time are just another way in which the peculiars' abilities enable them to protect themselves in a world which so often targets them. With the help of Miss Peregrine's time loop, the children are able to live peacefully in the home, avoiding not only the bombs that would have rained down on them, but also the people who might act cruelly towards them.*



Ymbrynes scour the world for young peculiars and provide them safe harbor from the world. If they don't ensure that the loops reset each day at the exact right time, "disaster" will ensue. But, Miss Peregrine assures Jacob, it's not too difficult to reset: someone must simply cross through the entryway every so often. With that, Miss Peregrine explains that she doesn't have much more time to spend, but hopes Jacob will stay for supper. Jacob asks whether his grandfather was truly running from the Nazis, and Miss Peregrine says yes—she found him in a refugee camp. Jacob asks then if his grandfather was like the other peculiars, to which Miss Peregrine ambiguously replies, "he was like you, Jacob."

Jacob washes off the bog mud before joining the others for dinner, finding a change of clothes of suspenders, tweed pants, and a button-up shirt before descending for dinner. When Jacob enters the room, the kids are thrilled to meet someone new, but they ask many questions about Abe that Jacob's not sure how to answer, so Miss Peregrine simply changes subjects. Jacob sits on what he thinks is an empty seat, but he bumps into Millard, and Mrs. Peregrine admonishes Millard for eating naked.

The children on kitchen duty appear with food: a roasted goose, salmon and cod, vegetables, mussels, and loaves of bread. It all looks delicious to Jacob, and he digs in greedily. While eating, he looks around at some of the children. Olive the levitating girl is tied to a chair screwed into the floor, so she doesn't float away. Hugh, the boy with bees, eats under a mosquito net. A girl named Claire is embarrassed and doesn't eat because she has a mouth on the back of her head, underneath a pile of golden curls. They ask her to demonstrate, and she does so, turning around to eat her dinner.

The children then turn to questions about the future. When Jacob explains that there are no flying cars or cities on the moon where he's from, they're disappointed, and Miss Peregrine seems vindicated, seemingly having told them many times that there's nothing wrong with remaining in the same time period. Jacob asks in turn how old they all are. They range between 75 and 117—some of them lived in other loops before this one. They're shocked to learn that Jacob is only 16. Jacob thinks that despite their ages, they still seem young, as though their activities have made them perpetually immature—like Peter Pan and the Lost Boys.

*Miss Peregrine's story again emphasizes that even as peculiar children and adults become outcasts, their common bond also helps Miss Peregrine protect them and helps them find a sense of belonging. Miss Peregrine even hints at the problems that would occur if she couldn't use her powers. Additionally, the book again highlights the dangers of being less than forthcoming with the truth. Miss Peregrine doesn't make it clear whether Jacob has peculiar abilities, which only ends up causing problems for Jacob later.*



*The dinner that Jacob shares with the children underscores the family dynamic that the home fosters. But the book also hints at the pain that even found families can experience, as the children are still clearly emotionally invested in Abe more than 80 years after he left (and in Emma's case, heartbroken because of it).*



*The dinner again reinforces the family dynamic between the children as they find joy in eating together. It also shows how Miss Peregrine's home is a place where all of them can belong, despite their peculiar abilities. Whereas they might be ridiculed in other places, the children like showing off their abilities and making various accommodations for their respective differences, showing how their differences are actually a commonality and a basis upon which they can belong and support one another.*



*Here the book begins to hint at some of the conflict within the children's lives. Even though they live in a kind of paradise, at the same time, there are limitations to what they can do. Because they never grow up, they miss a lot of the meaning in life that they would get as they aged, nor do they get to see the world progress. Instead, like Peter Pan and the Lost Boys, they are frozen in time. This conflict between aging and immaturity foreshadows the end of the book to a degree.*



Suddenly, a boom erupts outside, and Miss Peregrine tells the kids to finish quickly. Jacob panics, realizing what's about to happen, but Miss Peregrine assures him that they're not going to die—it's only the "changeover." The children plead to show Jacob what's happening, and Miss Peregrine agrees as long as they wear their gas masks. Jacob runs outside with the other children, watching as the bombs streak by. The children applaud like they're watching fireworks, and Jacob realizes that the bombing has become such a part of their daily lives that they no longer view it in terror.

As the attack is ending, the children bring Jacob over to another topiary, this one a copy of Michelangelo's painting of Adam in the Sistine Chapel. Meanwhile, Jacob can hear one airplane getting closer and closer. There is a whistling noise, and Jacob sees something falling out of the sky. He ducks, bracing for a blast, but suddenly all of the noise stops. He slowly looks up to see the sky completely frozen in place; the bomb rests atop Adam's finger. Then, whiteness engulfs the world.

When the whiteness fades, Jacob sees they are all still standing there in front of Adam, but the night is completely clear—it has reset to September 2. Jacob feels uneasy, and he asks Miss Peregrine if he can go home—otherwise his dad will worry. Emma volunteers to escort Jacob home, and the two set off through the woods, with a small ball of flame from Emma's fingertips providing them light. Jacob admires the flame but stays carefully away from her, still worried that she might try to kill him.

Emma notices that Jacob is keeping his distance, and she apologizes for how she acted earlier—she knew that Jacob was Abe's grandson because they look so much alike, but she didn't want to believe it. He tells her that he's sorry to have to break bad news, and Emma hugs him tenderly. She and Jacob both start to cry, until they slowly break the hug. They continue on, trudging through the bog and passing through the cairn. Emma then takes Jacob's hand, guiding him back to the path, before she disappears into the fog once more.

*The bombs are another illustration of how magic protects the peculiars. In a world with many threats and dangers, their abilities often make them targets, but at the same time, their abilities are what allow them to find their community, belonging, and safety—to the point where they view a traumatic event (aerial bombing) with joy and eagerness.*



*This passage emphasizes how the children's magic allows them to transform the horrors of their lives into something magical and protective. The fact that the bomb balances on a topiary replica of Michelangelo's Adam—with the finger extended, reaching out to God—also implies that, living in the time loop, the children reach for a certain godlike immortality themselves.*



*As Jacob observes the timeline being reset, he starts to understand why the loop is so important. It comes with immortality, but it also preserves the home and rescues it from the bomb, creating protection both in time and in space for the children. However, Jacob doesn't totally belong in the peculiars' world yet.*



*This exchange between Jacob and Emma demonstrates the different aspects of family. They both recognize that familial love leads to deep sorrow, as they feel keenly with Abe's loss. But at the same time, the growing familial relationship that they feel, and the connection that they already have, allows them to find comfort and support even in the midst of that pain. Sharing this grief is a comfort that Jacob hasn't even been able to find with his own parents, demonstrating how important Emma's consolation is to him and hinting that this newfound family will be increasingly important to him.*



Jacob returns to town, happy to see TV screens glowing and hear generators humming. He finds his dad upstairs, asleep in front of his laptop. His dad asks what he was up to and what happened to his clothes—Jacob is still wearing the borrowed suspenders. Jacob explains that he was just exploring the **house** and put on these old clothes that he found. Jacob's dad grows concerned, explaining that he doesn't think Jacob spending his days alone in an abandoned house is what Dr. Golan had in mind for the trip.

Jacob tries to protest, explaining that Dr. Golan has been a help to him but can't be in control of all aspects of his life. He sarcastically asks himself how Dr. Golan would want him to go to the bathroom. Jacob's dad declares quietly that Jacob will go birding with him tomorrow instead of going back to the **house**, and Jacob refuses. At this, Jacob's dad goes downstairs to the pub.

A few minutes later, Jacob's dad says there's a phone call downstairs for Jacob, and when Jacob picks up, it's Dr. Golan. Jacob is furious at his dad, but he assures Dr. Golan that he's okay. Dr. Golan agrees and explains that he told Jacob's dad that it's best to give Jacob a little space to heal from his grandfather's death. Jacob is stunned and very grateful. After he gets off the phone, Jacob's dad tells Jacob to do what he wants, and Jacob promises he'll be home for dinner. As Jacob falls asleep, he thinks about the kids asking whether he would stay with them, and he realizes for the first time that he might be able to refuse the "unremarkable life that had been mapped out for [him]."

## CHAPTER 7

The next day, the weather is terrible, but Jacob insists on going out, implying that he's meeting some kids who live on the other side of the island. Jacob's dad insists he wants to meet these kids, pretending to be the "sensible, no-nonsense dad" he wants to be. Jacob says they're meeting up on the other side, so they can be introduced another time. Before Jacob goes, his dad gives him a final warning to be back by dinner.

Jacob races to the bog and emerges from the cairn into the beautiful September 3rd day, where he finds Emma waiting for him. She says that the kids have a surprise for him, pulling him back down the path. Jacob grows excited, knowing the day is full of possibility. When they reach the **house**, Jacob sees that the kids have put up a small wooden stage with a curtain and are warming up and getting dressed for a show.

*Jacob's explanation to his dad continues to stretch the truth. And, as a result of his deception, Jacob's dad starts to trust him even less, implicitly doubting his mental health. In this way, the book suggests that lying runs counter to Jacob's goals, because it causes other people not to trust Jacob's ability to be an independent person; in reality, though, Jacob is gaining healthy confidence.*



*This is another example of how Jacob feels he is losing control over his life, feeling like his psychiatrist's opinions are valued more than his own decisions. In this way, the book suggests that a key part of Jacob's growing up is in facing his fears and moving on from relying on his psychiatrist and parents to determine what he can and cannot do in life.*



*This is a key turning point in Jacob's understanding of himself. For the first time, he recognizes that he might be able to make a decision that allows him to leave behind his "unremarkable life." The fact that it uses the words "mapped out" also calls back to his childhood dream of being an explorer, suggesting that in contrast to the path that's been decided upon for him, he is excited once more about the possibilities of forging his own path.*



*Jacob again stretches the truth here—even though he is meeting kids on the island, he can't tell his dad the full truth about them. His partial truth—which seems wise for the time being—comes out of a desire to protect the peculiars and also to spare his dad from worry. Additionally, the fact that Jacob's dad needs to feel like a "sensible, no-nonsense dad" suggests that, like Jacob, his dad has never quite felt adequate or secure in his role in life.*



*Again, the more Jacob realizes that his days are full of possibility with newfound friends, the happier he is. All of these are key steps in helping Jacob come into his own and find self-confidence, as well as helping him develop a broader sense of family.*



Millard calls all the children to their places, and some children form an audience alongside Jacob. Millard explains that they are putting on a performance of “accomplished magicianship.” For the first trick, he’ll make Miss Peregrine appear. From behind a curtain, he pulls out a sheet and a peregrine falcon. He holds the sheet in front and counts down from three, after which Miss Peregrine’s head pops up from behind the sheet, though she appears to be naked after transforming. She wraps the sheet around herself for modesty as the children applaud.

Miss Peregrine greets Jacob and explains that this is a performance they used to tour before the bombing. The show continues: Millard takes off his clothes and juggles. Olive performs a levitating gymnastics routine. Emma swallows fire and blows it out of her mouth without burning herself. Jacob claps and claps, astounded. Emma explains that when they performed, no one ever suspected anything unusual—it was the best way for them to make a living.

Next, a girl named Bronwyn drags a large boulder out from behind the curtain. Emma explains that Bronwyn might not be the smartest, but she is extremely loyal. Bending down, Bronwyn lifts the rock above her head, and the kids applaud and shout even though they must have seen her do it a thousand times. Next is Fiona, a wild-looking girl who takes the stage behind a planter of dirt. As an orchestra plays, Fiona causes daisies to bloom under her fingertips. Then Hugh joins her onstage and lets his bees pollinate the flowers Fiona grew. Emma explains that sometimes they’ll play a game where they grab hold of a sapling and see how high Fiona can get it to grow while they’re riding it. Jacob realizes that the kids must be bored a lot.

After a few more acts, the children disperse to various outdoor activities, and Jacob wanders around in “dreamy amazement.” After a delicious lunch, Emma convinces a few kids to go swimming. They have to walk straight through town, and a formally dressed boy named Horace gives Jacob clothes to better blend in. Jacob asks what makes Horace peculiar, and Emma explains that he has prophetic nightmares.

Walking through the town, Jacob realizes that it’s as if someone hit “reset” on it: the exact same things are happening as the day before. Millard explains that he is in the midst of compiling a complete account of the day—every action, conversation, and sound made. He explains that in 27 years he’s already observed half of the animals and most of the humans. Emma laughs, saying it’ll be the most boring thing ever written. To prove that it isn’t boring, Millard points out things just before they happen, which impresses Jacob.

*Whereas the rest of the world treats the children as oddities to be avoided or even abused, the children have learned to use their differences to their advantage, showing off their different skills and celebrating the unique sense of connection their abilities let them create. Though magic makes them outcasts in the broader world, it makes them a community at Miss Peregrine’s.*



*Emma’s story about the magic show also illustrates that in the right setting, common people don’t have to be afraid of the magic or view it as something to be marginalized. In this way, the book highlights how in certain settings, their magic actually helped the children blend in more—thereby protecting them—rather than making them stand out.*



*Here, Jacob’s realizations continue to hint at the limitations of the kids’ lives. They have seen these acts over and over again for 70 years, and they have attempted to come up with every possible game in order to make their lives more interesting. In this way, the book alludes to the idea that just because they have immortality doesn’t necessarily mean that their long lives are filled with deep meaning.*



*The book does illustrate how appealing the children’s lives can be, as Jacob feels happier than ever while enjoying various activities with them. But his “dreamy amazement” suggests that it doesn’t actually feel real—that this is an alternate reality from which he may have to wake up.*



*Even though Millard’s account impresses Jacob, it speaks to the fact that Millard has had an exceptional amount of time to compile this account, which ultimately amounts to very little. While Millard has tried to craft some purpose for himself, this ultimately adds to the image of the kids’ lives as lacking in direction and meaning.*



The kids reach the docks and jump into the water together, racing each other before lounging on the beach. The others ask Jacob a million questions about the world he comes from. The technology and standard of living amaze them the most: the planes, the TVs, the cell phones, the air conditioners. It's almost sunset by the time they start back for the town. Emma stays close to Jacob, and when she stops to pick an apple from the tree and can't reach it, he lifts her up to help; when she returns to the ground, she gives him a kiss on the cheek and the apple. Jacob is surprised as Emma runs to catch up with the others, but he likes whatever's happening between them.

When the kids come to the bog, Jacob has to go home, and he invites Emma to come to the other side with him for a minute. She says that Miss Peregrine will be expecting her, so Jacob asks her to come over to his time for a bit. Emma says that it's a bad idea, even though she wants to. Jacob asks once more for her to spend one minute on the other side, so he can take a picture—his phone doesn't work in 1940. She agrees, and he takes her **photo** with his phone on the other side. Afterwards, she tells him she'll see him the next day and ducks into the cairn.

Jacob returns to town to find his dad looking frantically for him. He explains that some sheep were killed, and the farmers think it was kids who did it—they want to know where he's been all day. Inside the pub, very angry sheep farmers are questioning Worm. Jacob says he's been alone in the old **house** on the other side of the island. Jacob's dad questions him about the friends he was seeing there, and Jacob realizes his only solution is to say that the friends he talked about were imaginary. Though Jacob's dad is worried about this admission, the farmers buy it.

Jacob's dad asks how many sheep were killed, and the men explain there were five—killed in their pen. His dad concludes that whoever did it would have been covered in blood, and that it was likely a pack of foxes. The farmers don't believe it, saying the cuts are too clean. They walk over to the pen, where the sheep are lying sliced open and bloodied. Seeing the violence, Worm gags and cries, which the farmers take as an admission of guilt and call the police on the mainland.

*As Jacob spends more time with the peculiar children, he starts to experience the same conflict that Abe did. On one hand, he is gaining friends and even a budding romance between himself and Emma. As a result, he gains more confidence and a sense of belonging. But on the other hand, he also realizes—particularly given their questions about technology—that the kids' lives are pretty stagnant, with little hope for change or new meaning.*



*Taking a photo is a symbolic gesture, because it shows that Jacob wants to be connected to Emma in the hopes that she can be a part of his present. But the fact that she can't really spend much time on the other side of the time loop indicates that it's difficult for Emma to be a part of Jacob's present. As Jacob becomes more and more a part of the peculiars' family, there is a growing conflict between wanting their support but also not wanting to lose aspects of his life in the present.*



*This exchange not only foreshadows that there is something sinister going on around the island, but it also shows the issue with the way Jacob's been lying up to this point. Even though he did so in order to prevent his dad from worrying about him, in the end it only made his dad more concerned and less trusting of Jacob. In this way, the book emphasizes the value of the truth once more.*



*The image of the bloodied sheep hints at the threat of danger that the peculiar children are soon to face, even if they don't know exactly what's coming. The fact that they are sheep suggests that even the most innocent and helpless beings can face this threat, which is why their separation from others and the protection in the home is so crucial.*



Jacob and his dad walk away, and Jacob apologizes for lying. He says that there aren't any other kids on the island, but also that he doesn't have imaginary friends—he just wanted to get the farmers off his back. Jacob's dad asks if they need to call Dr. Golan, but Jacob assures his dad that he's fine. Jacob's dad then wonders how Jacob got such a bad sunburn on such an overcast day. Jacob shrugs this off, and they turn in for the night. Before falling asleep, all Jacob can think about is Emma—even looking intently at all the **photos** he took of her to make sure that she's real.

*Jacob continues his trend of stretching the truth, and the book illustrates how, as a result, those statements continue to undermine Jacob's dad's trust in him—that is, the more Jacob lies, the more they grow apart, just as Jacob's dad did with Abe. Additionally, the fact that Jacob looks so intently at Emma's photo to ensure that she's real suggests the idea that she isn't quite real—that being stuck in the time loop means that she isn't able to live life in the same way Jacob can.*



## CHAPTER 8

The next day, Jacob sets out before his dad wakes up. When he goes to find the apple from the day before, he realizes that it's spoiled so badly it crumbles in his hand. Confused, Jacob goes to the cairn and arrives at the **house**, where Miss Peregrine pulls him aside before he sees anyone. She scolds him for talking about the future with the other children, who were very excited about the technology Jacob described the previous day. It's her job to protect them, and they can never be a part of his world. Now half of them are dreaming of cell phones and the other half want to fly on a plane.

*The apple foreshadows what might happen to the children if they were to leave their time loop. It has particularly Biblical meaning as well, as the knowledge that Jacob gave the children (like the Biblical apple in the garden of Eden) is putting their immortality at risk by tempting them to leave the time loop. This parallel suggests that having immortality isn't necessarily worth it, because it isn't the same thing as living a happy, fulfilling life.*



Jacob asks why the children can't leave, and Miss Peregrine explains that if they stay in his world too long, they'll die very quickly. Jacob realizes that this is what happened to the apple this morning. Miss Peregrine admits that this happened to one of the girls, Charlotte. When Miss Peregrine took a trip to visit one of her fellow ymbrynes, Charlotte wandered out of the loop and a constable discovered her. She was shipped off to a child welfare agency, and in the two days before Miss Peregrine retrieved her, she aged 35 years and was never the same afterwards.

*Miss Peregrine's explanation illustrates that even though the home provides protection for the children, it also becomes restrictive because of how dangerous it would be for the children to leave, even for a relatively small amount of time. Even though the time loop gives them a degree of freedom to do what they want without fear of outside dangers like bombs or even the threat of old age and death, at the same time the time loop is quite constricting.*



Jacob asks if they can leave the island in their time, in 1940, but Miss Peregrine explains that they could get caught up in the war or encounter normal people who would fear and threaten them. She notes that there are other dangers, but she doesn't explain what they might be. She tells Jacob to enjoy the morning, and Jacob quickly puts the apple out of his mind while going to find Emma. Hugh informs him that she went on a supply run to the village, so Jacob waits for her under a tree.

*Again, the house forces the children to make a compromise: they have a place where they find belonging and protection, but even though they have gained immortality, they have also been essentially imprisoned in the home, with little ability to find greater purpose or meaning in life.*



Jacob starts to realize that just being with the children is addictive—if he stays too long, he may never want to leave. At the same time, Jacob realizes that the place isn't "just a heaven but a kind of prison, too." It might take a person years to notice how addictive it is, and by that point it would be too late to leave.

Jacob dozes off and wakes to find an animated clay soldier nudging his foot. A boy calls out to bring the soldier back, and Jacob returns the figure. The boy introduces himself as Enoch, and Jacob thinks that he looks like a chimney sweep because of the black circles under his eyes and his dirt-stained clothes. Jacob is impressed that the boy made the soldier, which is just one of an army the boy has created. When the first soldier disobeys Enoch, he snaps off one of its legs, causing it to squirm on the ground.

Jacob is a bit disturbed by this display, and Enoch points out that the soldier wouldn't be alive without him. He takes another soldier and cracks it down the middle, removing a tiny heart from its body. Enoch explains that the heart is from a mouse—his peculiar talent is the ability to take life from one thing and give it to something inanimate or even dead. He wants to train up a massive army. He asks what Jacob can do, and Jacob explains that he can't do anything special. Enoch asks if he'll live with them, anyway, and Jacob isn't sure.

Enoch then asks if Emma told Jacob about a game they play called "Raid the Village," and Jacob says no. Enoch says that there's probably a lot that Jacob doesn't know, because if he knew he wouldn't want to stay there. When Jacob asks what Enoch means, he smiles wickedly and explains he could get in trouble for saying anything. But he gives Jacob one more crumb: that they couldn't stop him from going upstairs and looking in the room at the end of the hall, where his friend Victor stays.

*Here Jacob recognizes that despite the outward appeal of immortality—the fact that it is "heaven"—remaining in one place forever would be extremely restrictive, like a "prison." Since part of Jacob's journey lies in being able to make his own choices, this introduces a tension between Jacob wanting to determine his own path and finding a place of belonging where his path would be restricted.*



*Enoch's treatment of the clay soldiers provides another perspective on why immortality isn't necessarily a uniformly good thing. Enoch takes on a god-like status by animating the clay soldiers, but he also proves that wielding such power can lead a person to be callous and cruel.*



*Here the book demonstrates the connection between trying to live forever and a kind of cursed life. Although the soldiers are animated, they are completely under Enoch's control, and he can torture them however he chooses. This again counters the idea that an immortal life is an inherently good thing; it can be tormenting as well as freeing.*



*Enoch continues to hint at some of the less palatable parts of the children's ability to live forever. Moreover, Enoch's statement illustrates that Miss Peregrine and the other children aren't being fully truthful with Jacob, and that this will eventually hurt him because of the disillusioning things he will discover.*



Jacob quickly climbs the stairs and reaches the room at the end of the hall, finding a key on top of the door frame to open it. When he enters, he sees Victor lying on a bed behind a curtain, asleep—until Jacob realizes he’s actually dead. Suddenly, Bronwyn enters behind Jacob, explaining that he isn’t supposed to be there. Jacob realizes suddenly that Victor is Bronwyn’s brother; he remembers them both from his grandfather’s **pictures**. Enoch then appears in the doorway, suggesting he wake Victor up. Bronwyn begs him to, explaining that it’s been ages since they spoke to Victor. Enoch callously pretends to consider it, but then says Victor likes it better where he is. Jacob tells Enoch it’s cruel to toy with Bronwyn, and to trick him into coming to the room.

Jacob then asks how Victor died, but Enoch explains they can’t say. Hearing Miss Peregrine climb the stairs at that moment, Jacob makes a deal: he won’t tell Miss Peregrine that they told him about Victor so long as Enoch tells him about Raid the Village. Jacob shuts the door just as Miss Peregrine reaches the landing, and when she’s gone, Enoch explains that sometimes they smash up the village, chase people, and burn things down—to practice defending themselves. They don’t kill anybody, and if anyone gets hurt, it all goes back to normal the next day. Jacob protests that that’s terrible, and Enoch says Emma thinks so, too. But he assures Jacob that *they’re* not the ones who are wicked, alluding to some other danger threatening them. He then leaves the room.

Jacob tries to digest all of this information—he wonders what happened to Victor and about the danger that everyone seems to be hinting at. Jacob walks down the hall and hears Miss Peregrine once more, so he ducks into what he soon realizes is Emma’s bedroom. Jacob looks around the neat room until he finds a hatbox that says “Private Correspondence of Emma Bloom” on it, along with the words “Do not open.” Jacob can’t help himself, opening the box and finding old letters between Emma and his grandfather. They are long and sappy, and over time, they grow less frequent. Soon, they become just **pictures** rather than letters. In the last envelope his grandfather sent, he is holding a little girl—Jacob’s Aunt Susie at around four years old.

Jacob wonders how many letters Emma sent his grandfather after that, and he also realizes quickly that it’s one of Emma’s letters that his dad and Aunt Susie found as kids, making them think he was cheating. Suddenly, Emma comes into the room, furious to find Jacob reading her letters. Emma sorts them back into the box, saying that if he wanted to know about her and Abe, he could have just asked. Jacob says he didn’t want to pry, but as Emma points out, he already has.

*This is another example of why immortality might not necessarily be a good thing, according to the book’s perspective. Just because Enoch can raise Victor from the dead doesn’t mean that this is necessarily the best thing to do. First, this is another kind of prison—because Victor can only live some of the time, when Enoch has a heart available. And this also torments Bronwyn, because she knows that Victor is essentially imprisoned in the room with no ability to fully live out his life.*



*The description of “Raid the Village” again illustrates the darker side of immortality. Because the children have the freedom of the time loop, they know that they can act violently without consequence. And because they can do so, they indulge those darker impulses. Just as Enoch feels he can torture the clay soldiers because they are beneath him and he gave them life, the peculiars justify their damage by saying that the people won’t really remember the harm that they caused, even though it’s very real in the moment. This again suggests that immortality isn’t inherently good.*



*Here Jacob understands the visceral difference between a person who has been able to move forward with his life and find new meaning in it—his grandfather—and a person who has been essentially trapped by their circumstances—Emma. This is another way in which the time loop and the house become a prison, preventing those inside it from moving forward with their lives. Additionally, this shows another complicated family relationship, as even though Emma loved Abe, it’s clear that his absence and ultimate decision to start another family caused her pain.*



*This exchange highlights two additional examples of why deception can be so problematic. Because Abe wasn’t open about the peculiar children or his situation with Emma, it caused Jacob’s dad and aunt to mistrust their father and question his character. And now, in trying to secretly look at Emma’s letters, Jacob has also undermined the trust between them when he could have simply asked Emma about her relationship with his grandfather*



Jacob asks Emma what happened between her and his grandfather, and she explains it succinctly: they loved each other, and one day he left because he didn't want to sit the war out while his people were being killed. He promised to return, but after the war, he said he would lose his mind if he came back. He was going to America to make a home, and then he'd send for Emma—except he never did. Jacob asks if she blames his grandfather for being stuck on the island. Emma denies this, explaining that she just misses him. For a moment, Jacob can see the pain of a grown woman nursing an old—but still raw—wound.

Jacob quickly realizes that he's just a stand-in for his grandfather; Emma is still heartbroken over Abe. Emma puts her head on Jacob's shoulder, and Jacob realizes how strange it would be to kiss her, even though he wants to. When Emma's face moves in towards him, Jacob asks if there's something between her and Enoch to kill the mood. Emma protests, saying he's just jealous and a liar.

Jacob then changes the subject to Victor, asking what happened to the boy. He knows there's something that they're all not telling him, and his grandfather's dying wish was for Jacob to know what was going on. Hearing this, Emma agrees to tell him that night, after his dad and Miss Peregrine have gone to sleep. They spend the rest of the day together in the yard before Jacob makes the trip back, alone.

Back in the 21st century, Jacob finds his dad in the pub and makes up stories about his day—but he notices something is off about his dad. His dad explains that another birder showed up who seems very serious about his work, and he's disappointed that someone else is trying to scoop his book. Jacob assures his dad that he'll write a better book than the other guy. Internally, Jacob can see his dad falling into a familiar pattern: getting passionate about a project for months until a tiny problem arises and completely derails it, causing him to simply move onto the next one. He's still trying to find himself and prove that he doesn't need his wife's money.

Jacob wonders where the other birder is staying, and his dad speculates that he's camping to show his hardcore dedication. Jacob asks why his dad isn't doing the same and immediately regrets making his dad feel bad. Just then, the other birder walks into the pub. He's wearing a rain hat and dark glasses and has a scruffy beard. He orders a few raw steaks before leaving the way he came. Jacob notes how weird that is, but Jacob's dad assumes he has a cooking stove. Jacob and his dad then have another tense exchange where Jacob asks why his dad is defending the birder—his “archnemesis”—before his dad asks Jacob to stop making fun of him and goes to the bar.

*Emma's relationship with Abe demonstrates another way in which family can be complicated. For as much as Emma and Abe loved each other, they still struggled in their relationship and ultimately ended up causing each other a great deal of pain because he wanted to progress and start a family while she remained on the island. This story also demonstrates that for Abe, the cost of a stagnant life was not worth immortality; he wanted more meaning, even if it came at the cost of his eventual death.*



*Jacob also recognizes how complicated his relationship with Emma is. Even though he likes her and wants to be with her, he is also gaining the confidence to stand up for himself and recognize that he doesn't want to be seen as simply a replacement for his grandfather; he wants to be appreciated as his own person.*



*Again, Jacob recognizes that he isn't being told the full truth about life at Miss Peregrine's home. He even intimates here that not understanding the full truth is weighing on him deeply, because it goes against his grandfather's dying wish. These situations have taught Jacob the importance of the truth for healthy relationships.*



*Jacob's dad provides another angle on the idea that part of maturity is finding confidence in oneself and being able to determine one's own path. Jacob's dad doesn't feel either of those things, knowing that he relies on his wife's money in order to be able to pursue what he wants, but also not having the confidence to persist in his passion when tiny problems arise. The fact that Jacob is comforting his father illustrates how their dynamic is shifting, with Jacob taking on a mature, reassuring role while his dad is behaving more insecurely.*



*Jacob's exchange with his father here illustrates the complicated and often painful relationship between them. While there is love there, they often feel unsupported by each other—Jacob feels his dad isn't fully listening, while Jacob's dad feels that Jacob doesn't respect him. Moreover, the description of the birder, and the fact that Jacob reads him as strange, foreshadows sinister developments to come.*



A few hours later, Jacob's dad returns to the room very drunk and immediately falls asleep. Seizing the opportunity, Jacob sets out to see Emma. In the dark and the rain, Jacob immediately gets an eerie feeling from the empty town, and he notices the birder watching him with binoculars. Jacob feels like he's caught, but the man doesn't move, so Jacob continues on the path.

Passing through the cairn, Jacob finds Emma on the other side. She throws her arms around him and tells him she missed him before leading him to a "special place." Jacob is nervous, still somewhat uncomfortable with the romance between them, but deep down he really does want to follow her. Emma leads Jacob to a rocky path, where she takes out a pair of snorkeling masks. She tells him to take off his clothes, but Jacob starts to protest that he doesn't want to swim in the middle of the night.

Emma playfully starts to wrestle with Jacob, trying to get his clothes off and rubbing sand in his face. Jacob returns the favor, and afterwards they're laughing and exhausted, and Emma points out that now he's so dirty he *has* to go in the water to wash off. Jacob relents, diving in the cold water and finding that it's pleasant after he gets used to it. They swim out to find a canoe, then paddle until they come upon a shipwreck of an allied warship, which is so close to the surface that they can stand on the ship's hull. They dive down and Jacob sees a tube that reaches far under the surface for them to breathe, and Jacob takes a breath from it.

Emma leads Jacob into the ship's door in total darkness. Jacob is amazed as they sit floating like astronauts in the silent darkness, passing the breathing tube between each other. Suddenly, small green lights appear and twinkle around them. Emma produces a ball of fire and the lights—which Jacob realizes are fish—move around it, mimicking what she does. They stay there for what feels like hours while Jacob watches in amazement, until Emma motions to Jacob to swim up. Back on the surface, Jacob says that the fish are "beautiful" and "peculiar."

Emma smiles and puts her hand on Jacob's knee, and then suddenly they're kissing. Jacob can't remember why he ever had doubts about doing so, nor can he remember why he met up with her in the first place. As she pulls away, she tells Jacob that he should stay with them. Jacob thinks about it; he knows he would get bored of the perfect days all the time—as he knows from his mother's life. Still, he does like Emma and thinks he could stay there for just a little while. But he knows that by the time he would want to leave, it would be too late for him to do so.

*The book continues to point out the menacing and ominous nature of the birder, suggesting that he isn't exactly what he seems and will take on a more sinister persona in the future. This again highlights the book's perspective that deception and secrecy are tools of villains—lying is never a virtuous tactic.*



*Again, Jacob encounters complicated feelings around beginning a romance with Emma, reflecting the fact that they belong to different worlds. It also demonstrates that he is finding the confidence to know and assert what he really wants.*



*The wrecks of the allied warships reminds readers of some of the dangers that the children are facing there. This is one of the reasons why they have been forced to remain in their time loop on the island, because the outside threats loom large and often unseen (much like the threats they face from hostile outsiders). And yet exploring them shows that Emma and the others would rather invite danger if it means that they get to pursue adventure and meaning.*



*This is a key example of how Emma's peculiar powers, which have set her apart from other people, are also what make her special—providing Jacob with this beautiful light show. And Jacob notes how the fish are similar: their glow sets them apart as "peculiar" but it is also what makes them "beautiful," much like Emma.*



*Ironically, even as Jacob doesn't want to feel like a stand-in for his grandfather in his relationship with Emma, he is considering the exact same choice that his grandfather did. He doesn't want to stay on the island, knowing that only experiencing perfect days without any sort of progression is essentially a meaningless life, even though it affords him an essentially immortal one.*



Jacob explains that he can't be Abe for her, but Emma says that Jacob belongs there. Jacob protests, saying that he and Abe aren't peculiar; otherwise he would have noticed. Emma says that she's not supposed to tell him this, but ordinary people can't pass through time loops. Emma says that Abe had a peculiar talent, something almost no one else can do: he could see the monsters.

*Emma's surprising news is a major shift for Jacob, who is finally able to feel a sense of total belonging, because like the other children, he, too, is peculiar after all.*



## CHAPTER 9

Jacob is stunned: he knows his grandfather can see monsters, and he knows he can see them, too. It explains why his grandfather saw them all his life, and why Ricky didn't see the monster that night. Jacob isn't crazy—that's his gift. Emma explains that she and other peculiars can only see the monsters' shadows, which is why the monsters hunt at night. But fortunately, the monsters don't know where to find them and they can't enter loops, so the kids are safe on the island.

*Jacob's gift illustrates that even as his peculiarity has set him apart—others thought he was crazy—it is an ability that protects him and others, making him special. Additionally, this suggests why lying and deception can be so dangerous: because Abe withheld the truth from Jacob, Jacob only narrowly avoided the monsters, while being open with him would have given him much more protection.*



Jacob realizes that this is what must have happened to Victor: he must have left the loop. Emma confirms his theory, explaining that Victor was going crazy on the island, so he left and was murdered. Jacob admits sadly that the monsters found his grandfather, too. He and Emma continue to talk until the moon is very low in the sky, and then they paddle back to the beach. On the beach, Hugh and Fiona wave at them—something is definitely wrong. Hugh tells Emma that she must come back, but Jacob can't come. Emma explains that Jacob is one of them, and that he basically worked out what was going on himself.

*Hearing Victor's story only emphasizes the tension between protection and restriction that the children find at the home. It again suggests that the life of immortality that the kids enjoy comes at a price—one so high that it actually backfires, causing Victor to leave with no protection whatsoever. And Jacob's grandfather made the same choice, choosing to start a family even knowing that he might one day die at the hands of the monsters—as he eventually he did.*



Running back to the **house**, Hugh explains that one of Miss Peregrine's fellow ymbrynes flew to the house, terrified, and before they could understand what happened, she fainted. Back at the house, the children speculate about what might have happened, getting more and more upset about the horrific possibilities. Then, Miss Peregrine calls out asking for Emma and Jacob—the other kids had to tell her that the pair ran off together, and she was furious.

*This incident foreshadows the more ominous events to come in the book, illustrating that just because the children live in the time loop doesn't necessarily mean that they're completely safe. They rely deeply on the ymbrynes' support to make sure that they avoid the bombs and can continue to live in the time loop.*



Emma and Jacob enter the sitting room, where the other ymbryne, Miss Avocet, is barely conscious in a chair. Miss Peregrine is feeding the woman some dark liquid to revive her, while Bronwyn hovers nearby. Miss Peregrine sends Bronwyn away to prepare a couch for Miss Avocet and to fetch another bottle of wine and brandy. When she's gone, Miss Peregrine scolds Emma for sneaking away, but given what has happened, she doesn't think it's worth the effort to punish her.

*This incident illustrates the benefits of family—particularly found family. Miss Avocet knows that there's a community for her that will help her no matter what. And even though Miss Peregrine is Emma's guardian, she recognizes the pointlessness of punishing Emma for what she's done when their lives are at stake.*



Jacob redirects the conversation, asking when Miss Peregrine was planning to tell him that he was peculiar. She says that she didn't want to shock him by telling him everything during their first meeting. Jacob says he spent his whole life not believing his grandfather, and maybe if he had, Abe would still be alive. Emma comforts Jacob, explaining that Abe would have known Jacob was peculiar and must have had a good reason for keeping it a secret. Miss Peregrine says he probably wanted to protect Jacob.

Continuing, Miss Peregrine explains that Abe probably wanted Jacob to have a normal life, not a life in hiding. He went to war to protect his people—both Jews and peculiars—and afterward he went to America because it had few “hollowgast” (monsters) at the time. Many peculiars moved to America and passed as common, which Abe desperately wanted to do. He wanted Jacob to have the life he never could. But other peculiars often called upon him to help find and kill the hollowgast—the “hunting trips” his grandfather used to go on. Hearing this, Jacob reframes how he thought about his grandfather. He risked his life for others, and for his sacrifices, he only made his family upset and suspicious.

Then, Bronwyn returns, and Miss Peregrine tries to revive Miss Avocet. Miss Avocet wakes in surprise at seeing Miss Peregrine, before she remembers that she came to warn them about a pair of wights who invaded their loop. They barricaded Miss Avocet inside the house and dragged the children away. Her fellow ymbryne, Miss Bunting, was abducted—it seems there is a coordinated attack happening against ymbrynes. Miss Avocet starts to cry for her wards, and Miss Peregrine tries to comfort the woman.

Outside the sitting room, the other children have been listening in on the conversation. When Miss Peregrine emerges, she tells them to remain calm and to be on watch, explaining that they can travel beyond the **house** only with her permission. She insists that Jacob spend the night, and he agrees only on the condition that she tells him about what killed his grandfather. She relents, frustrated at his persistence.

*Again, Jacob recognizes here how detrimental his lack of information has been. This is true not only of his time on the island, but also growing up, when he didn't believe Abe and felt heartbroken as a result. Interestingly, Abe's decision not to tell Jacob about his peculiar talent breaks with much of the pattern in the rest of the book, where the children's peculiar talent helps to protect them. But it is likely that Abe simply didn't want Jacob to be singled out or separated (or persecuted) based on his ability.*



*Here the book underscores another way in which being peculiar can make a person a target—not just a target of the common people, but also of the monsters, who actively seek out the peculiars. Moreover, the book emphasizes another reason why deception is so detrimental. In not telling his family about the truth behind the hunting trips, Abe gave them reason to become suspicious of what he was doing, when in reality Abe was acting as a hero.*



*This illustrates the sheer evil of the wights and hollows, who specifically targeting the peculiars—even children. On the flip side of that dynamic, the book also illustrates how loving and supportive a family can be, by showing how much Miss Avocet loves her children and how Miss Peregrine cares for Miss Avocet.*



*Miss Peregrine's rules make the house even more restrictive, as the children give up even further freedom in order to remain protected from external harms. Additionally, Jacob's negotiation skills not only demonstrate his desire to know the truth, but also his newfound confidence in standing up for himself as he matures.*



Jacob and Miss Peregrine head to the greenhouse, and she begins her story. Long ago, people thought that peculiars were gods—but they aren't immortal. The time loops can help delay death but not escape it entirely. About a hundred years earlier, a group of peculiars thought they could use the time loops to reverse aging, so they could enjoy eternal youth even outside of a time loop. Her two brothers were interested in the idea and asked her to help with their plan. She insisted that this shouldn't be done, that it was dangerous and against the laws of nature, but they didn't listen.

Miss Peregrine's brothers, along with a few traitorous ymbrynes and several hundred peculiars, went to Siberia to make their plan a reality. They caused a massive explosion, but they survived—in a "living damnation." Only their shadows could be seen, except by peculiars like Jacob, and they attacked other peculiars. They "transformed themselves into devils" rather than gods. She believes that they reversed their aging so severely as to exist during a time before their souls or hearts existed—which is why they are called "hollowgast." They achieved immortality but now have a life of "constant physical torment," longing to feed on the flesh of other peculiars. If a hollow eats enough peculiars, it becomes a wight.

Wights, Miss Peregrine explains, have no peculiar abilities, but they pass for human, so they can act as spies for the hollows. Their goal is to kill all the peculiars and allow the hollows to become wights. Fortunately, they don't retain any memory from their former lives, so they don't know where the peculiars are hiding. She also gives Jacob some clues to identify wights: they lack pupils. Jacob then remembers the old man he saw watering his grandfather's lawn, whom he thought was blind. Miss Peregrine then shows Jacob an album with **photos** of wights who lived in society—as a mall Santa or an oral surgeon, for example. She shows Jacob a picture of a wight about to abduct a young peculiar, which the wight left behind as a dramatic gesture.

Miss Peregrine is showing Jacob the **pictures** because she needs his help: he is the only one who can go outside the loop, and he can watch for new arrivals on the island. Jacob remembers the birder who was watching him, and he wonders how the man could have known he was peculiar. Miss Peregrine explains that if the wights knew about his grandfather, they most certainly know about Jacob, too. Jacob starts to feel nauseous, realizing how vulnerable he's been since his grandfather died. He asks if he'll ever be safe anywhere, and she tells him that he'd be safe on the island.

*Miss Peregrine's story underscores the idea that a life of immortality is not something to be desired, because it is dangerous and unnatural. While the peculiars were often treated as gods, she understands that in reality, immortality can make life seem meaningless because it limits a person's options and opportunities so severely.*



*The hollowgast's transformation demonstrates that an immortal life is, in reality, quite empty. In portraying those who wanted immortality as soulless "devils" in a "living damnation" and "constant physical torment," the book emphasizes over and over that immortality robs existence of ultimate meaning, grotesquely distorting human desires by causing hollowgast to prey upon other peculiars.*



*Here the book makes explicit another way in which the peculiars face dangerous threats because of their differences. The hollows and wights target the peculiars specifically because they are peculiar and not just because they differ from mainstream society, as outsiders might. Moreover, the fact that the hollows and wights lack memories is another illustration of the fact that their immortal lives carry little meaning, because they have given up their humanity in order to achieve their perverted version of immortality.*



*Here Jacob starts to realize that he must face the same decision that his grandfather did: whether to remain on the island with a protected life but limited meaning, or to put himself in danger outside of the time loop. Jacob's realization of how vulnerable he's been also highlights that his grandfather and Miss Peregrine's decision to hide the truth from him—even though it was meant for his protection—really only made the situation worse. This realization suggests that deception, even for seemingly good reasons, is never worth it.*



Jacob returns to town at dawn, crawling into bed just before his dad stirs from his drunken sleep. Jacob sleeps until late that afternoon, waking to find a nice note and flu pills his dad left for him. Then, thinking about his dad alone in the fields, Jacob starts to worry and throws on a jacket to go searching for him. Jacob doesn't find either his dad or the birder, and so he returns to the Priest Hole at dusk, where he finds his father. Jacob warns him to keep his distance from the birder, suggesting that he might have killed the sheep. Jacob's dad wonders why Jacob is saying this. For a moment Jacob wants to explain everything—he even wants to go back to his life before knowing anything about Miss Peregrine's. But instead, they talk about insubstantial things until Jacob goes upstairs, alone.

*Again, the book illustrates the complicated nature of family. His dad clearly cares about Jacob and wants to take care of him, but at the same time, they still struggle to meaningfully connect. This also continues the pattern of Jacob struggling to be fully honest with his dad, even though he has been frustrated when others withhold the truth from him. Not only does this show Jacob's developing maturity, but it also demonstrates how a pattern of lies can damage a relationship—Jacob continues hiding the truth from his dad, because based on past lies, he's afraid his dad won't believe him.*



## CHAPTER 10

Jacob's talk with Miss Peregrine is on Tuesday night, and he and his dad are supposed to leave that Sunday, in just a few days. Jacob doesn't know what to do—he can't leave his family and everything he knows, but he can't go home after learning all he's learned. Moreover, Jacob can't get advice from anyone: he can't talk to his dad, and Emma and Miss Peregrine are biased, wanting him to stay. Jacob remembers that his grandfather had chosen to leave for a reason as well. But at the same time, Jacob knows he would live his life as a hunted man.

*In this passage, Jacob faces many of the same struggles that his grandfather did, and being able to make this choice and determine what he wants to do is a key part of his coming of age process. Within those decisions, Jacob struggles to choose between his biological family and his chosen family, knowing that he loves both and that no matter what, he'll feel caught between them to some degree.*



Jacob wonders about a third option, like the life his grandfather led. But Jacob realizes that compared to his grandfather, he can't defend himself at all. A voice in his head starts making him doubt himself, calling himself "weak" and a "loser." The voice says that that's why his grandfather didn't tell Jacob who he really was—he knew Jacob couldn't handle it.

*Even though Jacob is trying to find a greater degree of self-determination, he still has a ways to go to come into himself as a confident young man. In making this decision, his old insecurities come through in the disparaging voice in his head.*



For the next few days, Jacob obsesses over what to do; meanwhile, his dad spends more and more time in the bar sulking. The drunker he gets, the more he starts telling Jacob about his problems, like his belief that Jacob's mom is going to leave him. Jacob spends more time avoiding him. Meanwhile, at Miss Peregrine's, the children are essentially locked down in the **house**, with rotating sentries keeping watch. The kids start to go a little wild, being cooped up all day.

*The twin situations with Jacob's dad and with the children at Miss Peregrine's home only show Jacob the difficult sides of his decision: the strain in his family dynamic and the restrictions of life in the children's home. The lockdown at Miss Peregrine's, and the kids' wildness as a result, demonstrate the overall limitations of the peculiars' lives there.*



Miss Peregrine smokes her pipe all day while in constant motion, checking on the children. Miss Avocet is also still there, and the children theorize why the hollows are trying to capture ymbrynes. But being confined to the **house** makes them apathetic and unhappy. One night, Jacob experiences Horace's peculiar talent for the first time—Horace is caught in a waking nightmare, screaming terribly and babbling about an apocalyptic event. They carry him to bed, and the next moment he claims he can't remember the dream. He explains that his dreams rarely come true, but Jacob senses Horace is hiding something.

Meanwhile, people have begun disappearing from Cairnholm: Martin disappeared, and the next day his body was fished out of the ocean. The fisherman who found Martin explained that it looked like Martin fell down a cliff and was eaten by sharks. He was dressed for bed, not for taking a walk. Men in the pub wonder if he was drunk, or if he was chased—or if there's something suspicious about the new birder.

Jacob's dad admits he ran into the birder as the man was walking out of town two nights earlier. He was trying to be intimidating, but when Jacob's dad spoke to him, the man just walked off. Jacob asks if anything was strange about his face, and his dad admits that he was wearing sunglasses at night. Jacob realizes then that the birder is almost certainly a wight, and he has to get back to Miss Peregrine.

The weather foils Jacob's plan to return: a massive storm is rolling in and the town goes on lockdown, shuttering windows and doors and tying up their boats. The mainland police can't collect Martin's body, so they store him in ice at the fishmonger's. Jacob has to get back to the children's **home**, so he fakes being sick, locks his room, and slips out the window and down the drainpipe. He tears down the path to the children's home, and when he arrives, he tells Miss Peregrine all that has happened in the town. Miss Peregrine is shocked, explaining that if hollows can't eat peculiars, they'll start to prey on common people instead, which is likely what happened to Martin.

Miss Peregrine makes an announcement, explaining that no one can leave the **house** for any reason. When Jacob protests that he needs to return to the town, Miss Peregrine refuses to let him leave as well—if the wights are following Jacob, he could be putting the children at risk. Jacob explains he needs to protect his dad and the other townspeople, and Miss Peregrine says that if he leaves, she asks that he never come back.

*Again, the book emphasizes the ways in which family can be both helpful and complicated. Miss Peregrine cares deeply about Miss Avocet and the children, but at the same time, she's effectively their jailer in the home. Just like Jacob, the children long for greater freedoms, but being stuck in the time loop means that they never really experience coming of age.*



*The book here foreshadows that there is something strange about the birder. Jacob already thinks that the birder is a wight who is disguising itself as the birder, and the fact that people are dying only illustrates the danger that they're all in—and which Miss Peregrine is trying to protect them from.*



*This passage essentially confirms that the birder is a wight, as Jacob knows that he is trying to hide his blank eyes. His presence on the island endangers the peculiars, but Jacob shows his growing maturity in that his first concern is not for himself, but for Miss Peregrine and the children.*



*The storm in the town reflects the growing turmoil that Jacob feels in his life and the sense of impending doom as the wights seem to be closing in on them. It is notable that in this moment, knowing that the birder is likely a wight, Jacob feels responsible for going back to the children and telling them what has happened. He now has a strong sense of belonging to the home, and as a result, he wants to help use his peculiar talents to help and protect the other children. Magic—or any difference—can help form bonds that enable communities to protect and support themselves.*



*Yet even as Jacob has a newfound loyalty to the peculiar children at the home, at the same time he feels responsible for his dad as well. This not only reflects Jacob's growing confidence to try and protect the adults around him, but also illustrates the pain that families can cause each other even well they're well-meaning.*



Jacob trudges upstairs to Emma's room, explaining what Miss Peregrine said to him. He tells her that he has to leave; he can't hide out while his dad is in danger. Emma insists on going with Jacob, even though there's a risk that if she stays out too long, she'll age very rapidly. But she wants to fight against the wights and the hollows—she explains that “living like this might just be worse than dying.” She tells the other kids in the room—Bronwyn, Millard, and Enoch—that she doesn't want to sit around and wait for the wights to show up at the **home**.

Millard protests, saying that they have no idea how to find the wights or the hollows—even though Jacob can see them, he doesn't necessarily know where to find them. Enoch then has an idea: revive Martin to find out all they can about what and who killed him. They decide that Jacob, Emma, Bronwyn, and Enoch will go together, but Millard wants no part of it.

After dinner, when the **house** is most chaotic, Jacob and Emma sneak out of the attic and onto the roof, where Bronwyn and Enoch are already waiting. Hanging onto Olive, who's come to help, the children slowly lower themselves to the ground. The group then runs through the bog and the cairn, finding the storm roaring on the other side. In the town, everything is shuttered, and they navigate to the fishmonger's shop. Bronwyn kicks the door in, and in the back of the shop, they shovel through the different cases of ice to find Martin's body.

Martin's body is completely torn up, with his face completely shredded and his torso open and empty of his vital organs. Seeing how damaged his body is, Enoch says it may not work—and even if Martin does wake up, he won't be happy. Enoch pulls a sheep heart from his pocket and convulses as he raises it above his head. When it doesn't seem to work, he pulls out three more hearts, and only on the last one does Martin wake up suddenly, as if shocked by a defibrillator.

Martin rises, trembling, and reaches out to Jacob. Speaking softly, Martin realizes he is dead. Jacob asks if he can remember what happened. Martin says “My old man” killed him, but Jacob doesn't know what that means. Martin explains that the old man slept so long before waking—and Martin always took such good care of the man. Martin spouts some poetry, and Jacob realizes that Martin mistook a hollowgast for the museum corpse, as Miss Peregrine told Jacob that hollows become visible when they're eating. Jacob asks where Martin saw the hollow, and Martin only says, “He came to my door.”

*Here Jacob illustrates just how much he's grown as a person. He has the confidence to make his own decisions and not bow to Miss Peregrine's ultimatum. Additionally, even though he has a new adopted family, he still clearly loves his biological family and wants to protect his dad in any way he can. Lastly, Emma's statement that living in the house might be worse than dying illustrates that having protection and immortality is not worth the restriction and lack of meaning in the children's lives; safety, in other words, is not the only thing that makes life worth living.*



*Using Enoch and Jacob's abilities to find the wights and hollows again shows how even though their peculiar abilities make them targets for the wights, it is those same abilities that make them special and give them a chance to defend themselves.*



*Olive and Bronwyn's abilities not only provide further examples of how the children's abilities make them special and capable, but they also show how supportive Jacob's found family is. Rather than letting him try and find out what's happening with the wights by himself, they offer to support him in whatever way they can—even putting their lives at risk by passing through the cairn to Jacob's timeline. This is a turning point, demonstrating that they care less about immortality and more about being able to live fuller lives of their own choosing.*



*The fact that Martin's body is so damaged as they try to revive it demonstrates that just because achieving immortality and reviving people from the dead is possible doesn't necessarily mean it's a good endeavor. This episode also emphasizes that the ability that makes Enoch different and an outcast also makes him special and protects himself and the others.*



*Martin's relative incoherence demonstrates how the ability to live beyond one's natural lifespan often goes hand in hand with a cursed existence. The hollowgast is also far more frightening than the museum corpse precisely because it's a kind of living corpse, its existence devoid of humanity. Both these disturbing phenomena suggest that immortality for its own sake isn't automatically a good thing.*



At that moment, the birder comes to the doorway with a flashlight and a pistol. He sees Martin, whose life is draining from his body. Bronwyn asks who the man is, and the man explains that that doesn't matter—what matters is he knows who they are, quoting facts about each of them. Scariest for Jacob, the man changes his voice drastically several times, revealing that he was Jacob's middle school bus driver, his family's landscaper—and, most startlingly, Dr. Golan. He pops out contact lenses to reveal completely white eyes.

Jacob is completely shocked, and Dr. Golan starts to say that he can still help Jacob. He can offer safety and money and give Jacob his life back if Jacob works with him and Malthus, gesturing to a shadow that appears in the doorway, accompanied by a disgusting smell. Golan offers a deal: help them find more peculiars and Jacob can live freely and not worry about being tracked down by a hollow. Jacob can see the appeal in the idea, but he knows he could never betray his friends, and he says he would rather die than help Golan.

Dr. Golan then leaves, saying Jacob has already helped him and setting Malthus on the children. Jacob asks Emma to shine a light on the shadowy figure, and when she conjures a fire, Jacob sees his nightmare come alive. The body is ancient and withering, with sharp teeth poking through a disturbing smile. Malthus opens his mouth, and three snake-like tongues emerge, slithering into the center of the room. Jacob is the only one that can see the hollow, but the others see its shadow on the wall. Jacob knows it's just toying with them because they're trapped.

Jacob says that the hollow is to the left, so they have to keep to the right and try for the door. Instead, Bronwyn throws one of the cases of ice at the hollow and then kicks out a section of wall, tossing the other kids through it. She then rams into the corner support, causing the building to collapse in on Malthus. The other kids cheer as they tear off into the night.

As they run, Jacob explains all he knows about Dr. Golan, and how the psychiatrist let him think that he was crazy, even though he clearly knew all along that Jacob was peculiar. He apologizes for not believing his grandfather and for telling the stories to a stranger. They run through the treacherous storm, slipping frequently, as Jacob occasionally spots Malthus behind them during lightning flashes. He knows that they can't outrun it, so he suggests that they split up, with the others going ahead to escape while he stays behind. Emma refuses to let him hang back alone, so she swerves off the path with Jacob while Bronwyn and Enoch keep running.

*The birder/Dr. Golan, who has turned out to be a wight, demonstrates to chilling effect that he has used different personas in order to track Jacob and the other peculiar children. In this way, the book hammers home the idea that lying and deception are completely manipulative and villainous tools.*



*This exchange shows how much Jacob has grown. Before, he lacked the confidence to be able to refuse Dr. Golan's offer. But now, supported by a newfound family and with a greater sense of belonging, Jacob has gained the confidence to do what he wants to do, rather than feel forced to do something because it's the easy path or because an adult is telling him to.*



*The children's confrontation with Malthus forces Jacob to face his worst nightmares—the nightmares that plagued him throughout the early part of the book. But rather than shrink away like before, he bands together with his friends, knowing that they can defend each other—for example, Emma can provide light, and he can tell the others where the hollow is in the room because of his peculiar ability. The friends' magic makes them targets, but it also provides them with mutual support and protection.*



*Bronwyn's abilities prove the same point that Jacob's does: even though her peculiar strength makes her unusual and a possible target, it also allows her to protect the other children in unique ways, even saving their lives.*



*In this passage, Jacob not only continues to show his confidence—bravely luring Malthus away from his friends and putting himself in danger—but he also maturely recognizes the mistakes that he made in the past and his determination to correct them. Moreover, the book illustrates just how cruel Dr. Golan's deception has been, making Jacob believe that he was losing his mind when Dr. Golan knew all along that Jacob's nightmares were real—again associating deception with complete villainy.*



Malthus follows Jacob and Emma like they planned, and they duck into a nearby shack, hoping the hollow is too stupid to follow them. Jacob realizes when he enters it that it's the shack filled with excrement—and at this moment, it's also filled with sheep. They move into another room in the shack that's filled with rusted tools, and Jacob takes down a pair of giant scissors to use as a weapon. Then, they see Malthus's tongue enter through an open window. It attempts to sniff out the kids, but the excrement masks their scent.

Malthus gives up and leaves, and Jacob turns to Emma and says that if they make it through this attack, he'll stay to protect them. Just as they're about to kiss, Malthus circles back and comes through the shack. The hollow tears sheep after sheep apart, making its way towards Jacob and Emma as the other animals all panic and scatter. Jacob gets an idea, running toward the door as a distraction to lure it away from Emma and taking off into the night.

Jacob reaches the bog, gaining an advantage because he knows exactly where to step, thanks to Emma. He runs into the cairn, but one of Malthus's tongues catches Jacob's ankle and pulls back. Jacob tries to stab the tongue with the shears, but to no avail. He turns around as he's pulled towards the hollow and stabs into the hollow's eye sockets, causing it to thrash and bleed a dark, thick fluid. The creature sinks into the bog, and Jacob can feel himself sinking too. He tries to paddle frantically and screams for help, and miraculously he sees a light—Emma. A tree branch lands in the water, and Emma pulls him out. Safe on the shore, he hugs Emma and feels proud that he was able to kill one of the monsters. Maybe he isn't as weak as he thought.

Jacob and Emma emerge from the cairn before the loop has been reset, with bombs flying overhead. Bronwyn, Enoch, and Hugh greet them, relieved. Jacob and Emma explain happily that they killed the hollow, while Hugh reveals that Dr. Golan kidnapped Miss Peregrine and Miss Avocet by threatening to kill the children with his gun. He forced them to change into birds and put them in a cage while locking the children in the basement. That's when Bronwyn and Enoch came back and let them out, but they don't know where the man went. He only left a **photo**, in which he makes it clear that he'll kill the women if they come after him.

*The shack filled with animal excrement also becomes another example of how Jacob has grown. Whereas earlier Dylan and Worm used the shack in order to prank and mock Jacob, now he is using it to his advantage, confusing the hollow with the scent and protecting Emma from danger—much as his grandfather might have done.*



*This passage shows just how much Jacob has grown up. He has his relationship with Emma, declares his own choice to remain with the children to protect them, and again bravely puts himself in danger so that Emma can escape. All of these culminate to show that a key part of Jacob's growing up process is in discovering his bravery and his ability to choose what he wants to do.*



*This is a major turning point for Jacob. Earlier in this very chapter, Jacob's self-deprecating voice mocked him that he was too weak to kill a hollow, and that he would either have to remain on the island or live in constant fear, never able to live up to his grandfather's legacy. But now, Jacob is able to slay a hollow—and as a result, he gains the confidence that pushes him past his childhood anxieties and helps him grow into a self-sufficient young adult.*



*This passage illustrates again how peculiars often become the target of evil beings just for being different—and the ymbrynes even more so because of their ability to manipulate time loops. But whereas Miss Avocet and Miss Peregrine were always treating their children as kids to be protected, now the kids are gaining their own confidence to lead and protect their caregivers and each other.*



The children think about where Dr. Golan might have gone, realizing that he'd have to get off the island. He must be inside the loop, because the storm outside the loop is too bad to get off the island. The children argue about the best way to go about finding him, particularly because he has a gun. But before they form a plan, Fiona approaches them, explaining that Millard followed the man, who didn't realize that he hadn't shut Millard in the basement. Millard saw that the man took Emma's boat, but the tide was too rough, so he had to pull onto the lighthouse's rock.

Jacob and the other children crawl to the edge of the cliff to stake out the lighthouse, the sky exploding with bombs. They realize the only way to get to the lighthouse is to swim to it, deciding that the best people to go are Jacob, Emma, Bronwyn, and Millard. They first swim out to the shipwreck, where they can pause and rest against the boat's hull. Emma concocts a plan: she and Jacob will distract Golan until Bronwyn sneaks up behind him and attacks him, while Millard goes for the birdcage.

Suddenly, a shot rings out, and the kids realize that Golan has seen them. Millard suggests that he can go first—he's the hardest to see. Millard sets out while Dr. Golan continues to fire at them, and suddenly, Jacob sees the outline of Millard's body, covered in red. He's been shot. The kids dive into the water, hoping to get away from the bullets, sharing the breathing tube. Rising to the surface again, they formulate a plan: they have to continue to the lighthouse because Millard might not make it if they turn back. Grabbing a piece of the ship's hull as a giant shield, Bronwyn explains that she'll carry Millard on her back.

The group gets to shore safely, protected by their shield. They see Dr. Golan just inside the lighthouse, holding the cage with two small birds. He threatens to shoot Miss Peregrine and Miss Avocet if they come any closer, but Jacob guesses this is a lie: he needs the women for some reason, otherwise he wouldn't have gone to the trouble of kidnapping them. Bronwyn speeds toward the lighthouse, still carrying the shield. She hurls it at Golan and hits him, causing him to fall back through the doorway. He then begins to climb the stairs inside. Having bought some time, Bronwyn tends to Millard's wound and tells Jacob and Emma to go on.

*Just like Jacob, Bronwyn, and Enoch, Millard's ability becomes critical in facing the threats that are targeting them. It is only because of his invisibility that the children are now able to follow Dr. Golan and rescue Miss Avocet and Miss Peregrine. Thus, the abilities that make them different and discriminated against are also the abilities that equip them to face those threats head-on.*



*This scene of turmoil shows how sheltered the peculiar children have been within the time loop—now having to dodge bombs as well as the threats from the hollows and wights, and all this without the protection they've been used to from Miss Avocet and Miss Peregrine. For the first time in a long time, they have the potential to come to real harm, demonstrating why their protection was so necessary in the first place.*



*Millard's injury demonstrates the gravity of their situation—that any of them might be shot and killed as they confront Dr. Golan. At the same time, the passage demonstrates how they are well-equipped to protect each other, as they use their peculiar talents to support each other and confront the demons that are trying to kill them.*



*It is perhaps ironic that they are headed to a lighthouse—which usually indicates a place of safe passage—and putting themselves in direct danger by doing so. This distorted symbolism suggests that while their environment might have been extremely safe, now, outside the shelter of the children's home, their environment threatens mortal peril.*



Emma and Jacob enter the lighthouse and begin to climb the spiral stairs, knowing that it's the only place they're protected from the gunshots. Jacob starts to rock the unsteady staircase, hoping he can force Golan to come down. Even better, as the staircase sways and screws come loose, the gun clatters down the stairs and lands next to Jacob, who picks it up. Emma and Jacob then start to climb until they reach a landing at the top of the lighthouse. On one side of them is the light, and on the other side a small rail, over which they can see they're ten stories above the rocks and the ocean.

Jacob tracks around one side of the lighthouse while Emma takes the other. Jacob finds Golan first, hunched against the railing with the bird cage between his knees, blood streaming down his face. He rises and runs, but Emma has him trapped on the other side. Jacob warns Golan to put the birdcage down, but Golan laughs; he knows Jacob doesn't have the guts to shoot him, and if he does, he'll throw the cage over the edge. Emma calls his bluff, saying that she doesn't need Miss Peregrine to babysit her anymore, conjuring a fiery weapon between her hands.

Jacob asks what Golan wants with the ymbrynes, and Golan explains that the hollows need all the ymbrynes working together to get their experiment right and live forever. Jacob remembers Horace's prophetic dream of the apocalypse and realizes what might happen if the wights and hollows fail again. Golan goes on, saying that the peculiars shouldn't have to hide from normal humans: they should rule over others and make them slaves. Then, seeing a little red light glow on the cage bars, Dr. Golan tosses the cage over the railing.

Emma screams, and in the confusion, Golan knocks Jacob to the ground, trying to wrestle the gun away. But Emma grabs Dr. Golan's neck, scalding his throat with her hands. He howls and grabs Emma's throat in turn, and Jacob points the gun at Dr. Golan and fires. For a moment, time freezes, and then Dr. Golan stumbles backward, blood gushing from his throat, and he dies.

*Jacob picking up the gun is again another symbolic shift in his development, as for so long, Jacob never felt he would have the confidence to pick up a gun or wield it like his grandfather. But here Jacob doesn't even hesitate: spurred by his desire to protect his friends, Jacob has no choice but to grow up and become a leader.*



*Dr. Golan's taunting recalls the anxieties and nightmares that plagued Jacob only a week prior. Dr. Golan knows this and surmises that Jacob still doesn't have the courage or confidence to do what needs to be done. Additionally, while this is Jacob's coming of age story, in a way the same is true of Emma and the other peculiar children. Now without an adult to guide them, they, too, are coming into their own and making their own decisions about how to confront their futures.*



*The book once again emphasizes the problems with attempting to achieve true immortality or god-like status. While the ability to not die is appealing, it often allows for cruelty (like Enoch's torture or "Raid the Village") simply because immortal beings have power over others who aren't immortal. Golan's grievances focus on this possibility—that instead of having to hide, the peculiars should invert their situation by oppressing those who once threatened them.*



*This moment shows how Jacob has grown over the course of a very short period of time. With this action, Jacob conquers his old insecurities—literally, by killing the psychiatrist who told him he was crazy and made him relive his nightmares. He has defeated both a hollow and a wight and wielded a gun where before he believed he was incapable, showing that his coming of age journey is nearly complete.*



Emma then points out the LED light on the cage bobbing on the waves in the distance. She and Jacob scramble down the stairs and dive into the sea, swimming as fast as they can. The current is strong, and they soon lose sight of the cage's light. Jacob tries to get Emma to return to shore, but they catch sight of the cage again; it looks as though it's resting on a shipwreck, rising toward them. Suddenly, a swell surges, and a giant U-boat emerges from the water, catching Jacob and Emma on its deck. Jacob thinks this is what Golan must have been waiting for, and what the little red light signaled.

Emma starts running toward the cage, until a man in a grey uniform begins shooting at them, and Jacob tackles Emma out of the way and into the water. The lighthouse light passes over them, and Jacob sees that the soldier is a wight—he has no irises. The soldier grabs the cage and pulls out one bird. The other, Emma realizes, is floating in the water—Miss Peregrine. Emma scoops Miss Peregrine up, and she and Jacob swim away with their remaining strength, until they're close enough to the shore that Bronwyn can pull them out of the surf.

After recovering a little, Jacob, Emma, Bronwyn, and Millard take Emma's canoe back to shore. There, the other children cheer at their return, but they quickly notice Miss Avocet's absence and Millard's frightening condition. They also realize that something is wrong with the time loop—it should have reset an hour earlier. They try to encourage Miss Peregrine to turn back, but she seems unable to turn back into a human. Returning to the [house](#), they hope that after some time to rest, Miss Peregrine and the loop will go back to normal.

## CHAPTER 11

When the children reach the [house](#), they see that a bomb has completely destroyed it; small fires burn everywhere. Miss Peregrine squawks in terror but still seems unable to turn back. They wonder if this is why the loop isn't working: perhaps Miss Peregrine injured her head and can't control her powers. They decide that the best course of action is to figure out where the wights are taking the ymbrynes. Horace starts to draw a scene from his dreams with the soot: a dark forest, snow on the ground, and a severe building covered in razor wire. The problem is, Horace doesn't know exactly where this building is.

*Jacob and Emma's determination to retrieve Miss Peregrine and Miss Avocet shows how important found family is to them. Even though Emma said that she could live without Miss Peregrine "babysitting her," that doesn't mean she doesn't love her, and indeed she's willing to risk her life for her guardian.*



*The book again creates parallels between the wights and hollows and the Nazi regime, particularly by demonstrating that the wights are using German U-Boats and dressing as soldiers to carry out their plans. In this way, the story reinforces the idea that the peculiar children are being singled out and targeted for their differences, much as Nazis targeted Jews.*



*While the children are celebrating, the passage also strikes an ominous tone as they recognize a crucial shift in their lives. They no longer have the security of Miss Peregrine or the time loop; Millard's condition also suggests that they may not be as protected or immortal as they think they are. In this way, the book foreshadows the fact that they are passing into a new phase of their lives—a progression they have not experienced for some time.*



*The house's destruction represents the idea that the children no longer have the same protection that they once did—but nor do they have the same restriction. Now, without the house and the time loop tying them to the island, the kids are free to seek out any place they choose—in this case, hoping to save Miss Avocet and confront the wights before they do even further damage in their pursuit of immortality.*



Enoch and Emma argue about what to do. Emma wants to go in search of the place, while Enoch thinks it's too risky. But Emma insists that if they stay, the wights and hollows will simply return. Emma suggests that finding another ymbryne can help them fix their loop, and gradually the others agree. They decide to abandon the **house**, scavenging a few medical supplies to help Millard and a peculiar atlas to help them find other loops. By jumping from one loop to another, they can go very far back in the past. They worry that the wights have likely found many of the other ymbrynes, but Jacob insists that he'll protect the others.

Emma is grateful that Jacob wants to stay with them, but she admits that if he comes with them, the loop will close behind them and he may never be able to return to his own time. Jacob assures her that he has nothing holding him to that time anymore—he's not sure he wants to go back. But still, he considers what she's saying, taking a walk alone. He thinks that even if he goes home, that world would still be dangerous, threatened by wights, and he would live in constant fear for his family. Or, he could go with the children who, for the first time, are planning out their future. When Jacob returns, he tells Emma he's coming with her—but that he has one thing he has to do first.

Jacob returns to the 21st century just before dawn. His dad is still asleep, and rather than wake him, Jacob writes a letter, trying to explain as best he can what has happened. But Jacob quickly realizes that he'd sound insane, so instead, he throws the letter in the trash. Just then, his dad appears in Jacob's room, asking where Jacob has been. When Jacob explains that he's been with his friends, his dad grows furious, sick of Jacob's lies. Just as Jacob starts to protest, Emma (with her fire), Olive (levitating), and Millard (who appears to be a floating bandage), enter the room. Jacob's dad wonders if he's still asleep, but Jacob explains that he's not.

Jacob reveals to his dad that he's going away and doesn't know when he'll be back. Jacob's dad doesn't really understand, so he wanders back to bed. Just before he goes, though, he tells Jacob to be careful. After his dad has left, Emma gives Jacob a **picture** of her and Abe, hoping that this will provide some proof that she was real. She writes his dad a note on the back, and Jacob retrieves his own letter from the trash, hoping that his dad will believe him. Emma's note explains that Jacob is telling the truth, that they'll keep each other safe, and that Abe was an honorable man.

*Here again, Jacob and Emma both show their transformations. For so long, Emma was waiting for Abe to return so that they could be together; likewise, Jacob felt that others were determining his life path. Now, both are able to gain control of their lives, suggesting a newfound maturity and confidence in their ability to lead and protect the other peculiar children. This suggests, too, that the peculiar children create a sense of belonging and protection for each other as a community even more than the Miss Peregrine's home ever did.*



*Again, for the first time in Jacob's life, he realizes that he has the ability to make his own decisions, and he can forge a life independent of his family's expectations of him—both his biological family and the family that he has created with the peculiar children. It makes sense, then, that the path that is most exciting to Jacob is the one in which he has the ability to map out a new path for himself and lead the other children, because he has a newfound confidence which allows him to do so.*



*This exchange with Jacob's dad puts a final point on the fact that lies—and patterns of concealing the truth—can be really damaging to a relationship. Jacob has spent so much time making up stories about what he's been doing that now his dad doesn't know what to believe—and even the truth, Jacob knows, will sound like a lie to his father. It is only when Jacob can demonstrate the truth to his dad that they can finally have a real conversation about what's been happening—something that Abe never did and which created resentment in their relationship as a result.*



*Though the reader never sees Jacob's dad's reaction to the photo that Emma leaves, Jacob's dad's advice that Jacob should be careful suggests that they have or will achieve some closure between them—and with Abe as well. This is something that only telling the full truth has allowed them to do, a reminder that deception is self-defeating. Moreover, even though Jacob is going off with his found family, this exchange shows that his dad is still extremely important to him, and that for all their conflict, they want each other to be happy.*



Jacob and the kids return to the cairn, saying goodbye to their loop. They bury Victor sadly and say goodbye to the **house**, taking just a few things that they can carry. They venture into the village, where people are so shocked that they hardly notice the peculiar children. It's September 4th for the first time in a long time, and the kids feel more alive than ever. Jacob does, too.

At one time, Jacob dreamed of escaping what he thought was an ordinary life, but now he realizes that he just failed to realize how extraordinary his life was. Now, it's impossible to return to, just like the children's **home**. The kids, along with Miss Peregrine in bird form, set out in three rowboats, and Bronwyn takes **pictures** of them on an old camera. They take none of their photo albums—perhaps now they'll make a new one, which Jacob might show to his grandkids someday. And then, on the horizon, they see a set of battleships. They row faster.

*This passage emphasizes the idea that life only carries meaning because, at some point, it ends. The kids understand that they must finally bury Victor, and that a life of constantly reviving him was pointless because it was a life devoid of meaning. On the other hand, now that the children lack the protection of the home and are actually aging and moving forward for the first time in a long time, their lives feel more meaningful than ever.*



*This final passage provides a bookend with the opening of the book, in which Jacob dreamed of being an explorer. Now, he has the opportunity to actually achieve that dream, showing how he has come of age enough to determine what he wants to do with his life. Moreover, ending with Bronwyn taking new photos suggests that the kids are no longer stuck in the past—they are creating new memories for a meaningful future. Jacob's thought that he will someday show the photos to his own grandkids suggests that like his grandfather, he believes that only by living, growing, and knowing that life will someday end can he find meaning in the present.*





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