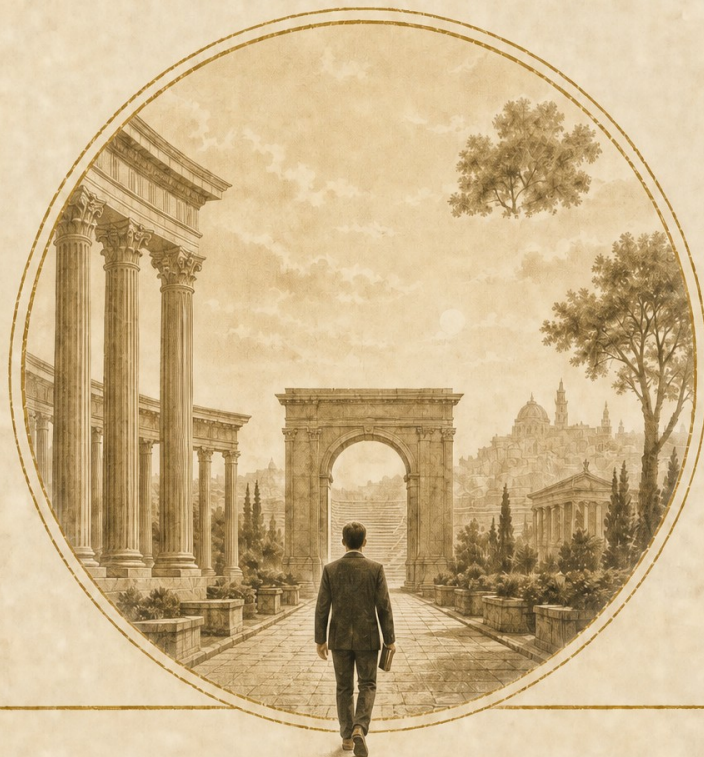


THE THIRD PHASE



BACKSTAGE

A Companion Guide

JOHN C. ADAMS

THE THIRD PHASE

— BACKSTAGE —

A Companion Guide

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

CHOOSE · EDUCATE · LOVE

FEAR · TRUST · RULE

Questions, connections, and ties to two of the greatest books ever written.

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This Companion Guide is designed to prompt discussion and thought surrounding *The Third Phase*. It will help a reader unpack some of the more subtle messages and themes, as well as some internal and external points of connection.

It comes in three parts, and each one goes a level deeper than the last.

Two things to have to hand

The Character Map, which is reprinted in full immediately after this introduction. *Several questions assume you have it in front of you*, and **Part One's opening exercise is built directly on it.**

And the Author's Note, at the back of the novel. *It is worth re-reading before you start here. It names several of the threads this Companion follows, and a good deal of what follows will make more sense with it fresh in mind.*

THE THREE PARTS

Part One — Discussion Guide

Open-ended questions, organized by the novel's own Parts, and written to be read *alongside* the book rather than after it.

Nothing in Part One looks ahead. The questions for Part Two of the novel assume you have read Parts One and Two and nothing more. **You can finish a Part, turn to the corresponding questions, discuss them, and go back to reading without knowing anything you were not supposed to know yet.**

There are no right answers here, and no answer guide. **These are questions written to prompt lively conversation.**

Part Two — Going Deeper

Questions organized by theme rather than by chapter, and written for readers who have finished the book.

Where Part One asks what you noticed, **Part Two asks you to hold the whole story in your head at once** — to follow a phrase across many years, to set two characters beside each other who may never share a scene, to find the answer to a question asked long before it is answered.

Each section carries its own answer key, at the end of that section. The keys do more than name the answer: *where a wrong answer is a tempting one, they give the reasons that a tempting-but-not-best answer wasn't quite right.*

Part Two closes with three games. The first asks you to name the pivotal verb behind eighteen lines from the novel. The second is a matching exercise: **thirty-two things the novel plants, and the places**

they eventually pay off. The third is a crossword, built entirely out of the book's own vocabulary — its characters, its places, its coined terms, and the several languages its names come from.

Part Three — Outside the Book

Questions that leave the novel and set it beside the two works it is most in conversation with: *Plato's Republic* and *St. Augustine's Confessions*.

Everything you need is supplied in the summary introductions or in the questions themselves — no prior reading is assumed, and passages are quoted where they are needed. ***But you may want the two books in hand.*** *A few of these questions are best done with a copy open on the table. The author certainly encourages everyone to read these two masterpieces — perhaps the greatest books of the first millennia BC and AD respectively.*

WHICH PART NEEDS WHAT

	When	What you need
Part One	<i>While reading</i>	The novel
Part Two	<i>After finishing</i>	The novel
Part Three	<i>After finishing</i>	The novel, plus — ideally — the <i>Republic</i> and the <i>Confessions</i>

HOW PEOPLE ARE LIKELY TO USE THIS

All three Parts are relevant to every kind of reader. The only real question is how deeply you want to take the investigation.

Alone. Read a Part, sit with the questions, argue with yourself, **probe what you believe.** *Key parts of the book occur inside one man's head.*

Two of you. Couples and friends reading at the same pace will find that the questions are written to prompt lively discussion. **Intriguing discussions will no doubt follow questions you answered differently.**

A group. Book clubs, reading groups, church and parish groups. **No member needs to have read ahead of any other,** and a group that has finished the novel can work anywhere in the Companion it likes. ***Undoubtedly some groups will find Part One sufficient; Parts Two and Three are there for readers who want to go further, alone or in a more intensive setting.***

A class or a seminar. All three Parts will bear that kind of attention. ***Part Three is the natural fit***, since it sets the novel beside a founding text of political philosophy and a founding text of Christian autobiography.

ONE THING TO CARRY WITH YOU

Before you start, take six verbs:

choose · educate · love · fear · trust · rule

Watch them. Notice how each one changes across the story, and — this is the more interesting half — **notice which characters reach for which.** Some people in this novel never say *choose*. Some never say *love*. Some use *rule* the way other people just breathe.

By the end you will find that the six verbs have arranged themselves, and that the arrangement is much of what the book has to say.

A NOTE ON HOW TO ANSWER

Take the questions slowly, and resist the first answer.

Most of what is worth finding here is one layer below the obvious reading. **A question that seems to have a plain answer usually has a second one underneath it**, and the second one is generally the reason the question is in the Companion.

And where two answers both seem right, say so. Several of these questions do not have a single correct answer. ***Disagreement with the suggested answer — or proposing a better one — would make for a dynamic discussion for all involved.***

THE CHARACTER MAP

Reprinted from the novel, in full. Several questions in this Companion assume you have it in front of you — and Part One's opening exercise is built directly on it.

LATIN AMERICA

Carlos Smith, *Bolivia* — **Principal protagonist.** Smith is the most common last name in English, thus Carlos is meant to represent “everyman,” or, given his multiethnicity, he represents “the world” or “humanity” in general.

Gabriella — *Carlos's wife.* Her name refers to being “angelic” — the female version of “Gabriel,” angel from the Bible.

Hector Ramirez — *Drug cartel leader.* See the footnote below regarding the significance of his name relative to Rosey.

Diego Lucha — *Corrupt politician.* He wrestles with a significant moral dilemma. *Lucha* means conflict or struggle.

Nana, *Colombia* — Carlos's maternal grandmother.

UNITED STATES

Rosey Hernandez, *Miami* — **Core Team member.** See the footnote below regarding the significance of her name relative to Hector.

Francesca Smith, *Missouri and Miami* — *Carlos's mother.* Her name relates to St. Francis of Assisi — one of the most Christlike persons known to history.

Sophia — *Carlos and Gabriella's daughter.* Greek word for **wisdom**.

James, *from California* — Tech member of the Core Team.

Eva Goode, *DC* — *Department of Education.* Her first name mirrors Eve — original temptress to sin; “Eva” is the Greek version of Eve. Her last name is her perception of herself, but is it correct? ***Ultimately, she will confront the question: What is the Form of the “Good”?***

David O'Brian, *DC* — *CIA.* His first name is for King David from the Bible — a character who sees a higher mission, but is morally flawed — and his last name is taken from the principal “bad guy” from *1984*, with slightly different spelling. He also has an Irish name, denoting his Catholic upbringing.

Destiny Jones — *US House of Representatives, Democrat.* Her name is the English word “destiny.” **She is going places — whether deserved or undeserved.**

Phillip Saurian, *Texas* — *US Senate, Republican.* *Saurian* is an English word meaning “of or like a lizard.”

Grandpa — Carlos's paternal grandfather.

MIDDLE EAST

Azadi, Iran — **Core Team member.** *Azadi* is the Farsi/Persian word for **freedom.**

Anwar, Palestine — *Arab leader seeking peace with Israel.* Anwar is named for Anwar Sadat.

Papa, Palestine — Carlos's maternal grandfather.

EUROPE

Uvidende Velmenende — *EU bureaucrat and leader.* She is a representation of the classic "ivory tower" commentator. **Her name means "well-intentioned, clueless."**

CHINA

Zihao, Haipa, Wuqing — *Communist Party leaders.* Their names mean **"proud/pride," "fear," and "ruthless."**

Jack — **Core Team member.** His Chinese name is Xiaoxin, which means "careful."

Grandma — Carlos's paternal grandmother.

AFRICA

Mnyama — *African warlord.* His name means **"animal."**

Elimu — *poor villager in Africa.* His name means **"education."**

Hamu Abara — *Elimu's son.* First name means "eager." *Abara* is a common last name in East Africa meaning **"spirit."**

Footnote — Rosey Hernandez and Hector Ramirez. While the specific words in their names do not mean anything particular, **the fact that the cadence of their names is the same and the initials are opposite is not an accident.**

Hector depicts one who thinks of himself as a Nietzschean Übermensch. Rosey — both directly and through her education of Carlos — represents the philosophy of Plato.

PART ONE — DISCUSSION GUIDE

Read alongside the novel. Each section assumes you have read that far and no further.

There is no answer guide to this Part, and that is deliberate. None of these questions has a single right answer, and the ones worth the most time are the ones a group will answer differently. Parts Two and Three have answer guides at the end of each section; this one does not need one.

PART ONE — *Fame and Fortune*

As you read, notice three things. How each character is introduced, and what the introduction withholds. And the second number in every chapter title.

The character introductions

- What are the similarities in the character introductions? What are the differences?

Three questions about each of these characters — Rosey, Anwar, Hector, Azadi, Carlos, Zihao, Haipa, Jack, Uvidende, Francesca:

1. What was your impression of each based **solely on the Character Map**?
2. What **one word** would you use to describe each, based on the scene where they are introduced?
3. What kinds of things do you expect each of them might do in the future?

The frame

- What things does the reader learn in the Prologue?
- When did you figure out the chapter title number puzzle? **Be honest!** :-)

Justice and morality

- Identify three questions about **the nature of justice** that stem from the character introductions.
 - Identify three **moral** questions.
 - How do morality and justice interact?
-

PART TWO — *Criminals and Saints*

As you read, notice three things. What Francesca's email asks the world to do. The first time someone names what is wrong with the world. And watch *educate* — this is the Part where it becomes a political program rather than a private good.

Knowledge and wisdom

- What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom?
- How do we get more of each?
- How does Francesca think about personal growth? The arts? History?
- What is the link between history and art, and wisdom?
- What is the link between history and art, and morality?
- Why do we experience joy in becoming more wise and more moral?

The few ruling the many

- Why does Azadi — the personification of *freedom* — fight so hard to combat the few ruling the many?

- Come up with some examples of the few ruling the many in the world. In your country. In your community. **Now think more deeply and come up with some subtle examples.** Are you ever guilty of trying to be “the few” ruling “the many” in your own life?
- What does wisdom teach about that last question?

The journal

- What roles do the journal entries play in the novel?
- What is the relationship between the journal entry at the beginning of Part Two, where Carlos says God is dead to him, and the Core Team meeting that immediately follows?

Grief and guilt

- How would you describe the various facets of Carlos’s grief?
- Compare the feeling of guilt among Gabriella, Carlos, Eva, Diego and Haipa — and how each of them addresses those feelings.

Belief, belonging and government

- What are the key elements of Eva’s recruiting pitch to David?
- How should a gay person think about religion?
- List three key things that are “wrong with the world.”
- How does Uvidende’s view of the role of government differ from the Core Team’s?
- How is her view similar to David and Eva’s?
- What do you think of the question of whether belief, fear and love are things we choose or things that happen to us?
 - Is your answer the same for all three?

Education

- What is the relationship between education and wisdom?
- What is the relationship between education and “the few ruling the many”?
- How are Destiny and Uvidende similar in how they see parental guidance?

PART THREE — *Wisdom and Justice*

As you read, notice three things. What True Democracy actually requires of a citizen. Which characters are given power and which are given influence. And watch rule — who claims the right to it, and on what grounds.

True Democracy

- What are the key ways True Democracy would make our system better?
- Who would see True Democracy as a threat?
- What is the relationship between True Democracy and freedom?

- What is the relationship between freedom and wisdom?

The few ruling the many

- What is the relationship between “the few ruling the many” and money in politics?
- What is the relationship between “the few ruling the many” and crime?
- What does Diego learn about wisdom, justice, morality, education, freedom and crime?
- Compare and contrast the Society and the Final Dynasty. What does that reveal about wisdom and justice?

Morality, education and wealth

- Is morality something we make up, or is it something we discover?
 - To what degree is AIEdu a metaphor for moral education? For the Information Age itself?
 - To what degree is it a tool that True Democracy can harness?
 - What is the relationship between wealth and the health of a society?
 - What does Carlos learn about education as he reflects back on the lessons of his parents and grandparents?
 - What does that say about wisdom, justice and morality?
 - How does that compare with your answer to the last question of Part Two?
-

PART FOUR — *Neighborhoods and Asylums*

As you read, notice three things. What the Society says it is for. Which arguments are answered and which are only interrupted. And watch *fear* — who manufactures it, who submits to it, and who refuses it.

The nightmare

- List the aspects of the nightmare scene that tie to prior parts of the book.
 - What does the dream teach about our inner monologue?
 - What does it teach about wisdom?
- What parallels do you see with Francesca’s email in the Core Team meeting at the beginning of Part Two?

The Society

- To what degree is the Society a religion to Eva?
- Compare David and Eva’s view of the future of mankind to the vision of Rosey, Azadi and Carlos.
- What does this mean for “progress”?
- Do you see some of the Society’s “tricks of the trade” in our political system today?
 - How would True Democracy address those?

Front and back

- Does the discussion of “front versus back” in politics shade your views about “right versus left”?
- Why do Eva and David call political parties perhaps the Society’s greatest invention?
 - What is the relationship between political parties and “the few ruling the many”?

Trust and responsibility

- How does “trust” factor into the discussion of education, wisdom, justice and morality?
- The Core Team has faced “does the end justify the means” questions thus far in the book. **How have they done, in your view?**
- Rosey raises the “just doing our job” problem. How would Diego think about that?
- How has Uvidende earned her name?

The Trinity

- Elimu tries three times to tell his son what God is, and gives up. **God is like . . . everything. Well, no, that’s not exactly right. God is like a person. No, not quite that either. God is spirit, um . . .**
 - What does his garbled attempt say about the Trinity?
 - Why might a father who cannot finish the sentence be the right person to attempt it?

Villains and vocabulary

- How is Mnyama even more ruthless than Hector, yet somehow more likeable?
- How are Hector, Mnyama and Zihao similar to David and Eva regarding “the few ruling the many”?
- Compare the very brief conversation between Mnyama and the village woman with Francesca’s email.

Speeches and inner life

- What are three key takeaways from the Churchill conversation?
- Why does Carlos call every group of people “freedom loving”?
 - What does this say about the goals of the Core Team?
 - What does it say about “the few ruling the many”?
- What is the significance of Carlos’s inner monologue **about his inner monologue**?
 - Is that a breakthrough in his “education”?
 - What would Socrates likely say about that dialectic?

PART FIVE — *Fear and Love*

As you read, notice three things. What changes in Carlos, and what does not. What is given up, and by whom. And watch love and trust — the two verbs the whole book has been withholding until now.

Evil, fear and love

- What does Sophia’s Mother’s Day story say about the problem of evil?

- What is the relationship between fear, love and trust?
- How is Gabriella's life a metaphor for human history?

Faith, soul and time

- What is the relationship between faith and education?
- What is the relationship between Carlos's questions "what are we anyway" and "what is a soul," and the discussion of "forever" versus "eternity"?
- Why is it so hard to describe a mystical experience? Why are they so fleeting?
- Why does Sophia say "faith is enough"?

Politics and sacrifice

- How does True Democracy address the "politicians buying votes" question?
- What is the significance of Carlos "sacrificing his child" — the LSA?
- Can you think of an example of a nation state sacrificing itself?

Fairness and what we love

- Is our obsession with fairness a good thing?
 - What does it tell us about wisdom and education?
 - What do David and Eva learn about loving the wrong things?
 - What did the old man mean when he said "we are all just messengers"?
 - What is the meaning of *the Third Phase* as explained in the Athens speech?
-

EPILOGUE

As you read, notice three things. What the eulogy chooses to dwell on, and what it disposes of in a line. How many meanings the title turns out to have. And who is speaking the last words in the book.

- What does a truly global free market of ideas mean for education? For religion?
- What is the **psychological** meaning of *the Third Phase* in the Epilogue?
 - How does this relate to the discussion of individuals versus nations?
- What is the **spiritual** meaning of *the Third Phase* in the Epilogue?
 - How does this relate to Carlos's statement about "grace" when he was a brand new believer?
- Can you give examples of prayer being answered in the book?
 - How did those answers differ from the supplicant's expectations — in terms of *how*, and in terms of *when*?
- What is the connection between Carlos's last line to Sophia and the Bolivia barn meeting with David and Eva?
- What is the relationship between justice and mercy?

- Sophia closes the eulogy — and the book — by reading her grandmother's prayer aloud. **She could have ended on her father's last words, or on the vote, or on anything of her own. Why does she give the last word to Francesca?**
- If one were to realize they are eternal, how would that change them?
 - How would that help them change the world?
 - Is this an education in wisdom?
 - How would it change how that person thinks about love?

PART TWO — GOING DEEPER

Questions for readers who have finished the book. Organised by theme rather than by chapter.

Each section carries its own answer guide, at the end of that section. Work a section, then check it. Every answer opens with a one-line reminder of what was asked, so you need not turn back.

THE KINDS OF QUESTIONS

Parts Two and Three use five formats. Each is doing a different job.

MULTIPLE CHOICE. *Four options — and what is being asked for is the **best** answer, not the only defensible one.*

This matters, so it is worth saying plainly. Some of the other three options are also true. A wrong answer here is often a perfectly good reading of the surface — just not the one that goes furthest. The answer key names the most tempting of them and takes it seriously, because the reason a wrong answer is attractive is often where the interesting material is.

ECHO PAIR. *Two quotations, unattributed. Work out who says each, what they have in common, and what the pairing suggests. In some cases the two speakers never meet, and would disagree about a good deal else.*

ODD ONE OUT. *Four items, three of which share something. Find the one that does not belong. The odd item is usually less informative than the thread joining the other three, so the answer guide spends most of its space on the three.*

SHORT ANSWER. *No options — a direct question with a specific answer. Used where three plausible-sounding alternatives would add bulk without adding thought.*

TRACE IT. *No options — an instruction to go back into the novel and find something. A phrase across five decades, every use of a word, a chain of scenes nobody in the book connects. These can be the slowest questions, but they usually have built-in guidance.*

SECTION I — THE WRAPPING

How the novel is built: what it withholds, what it plants, and what it tells you without saying.

How is this book made? Watch *educate* — almost everything here is the novel teaching the reader how to read it.

I.1 • SHORT ANSWER

Status Profundus, the name spoken aloud only once and never written down, is a word-for-word Latin rendering of a modern political term. **Which one — and why is the joke worth noticing?**

I.2 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Mnyama tells the villagers that everyone is an animal and he and his men are simply the smart animals with the guns. Which earlier character in the novel holds the same position, and where does the novel draw the line between them?

A. Diego Lucha, who assures himself he is not hurting anyone directly **B.** Anwar's brother, who says the Israelis are satanic and deserve to suffer **C.** Zihao, who tells Haipa that China did not become great by quibbling over the perceived morality of the uninformed masses **D.** Hector Ramirez, who tells Diego that power is the root motivation and that money, fame, glory and even love are only manifestations of it

I.3 • SHORT ANSWER

Anwar's girlfriend, and eventually his wife, Jeshia is mentioned only briefly, but her name carries weight. **What does it echo — and what does she do in the scene that the echo is doing twice?**

I.4 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

The Author's Note identifies three allusions to the Allegory of the Cave. **Which of the following is not one of them?**

A. Carlos's dying dream, in which he leaves a cave, walks into a forest, and is greeted by the dead of Red Circle Day **B.** Journal #25000, in which Carlos describes his first sixty-three years as seeing the world through shadows **C.** Eva inside *Status Profundus* — an unwritten world she has never left, whose picture of reality she takes for the whole of it **D.** Jeshia leaving the cocoon, learning what is outside, returning to report — and being immediately marked for death

I.5 • SHORT ANSWER

In journal #8257, Carlos jokes that if the atheist scientist tells him his daughter is just a bag of chemicals, he will punch him and then plead that there is no free will.

Which event in the same section gives the joke its symbolic weight?

I.6 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Part Two opens with journal #4988, in which Carlos writes that whether or not God exists, he can decide God is dead to him — and does. What immediately follows, and why does the sequence matter?

A. Francesca's funeral, establishing grief as the cause of his unbelief **B.** Eva's recruitment of David, pairing Carlos's unbelief with the Society's **C.** The Core Team meeting in which Rosey reintroduces him to Plato's *Republic* **D.** The AIEdu press conference, in which technology takes the place he has emptied

I.7 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Eva tells David that the Society finds politicians easy to direct because the aptitude that wins an election is not the aptitude that governs. Which character is a prime example of her claim?

A. Diego Lucha **B.** Uvidende Velmenende **C.** Destiny Jones **D.** David O'Brian

I.8 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Journal #197, written at thirteen, and journal #16955, written at fifty-nine, take up the same question in very different conditions. What is it, and what has changed?

A. Whether God exists — at thirteen he doubts, at fifty-nine he is certain **B.** Whether prayer accomplishes anything — at thirteen he refuses to pray, at fifty-nine he has become a man of prayer **C.** The problem of evil — at thirteen he indicts God out of grief, at fifty-nine he asks whether a life with nothing to forgive would be worth choosing **D.** Whether the soul is immortal — at thirteen he fears death, at fifty-nine he has made peace with it

I.9 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

In Chapter 24, Carlos tells the Churchill avatar about Socrates drawing the Pythagorean theorem out of an uneducated slave boy. Churchill recalls Plato's point that knowledge is recollection. What does Carlos say Rosey draws from the same passage?

A. That knowledge is recollection, and therefore that the soul is immortal **B.** That geometry should anchor the AIEdu curriculum **C.** That the lowest in a social hierarchy can learn very quickly if given properly focused education — which is what True Democracy does, issue by issue **D.** That Socrates was history's first advocate of universal education

I.10 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

The Author's Note invites readers to substitute symbolic meanings for character names. Read that way, what is Sophia delivering the eulogy?

A. Wisdom addressing the world, showing it what it could be if it had the courage **B.** Wisdom eulogizing Humanity, marking the close of the human era **C.** The next generation succeeding the founder **D.** The author's surrogate stating the book's moral in his own voice

The Frame: Chapter 10 and the Epilogue

I.11 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Chapter 10 and the Epilogue are separated by sixty-two years of story. They are also built on the same piece of staging. What is it?

A. Both take place in Miami, at the Core Team’s headquarters **B.** Both open with Carlos in tears and end with him resolved **C.** In both, a woman reads Francesca’s private writing aloud to a listener who has never seen it **D.** Both are narrated from James’s point of view

I.12 • ECHO PAIR

Two accounts of the same afternoon, by two people who never compared notes — and which the reader meets sixty-two years apart.

“I’m ashamed to say that not long before she was killed, Mom and I had a big fight about the things I had been funding. That conversation will haunt me for the rest of my life. I know that for sure, and I don’t know what to do about it. It feels like a sword in my belly, day and night.”

“He and I just had a big fight, and while it was mainly me being on the receiving end of his wrath, I also did not handle it well. I took offense and reacted with every defense mechanism I could muster. All that did was push him away. I made him feel bad about himself and that crushes me.”

Who is speaking in each? And what does each of them do that the other does not expect?

I.13 • TRACE IT

Francesca’s email names three arenas in which the dance between the animal and the saint plays out:

*Living out that dance **within ourselves** is the foundation of human drama. **Describing and expressing** that dance is the core of literature and art. **Witnessing humanity live out that dance collectively** is the essence of history.*

The Epilogue reports back on two of the three. Find them.

One is a claim about what is happening to the arts. One is the sentence about generations.

Then answer the harder half. The first arena — the dance lived out inside a single person — is never reported on by anyone. But Carlos does name it once, in a journal entry written after he reads Sophia’s second novel. Find that sentence, and say why a book about twelve arguing emotions is the place he finally sees it.

I.14 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

In Chapter 10, Carlos reads out his mother’s new mission statement for the Core Team — *to bring wisdom into government worldwide* — and says *I have no clue what that means*. Where does the Epilogue locate the answer?

A. In True Democracy — the mechanism by which an informed population legislates directly, which is wisdom reaching government in the plainest sense **B.** In AIEdu, which made mass education cheap enough to produce an informed population **C.** In the United African States, the last and largest of the nations he founded **D.** In his daughter, who is named Wisdom, who did not exist when he asked the question, and who is standing at the podium

I.15 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Chapter 10 ends with Rosey telling Carlos: *We think so too. But you see now — we can't do it without you.*

The Epilogue opens with Sophia reporting that he would never call any of it his, and always said he was just a messenger.

Both claims are asserted by the novel and both appear to be true. How should a reader hold them together?

A. Rosey was flattering him to secure his commitment; the Epilogue gives the accurate account **B.** The novel contradicts itself here, and the contradiction is unresolved **C.** The Epilogue is a eulogy, and eulogies are conventionally modest; Rosey's assessment is the historical one **D.** He was indispensable as an instrument and not as an author — the message required this particular carrier

The Machinery of Part Two

I.16 • ECHO PAIR

Two women, a generation and a continent apart.

"My professors have taught me so much. They've explained all the adversity and bias I've had to overcome to achieve what I have. I don't know why my parents never spelled that out for me. Maybe they don't really understand how the world works."

"Parents may not fully grasp the bigger-picture issues."

Who says each? What conviction do they share — and what does the novel offer as its answer to it?

I.17 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Francesca described the avatar tutors as *like guardian angels*. Carlos, presenting them to the world, says he prefers *a more grounded analogy* — and offers the family dog: a creature that centers its world on you, lights up when you enter a room, waits at the window, and would know everything worth knowing. What does the substitution tell you?

A. Carlos is a better marketer than his mother and knows the dog will play better on television **B.** Carlos is embarrassed by religious language and is translating his mother out of it **C.** He reaches for the most complete devotion he can personally vouch for **D.** All three are true at once, and the scene works because they are

I.18 • ECHO PAIR

Two women, two scenes apart, on guilt.

"I feel so damaged, so unworthy. I have this horrible shame, even though I didn't do anything wrong. It's like a trap. I feel guilty even though I'm not."

"I have nothing to feel guilty about, and neither do you."

Who is speaking in each? What has each of them actually done? And what is the novel doing by placing them this close together?

I.19 • ODD ONE OUT

Four moments in Part Two when God is invoked or attributed. **In three of them, the speaker is describing a faith that is not there. In one, the speaker is describing her own — and it is there. Which?**

A. "God bless Colombia. God bless this World Cup Championship. And most importantly — God bless every one of you." **B.** "I never do prayers in my 'prayer journal,' but I'm going to try it now. I'm going to give you a test drive." **C.** "I feel like I'm talking to God all the time. I love life — immensely. And I don't see how I could ever separate that love of life from God." **D.** "I know you are a religious person."

I.20 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Carlos stages the AIEdu launch in the Ancient Greek wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The narration says he chose it because it is where a civilization that *embraced education with unmatched passion* is on display. What else is the choice doing?

A. Placing the education argument physically inside Plato's world, in a Part that opened by reintroducing the *Republic* **B.** Foreshadowing the Athens speech, forty years later, where the same argument is made on Greek ground for the last time **C.** Putting a program built on six adult avatars in a room full of objects depicting a Socratic philosophical tradition that thought education was the whole business of a life **D.** All three

I.21 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Azadi tells Anwar that the world suffers from a disease called *the few ruling over the many*. He says it is a shame there is no cure. She replies: *there is — you just met him*. The section break falls. The next scene is Eva telling David about a centuries-old society that transcends nations and religions and *maintains equilibrium in the world*.

What is the novel doing with that adjacency?

A. Establishing that the Society has been monitoring Azadi and Anwar's conversation **B.** Naming the cure and then, without transition, giving the disease an institution, a membership, and a name **C.** Contrasting

Azadi's optimism with Eva's cynicism **D.** Establishing that the Society and the Core Team began at the same historical moment

I.22 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

On his plane, Hector tells Diego: *We all want power. Power is our root motivation. It is our true purpose. When we die, the only thing that changes is that we stop desiring power.*

Which sentence in the novel is the direct negation of that claim?

A. *Nations are self-interested. Nations are not moral. Nations are animals.* **B.** *We're all animals. You, same as us. We're just the smart animals who have the guns.* **C.** *When he sees that You are Eternal, he will see that he is as well. As he realizes that he is eternal, he will change the world.* **D.** *There is such a thing as good and evil. You might have chosen to ignore that for a long time, but no more.*

I.23 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Rosey, catching Carlos up on his mother's mission statement, says of the *Republic*: *At its deepest, it's really a book about spirituality — wrapped in a discussion of the ideal government.*

The sentence is accurate about Plato. What else is it doing?

A. Establishing Rosey's credentials as the Core Team's intellectual leader **B.** Explaining why Francesca, a missionary's widow, would have made it her favorite book **C.** Describing the novel the reader is holding, in the voice of a character who does not know she is doing it **D.** Signaling that the political content of *The Third Phase* should be read as allegory rather than argument

ANSWER GUIDE — SECTION I

I.1 · What *Status Profundus* translates as

The Deep State. *Status* is the ordinary Latin for a state or condition, and by extension the political state; *profundus* means deep.

The joke is chronological. *An organization that claims to have existed for centuries carries a name that only became meaningful in the last few decades — and it is spoken once, aloud, and never written down.*

I.2 · The earlier scene Mnyama's speech answers

Answer: D. Hector and Mnyama state the same claim in two registers, years apart: **there is no standard above strength.** The novel makes the connection through Carlos, who in journal #8898 tries to work out what makes a Ramirez tick and asks whether some people are so arrogant they never contemplate the question at all, or simply embrace the randomness and make up their own rules. Mnyama, appearing eleven years later, is the answer to the question Carlos asked about Hector.

The tempting wrong answer is C. Zihao really does dismiss morality as a squishy thing belonging to the uninformed, and he says it while committing a fraud. The reader who picks him has found genuine moral subjectivism in the text. But listen to what Zihao says next: *we are doing this for the world.* He believes he is serving something — China, destiny, the future — and believes that service justifies him. Hector and Mnyama believe in nothing above their own appetite. Subordinating morality to a cause and denying that morality exists are different errors, and the novel keeps them apart.

B is violence inside a moral framework; **A** is a corrupt man who still recognizes the standard he violates — which is why he can eventually be moved.

I.3 · What Jeshia's name carries

Yeshua — the Aramaic name of Jesus.

And her function repeats it. *She leaves the enclosed world, learns something, returns to report it, and is marked for death (like Jesus and Socrates). She is also a plot cause — she puts the argument in Anwar's head that turns him toward the moderates, and is at his side at the wedding decades later.*

A character can be both a plot cause and a symbol, and here she is both.

I.4 · Which is not one of the three Cave allusions

Answer: C.

Everything in the Allegory is there. **A group of people essentially trapped inside a perspective. A picture of the world they take for the whole of it — we are the guardians of humanity, we maintain equilibrium — and a mentor system that hands the picture down intact across generations.** *Eva has been inside it since she was recruited, and she never once steps out.*

So why is it not one of the three? Because the Allegory is not a description of confinement. It is a story about the one who leaves — dragged up, blinded, seeing the sun, and going back down to

tell the others. **For most of the novel Eva does none of that.** She is inside it, she stays inside it, and the picture is never disturbed.

Except, perhaps, at the very end. In the barn she is asked why killing a man would be wrong, gives an answer that satisfies nobody, and then says *I don't have a good answer right now.* She is shown something. Whether she is dragged all the way up, and whether she goes back down to tell anyone, the novel does not say.

Which is the difference between a scene the Allegory is written into and a scene where a reader may reasonably wonder. The other three are constructed on it. Eva's is left open.

A is the obvious one, and the only place the word appears. **B** is the second — *the first sixty-three years seen through shadows, the last eighteen seeing things as they really are* — **in the same entry where he settles his mother's forgiveness.**

D is the most easily missed. *Jeshia is named twice in Chapter 2 and does not appear again until the wedding.* She goes outside, learns the world is not what her community says it is, returns to tell Anwar — and Anwar's brother's immediate response is that he will go kill her himself. **That is the last movement of the Allegory, in which the returning prisoner is not thanked.**

I.5 · The event that gives the bag-of-chemicals joke its weight

The adoption of Sophia — whose name is the Greek word for wisdom. **The argument is not refuted; it is held up against a nine-month-old and found absurd,** which is the move he makes again in The Athens speech: *people can articulate that position, but nobody actually lives it.*

And notice what breaks the argument. Not evidence, and not a loss — *the arrival of a person.* **The entry says so itself:** *the objection is that he would punch the scientist for saying it about his daughter.*

A man who could hear the claim about himself without flinching cannot hear it about a nine-month-old — **which is the shape of many conversions in this book.** *Something he is willing to believe about the world turns out to be something he will not believe about someone he loves.*

I.6 · What Carlos's *God is dead to me* does that Nietzsche's does not

Answer: C. The declaration is a deliberate echo of Nietzsche, and what the novel puts directly after it is the return of ancient philosophy — Rosey reintroducing him to his mother's favorite book, and explaining that the *Republic* is finally a book about spirituality wrapped in a discussion of the ideal state. **The Author's Note names this sequence directly: when Carlos declares that God is dead to him, he is symbolically mimicking the famous Nietzschean declaration. This is immediately followed by the meeting where Rosey reacquaints him with Plato.** *And what that pairing is for: another depiction of the pathway humanity is taking to return to ancient philosophical wisdom and belief in theological truth to overcome the emptiness of modern atheism.*

Which is the whole book in one sentence, with the same substitution applied: humanity, with the enlightenment that comes from wisdom, freedom, religion and education, overcomes nihilism.

The tempting wrong answer is B. The novel does habitually pair Carlos's interior movements against the Society's, and David's recruitment does arrive in Part Two. It is a real technique, applied to the wrong scene. It also has the wrong shape: pairing would make the Society a parallel to Carlos's unbelief, when the structural point is that something *answers* the unbelief immediately.

A happens at the end of Part One, not after. **D** comes two chapters later and inverts the point — AIEdu is Francesca's, and Carlos is being drawn back toward her, not away.

I.7 · *Why the Society finds politicians easy to direct*

Answer: C, and she is one of a matched pair. Destiny is elected and re-elected, is treated as a leading voice of her generation, and is charming on television. She also cannot say what a balance sheet is, has never heard of an Article V convention until two lobbyists explain it to her over dinner, and dismisses the national debt on the grounds that people have warned about it her whole life and things seem fine. She is very good at the first job and cannot do the second. *Eva's claim, demonstrated.*

And Phillip Saurian is the same illustration from the other side of the aisle — a senator whose confidence about the world outruns anything he has examined. The novel supplies one from each party, so that the failure cannot be mistaken for a feature of one of them.

The tempting wrong answer is B. Uvidende is the novel's showcase for confident wrongness — she is the one who chooses two-and-five over three-and-twelve because it is fairer, and Carlos says he has never met anyone so consistent at reaching the wrong conclusion. If the question were simply *who is least competent*, she would likely win. But Uvidende was never elected to anything. She is a career official who rose through a bureaucracy, which is why she is the wrong answer to a question specifically about what electoral incentives produce. Two failure modes, kept distinct: one is manufactured by campaigns, the other by institutions that never face voters at all.

A is corrupt but genuinely capable — he delivers what Hector asks for, repeatedly, at real personal cost. **D** holds no elected office.

I.8 · *Journal #197 and journal #16955 on the same question*

Answer: C. At thirteen, with Manny newly murdered, he states the problem of evil in its starkest form: *you either aren't powerful or you aren't good*. At fifty-nine, reading his daughter's story about a soul afraid to be born, he arrives at the question from the other direction — would we choose a life in which we never had to forgive anyone? — and answers that he doesn't think so. It is the first crack in the foundation of his skepticism.

The tempting wrong answer is A, and it is perhaps the most instructive error available in this section. Readers may well suspect the conversion is coming, and they compress the timeline so that the fifty-nine-year-old is already most of the way there. He is not. The conversion is journal #18459, at sixty-three — four years and roughly fifteen hundred entries later. At fifty-nine he is still a self-described skeptical agnostic; what has changed is not his conclusion but his emotional condition — *the same question asked in grief and asked in gratitude produces different thinking*. Answering A means missing the four years the novel spends earning the change.

B is contradicted by the age-fifty-five entry — his prayer life runs 99 to 1 toward talking. **D** is a live thread elsewhere, not here.

I.9 · What the Pythagorean theorem story is doing

Answer: C. The scene distinguishes the two readings explicitly. Churchill supplies the doctrine the dialogue is famous for; Carlos says that what Rosey took from it was something else — a demonstration about capacity rather than about the soul's prior life. Ninety minutes of video is the slave boy's diagram.

The tempting wrong answer is A, and it punishes the best-prepared reader in the room. It is the correct account of Plato's *Meno*. Anyone who knows the dialogue will recognize it and choose it. But the question asks what *Rosey* draws, and the novel goes out of its way to separate the two — Churchill states A, and Carlos immediately says that is not the part Rosey highlighted. Knowing Plato well is not the same as reading this scene closely, and here the two come apart.

B is invented. **D** overreaches: Socrates is demonstrating a capacity, not proposing a policy.

I.10 · Sophia delivering the eulogy, read symbolically

Answer: A. And it comes with a reading instruction worth keeping: as any student of Plato watches closely whenever Socrates turns to mathematics, the reader of this novel should watch closely whenever Sophia speaks or is mentioned.

The tempting wrong answer is B. It follows the substitution rule with perfect consistency — if Carlos is Humanity and Carlos has died, then Humanity has been eulogized. The trap is in taking the allegory to be airtight. Carlos is a man who represents humanity; his death is a man's death, and the novel is emphatic that what he represents continues, in his children, in the Core Team, and in the world the vote created. Allegory in this book is a lens applied where it illuminates, not a code to be solved everywhere at once.

C is true and trivial. **D** conflates the character with the author; the Note is careful to keep Sophia's function symbolic rather than autobiographical.

I.11 · What Chapter 10 and the Epilogue have in common

Answer: C. Rosey opens a laptop and reads the mission-statement email; Carlos weeps, and the trajectory of his life is altered from that moment. Sophia pulls out the prayer journal and reads; the book ends.

In both cases the mother's voice arrives posthumously and turns the scene — and in both cases the listener it is aimed at has not seen it before. *The email was written to the Core Team but never sent to Carlos; the prayer journal was written to God and shown to nobody.*

The tempting wrong answer is B. Carlos does weep in Chapter 10 — repeatedly — and the Epilogue is full of tears. But he is not present at his own funeral, and the tears there are Gabriella's and Sophia's. Anyone choosing B has noticed something real about the emotional register and missed the mechanism producing it.

A is wrong on the Epilogue. **D** is wrong on both; James is the point-of-view character only for the opening of Chapter 10.

I.12 · Two accounts of the same afternoon

The first is Carlos in Chapter 10. The second is Francesca in the Epilogue, in the prayer that ends the book.

Each blames themselves. He is ashamed of his wrath; she is ashamed of how she received it.

And one person hears both. Carlos says his aloud at the Core Team meeting, with Rosey in the room — she has just called Francesca a saint. Francesca’s is read at the funeral sixty-two years later, and Rosey is there: Sophia credits her grandmother and the Core Team, and winks at Rosey, sitting next to Gabriella.

Neither Carlos nor Francesca is given the other’s account. The reader is given both. The story opens with a man carrying guilt he cannot discharge, and closes by revealing that the person he wronged had already taken the blame herself.

Journal #25000 completes it: *I’ve never fully gotten over how I hurt you right before you died. But as I think about your “secret of life” I know that I am forgiven. By you and by Him. Fifty-five years to answer I don’t know what to do about it — and the answer is that there was never anything to do other than accept forgiveness.*

And notice the pairing in that last clause. By you and by Him — a mother’s mercy and God’s grace, named in one breath as if they were the same transaction. He is eighty-one, and he is working out how the two are related: what a person extends, and what is given without being earned.

Seven years later he tells Sophia that mercy resides at a much deeper plane within our souls. This entry is where he starts to see it — and it takes being forgiven by two parties at once, one of them dead for fifty-five years, to show him.

I.13 · The three arenas, and where they are reported on

Literature and art: *a renaissance like never before because of the sharing of ideas, expressed in every artistic field — and, unstated but standing at the podium, Sophia herself, a novelist and a screenwriter.*

History: *everyone seems to agree that we have telescoped what would otherwise have been many generations of human political development into the span of one life.*

The first arena is never reported on, because it is not the kind of thing anyone can report.

Francesca’s human drama is not a genre. It is the dance lived out inside one person — and the only way to show it is from the inside.

Which is what Carlos finally names, after reading The Deliberation. Sophia’s novel puts twelve emotions in a jury box and makes them argue, and her father’s response is to describe his own interior in the same terms: a lot of the joy of life is experiencing that lifelong dance between ideas and feelings.

His mother’s word, returned to him by his daughter, forty years later, in a book about an argument inside a single head. She dramatized the first arena; he recognized it.

I.14 · What bringing wisdom into government turns out to mean

Answer: A, and it is worth saying why the cleverer answer is not the best one.

The mission is a sentence about government. *True Democracy is the thing that puts an informed public in the legislature — ninety minutes, both cases, one vote — and it is the only item on this list that does what the sentence says.* AIEdu produces the informed public; True Democracy is where that public arrives.

The tempting wrong answer is D, and it is planted deliberately. Francesca's mission statement is announced in Part Two. Nine years later Carlos adopts a nine-month-old girl and names her Sophia — the Greek word for wisdom, as the Character Map notes — and in the Epilogue it is **Wisdom who stands before the world talking about government: worshipping the State, the free market for ideas, the few ruling over the many.**

The naming is real, and the reading instruction that comes with it is worth keeping: as a student of Plato watches closely whenever Socrates turns to mathematics, a reader of this novel does well to watch closely whenever Sophia speaks.

What D cannot do is satisfy the sentence. Sophia never holds office, never legislates, and is not in government at any point. She is wisdom addressing government from outside it — which is a different thing, and a pun rather than a mechanism.

B and C are steps along the way, and the Epilogue mentions both in passing.

I.15 · Whether Carlos was indispensable

Answer: D, and it is worth working out slowly.

The Epilogue itself confirms the indispensability: the telescoping of generations happened *principally because my dad was such a uniquely multiethnic individual that people worldwide trusted him*, and a podcaster is quoted saying that *Carlos, himself, was the bridge of trust that Gabriella was referencing.* **He was necessary — as a bridge is necessary, and as the thing crossing the bridge is not.**

And almost nothing in the message originated with him. *Wisdom is the fusion of education and love is his mother's. The few ruling over the many is Azadi's. Front versus back is Rosey's, and he repeats it on stage while announcing that he is repeating it. Fear and love, with trust between them is Gabriella's. Faith is enough is Sophia's. Choose what to love is his grandfather's, restored to him by a stranger on a train. The Form of the Good is Plato's, reaching him through his mother's rendering of it — and, at the last, through a prayer he never read.*

What is his own is the arranging, the timing, and the alien's eye view — the instrument that let a mixed audience hear any of it. **Which is a real contribution, and not the same thing as authorship.**

The tempting wrong answer is C, and it deserves respect. Eulogies *are* conventionally modest, funerals *do* inflate humility, and a suspicious reader is right to discount what the grieving say. The reason C fails is that the modesty is corroborated everywhere outside the funeral — in forty years of journals, in the divestments of power, in the moment he tells Rosey to run instead of him. **The Epilogue is not being polite. It is being accurate.**

A is refuted by the Epilogue's own confirmation of Rosey. **B** is the answer to reach for if D cannot be made to work — *but the reconciliation is there, and it amounts to a definition of humility: knowing whose shoulders you are standing on.*

Which is an argument for educating oneself in the history of thought. Almost nothing a person carries is theirs first — it was given by parents, by teachers, by the dead — and a man who can name where each piece came from is not diminished by the accounting. He is the only one who understands what he is holding.

I.16 · *Two women on parental judgment*

The first is Destiny Jones, an American progressive walking home from a demonstration. The second is Uvidende Velmenende, a European official explaining why AIEdu should be kept out of the EU.

They share a conviction that **in important ways parents are not competent to form their own children** — *reached from two very different starting points, and never noticed by either of them. One arrives there from a university setting; the other from a career in public administration.*

Part of the answer is AIEdu. Six adult avatars per child, modeled on two parents and four grandparents, offered free to anyone on earth — an institution built on the premise that what a child most needs is precisely what these two women think parents cannot supply.

But AIEdu is not the whole of it, and a reader should not stop there. The deeper answer is the one the book has been making since Chapter 1: that ordinary people, given the chance and the information, judge well — which is the same claim that underwrites True Democracy, and the same claim the Society exists to prevent anyone testing.

The parental version is simply the earliest and most intimate form of it. If parents cannot be trusted with their own children, nobody can be trusted with anything.

I.17 · *Why Carlos replaces angels with a dog*

Answer: D. He is a better marketer — the text calls him *ever the splashy marketer* two paragraphs earlier. He is embarrassed — this is the same man who will shortly tell a stadium he prays every waking moment while telling his journal it was a lie. And he is reaching honestly, because a dog's devotion is the most complete love he can currently affirm.

The tempting wrong answer is A, which is true and which flattens the moment into cynicism. What makes the substitution moving rather than merely slick is that the analogy he reaches for is *accurate* — he wants children to feel unconditionally attended to, and he names the only unconditional attention he can vouch for. **His mother had a larger vocabulary for the same thing.**

And the word comes back to him at the end. In the barn in Bolivia, when the topic of angels comes up he tells two people who have come to kill him that he realized a number of people in his life *looked a lot like angels* — **the word he could not say at the AIEdu launch, said forty years later to the least likely audience he will ever have.**

I.18 · *Two women on guilt*

The first is Gabriella, who was abducted at twelve, enslaved for a decade, and rescued two months before the scene. The second is Eva, walking through a park with David, having just been irritated by a question about growing up wealthy.

Gabriella is guiltless and drowning in guilt. Eva is, by the end of the book, complicit in an assassination attempt, an aircraft sabotage, and a campaign to keep a continent poor — and reports no guilt at any point.

The pairing states the novel's position on conscience without arguing for it: **the sensation of guilt and the fact of culpability are almost inversely distributed.** Diego sits between them, in the same Part, telling himself he isn't hurting anyone directly — the man who has the standard, violates it, and knows he is doing so, which is why he can eventually be moved.

I.19 · Which invocation of God is meant

Answer: C — Azadi, on the couch with Rosey. **She is describing her own faith, and she has it.** *A gay Muslim woman who believes she has no way to be with God publicly.*

A is Carlos closing a stadium speech sixteen months after writing that God is dead to him. **B** is Carlos again — *perhaps his first serious prayer as an adult, offered as an experiment, about a woman, and abandoned within a month when it appears unanswered.*

The tempting wrong answer is D, and it is tempting for the right reason: Gabriella means every word of it. She is not performing, not flattering, and not mistaken about herself. She is mistaken about him — and the narration says so in the same breath: She believed this because of his family history — and because of his carefully cultivated public image.

So D is not insincere. It is sincere and false — a true report of what she believes, about a faith that is not there — and Carlos's reaction confirms it: he wanted to conceal the considerable gap between his public image and his private beliefs, but in a way where he wasn't lying to her outright.

I.20 · Why the AIEdu launch is staged in the Greek wing

Answer: D, and the three are worth taking one at a time.

A. *Part Two opens with Carlos declaring God dead and answers it immediately with Rosey reminding him of Plato. The Part that reintroduces the Republic then stages its centerpiece inside a room full of Greece. The education argument is not merely made in Part Two; it is physically placed in Plato's world.*

B. *He begins his public argument for education surrounded by Greek antiquities in New York, and makes it for the last time on the stones of Athens, four decades later.*

C. *The narration gives the reason outright — a civilization that embraced education with unmatched passion — and the objects in that room were made by people for whom being taught was not a stage of life but the whole of it. Which is the claim AIEdu is built on.*

What is ruled out is the practical reading. A neutral venue for an international press corps would have been easier, and the text forecloses it by telling you he is ever the splashy marketer who chose the site more symbolically.

And there is a fourth thing the room is doing, which the novel will not spell out for another four Parts.

A philosopher is a lover of wisdom. *Plato concluded that a city can only be well governed if its rulers are philosophers, and then faced the problem that philosophers are scarce — so either find the rare few and give them power, or hope the powerful few become wise.*

AI Edu is symbolic of a third answer, and it is being announced in Plato's own room. Do not find the lovers of wisdom. Make everyone one. *Six adults for every child on earth, free — and once a population has been educated, the scarcity that forced Plato's choice is gone.*

Which is what True Democracy then requires. Ninety minutes, both cases, one vote — a system that hands the decision to the whole population and is only defensible if that population has been made capable of it. The launch in the Greek wing is the first half of an argument whose second half is a ballot.

I.21 · What the scene break after Azadi's diagnosis does

Answer: B. Azadi's metaphor is medical — *a disease, its symptoms, a cure*. **The scene break turns the metaphor into an organization.** *What was a description of how power tends to work becomes a thing with Mentors, protégés, a name spoken once, and a claim to have been guiding history for centuries.*

And the Society describes itself in exactly the terms Azadi used for the illness: *it maintains equilibrium, it transcends nations, religions, political parties. The disease is claiming to be the immune system.*

The tempting wrong answer is C. *Azadi is optimistic and Eva is cynical, and the two scenes do sit against each other that way — but that reading makes the adjacency a matter of tone, when what actually crosses the break is a metaphor acquiring a body.*

A is unsupported; nobody is listening. **D** is contradicted — the Society predates everything.

I.22 · Hector on power as the terminus

Answer: C — the last sentence of the book, from Francesca's prayer.

Both are claims about what death changes. Hector says it subtracts one appetite and nothing else; the self ends and the wanting ends with it. Francesca says the self does not end, and that recognizing this is what helps a person become capable of changing the world. They are the only two propositions in the novel about what death does — **Hector's closes Part Two (*Criminals and Saints*), Francesca's closes the book.**

The tempting wrong answer is D, Diego's realization on the park bench, which is a direct answer to Hector by the man Hector owns, in the scene where he defies him. It is the *dramatic* refutation, and it is satisfying. It is not the *metaphysical* one — Diego asserts that good and evil are real, which Hector has not denied so much as declared irrelevant.

B restates Hector rather than negating him. **A** applies his logic to nations, which is nearer agreement than refutation.

I.23 · What Rosey's line about the *Republic* is also about

Answer: C.

A reader who takes the sentence only as literary criticism will spend three Parts treating the political plot as the main event and the journals as interludes. **The sentence is an instruction, delivered at the opening of the book's argument, telling you which layer is load-bearing.** The Epilogue bears it out: having named the political achievement, Sophia moves past it and spends the rest of her time on a conversion and a prayer — **making plain which layer of meaning she takes to be the deeper one.**

The tempting wrong answer is B, and it is tempting because it is doing real character work — Francesca is a missionary who became laser-focused on politics and education, and the *Republic* is exactly the book that would sit at that intersection for her. **A reader choosing B has understood Francesca. What they have missed is that the sentence is also aimed outward, past Carlos, at them.**

A is a byproduct. **D overstates, and the distinction matters.** Readers have argued for centuries over whether Plato's ideal city was ever meant as a practical proposal or only as a device for seeing the soul. **No such question arises here.** The political ideas in this novel are meant seriously — *argued at length, costed, and offered for adoption.* **They are simply not the deepest thing in it. The politics are the wrapping, not a pretense.**

This is the second of the two moments in Part Two where a character unknowingly describes the novel. The first is the father explaining why we long to read another person's inner monologue; this is Rosey explaining that a book about the ideal state is really a book about the soul. **Between them they specify the form and the priority of everything that follows.**

SECTION II — THE FEW AND THE MANY

The political argument: who rules, who decides, and what the novel thinks is wrong with the arrangement.

What is politically wrong with the world? *How one phrase grows from a description of tyranny into the novel's definition of injustice. Watch **rule** — and notice who never uses it.*

II.1 • SHORT ANSWER

The phrase *the few ruling over the many* becomes the novel's central political formulation. **Who says it first, and where?** *And which character — the one who supplies most of the Core Team's vocabulary — never uses it at all?*

II.2 • TRACE IT

The phrase does not appear anywhere in Part One. The *thing it names* appears in the first six chapters, one after another.

Match each chapter to what happens in it.

	Chapter, and who is introduced		What happens
1.	Chapter 1 — Rosey, in Miami	A.	A cartel abducts a ten-year-old into slavery
2.	Chapter 2 — Anwar, in Palestine	B.	Two schoolboys forge their way into the ruling class, <i>destined to be leaders</i>
3.	Chapter 3 — Hector, in Latin America	C.	Commanders place themselves in schools, mosques and hospitals
4.	Chapter 4 — Azadi, in Iran	D.	A man takes a neighborhood by force — <i>we'll have half the city within a year</i>
5.	Chapter 5 — Carlos, in Bolivia	E.	ICE takes a mother — and in the same scene a husband rules his house by beating his wife
6.	Chapter 6 — Zihao and Haipa, in China	F.	A grandfather is executed in a public square

Then answer this: *why show the disease six times, in six consecutive chapters, before anyone gives it a name?*

II.3 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

In Beijing, Carlos says the phrase aloud for the first time in his life, and tentatively: *I'm still studying history... but I am starting to form some views. One of them is that rule by the few over the many doesn't seem like the best system.*

Haipa answers immediately: *Exactly! We give power to the people — not to capitalist elites.*

What does that exchange establish?

A. That Haipa is the most reasonable of the three and might be won over **B.** That the phrase is not self-interpreting, and can be claimed by the very people it describes **C.** That Carlos is out of his depth in political discussion **D.** That the Communist Party's ideology is closer to True Democracy than Carlos realizes

II.4 • ECHO PAIR

Two politicians at opposite ends of the political spectrum, refusing the same evidence.

"With all due respect, Madam President, that's a different culture. Different people. Different values. They're not the world's leader — we are."

"I think AIEdu is a better fit for poorer countries that lack our educational traditions."

Who says each? What do they share? And which character in the novel diagnosed this exact position — years earlier, and by name?

II.5 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

The word *diabolical* is used three times in the novel. **Here they are:**

Jack, on Uvidende's two-and-five choice: *every generation produces fresh minds who fall in love with that **diabolical** arithmetic.*

Rosey, in her exit interview: political parties are *a subtle — no, I'll say it — a **diabolical** version of "the few ruling over the many."*

Sophia, at the funeral: worshipping the State is *one of the most **diabolical** examples of loving the wrong thing.*

What do all three have in common?

A. All three are said by members of the Core Team **B.** All three describe a *system* rather than a person **C.** All three name something the speaker believes to be literally supernatural **D.** All three are said late in the book, after Carlos's conversion

II.6 • TRACE IT

Follow the phrase *the few ruling over the many* up its ladder. It means something different each time it is used, and the meaning climbs.

Match each use to what the phrase has come to mean by then.

	Where it is used		What it means there
1.	Azadi, in the restaurant, redirecting a discussion of Palestinian leadership	A.	<i>A commodity that can be sold</i>
2.	Carlos, publicly, announcing Palestinian independence	B.	<i>A condition that includes the well-meaning</i>
3.	Azadi, planning the Final Dynasty's pitch to China	C.	<i>A stage of history that everyone is standing on</i>
4.	Carlos, comparing warlords in Africa with parties in the United States	D.	<i>A regional problem</i>
5.	Carlos, in his journal, on a European official who means well	E.	<i>The definition of injustice itself</i>
6.	Carlos, in the Athens speech, to the species	F.	<i>A diagnosis that applies to free countries as well as unfree ones</i>

Then answer this: at which rung does the phrase stop describing other people's countries?

II.7 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Which of these characters uses the phrase *the few ruling over the many* at some point in the novel?

A. Hector Ramirez **B.** Mnyama **C.** Eva Goode **D.** None of them

II.8 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

The Epilogue reports Carlos's discovery at conversion: *he had slayed the exact same dragon dwelling within himself that he had worked tirelessly to slay collectively in the political realm.*

The novel staged that discovery once before, without explaining it. Where?

A. In the barn, when he asks the assassins whether they believe in God **B.** In journal #8898, where he asks what makes a man like Ramirez tick **C.** At Tiananmen, when he chains himself to the guardrail **D.** In the Chapter 22 nightmare, where one voice inside him claims the right to decide what the body should fear

II.9 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

In the Athens speech, Carlos says: *Representative democracy, while the best of the historic bunch, is still just another example of the few ruling over the many.*

Why does that sentence matter more than it first appears?

A. It is the first time he criticizes the United States by name **B.** It turns a phrase coined to describe cartels, theocracies and one-party states into an indictment of the constitutional systems of the free world **C.** It contradicts his earlier praise of Israel as a democratic republic **D.** It is the moment the global vote is effectively decided

II.10 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Francesca never once uses the phrase *the few ruling over the many*, and Azadi never uses *animals and saints*. Where do the two vocabularies finally meet?

A. In the Athens speech, when Carlos says nations are animals **B.** In the Epilogue, when worshipping the rule of the few over the many is named as an example of loving the wrong thing **C.** In journal #8898, where Carlos maps angels, people and animals **D.** In the Core Team meeting, when Rosey reads the email aloud

II.11 • ECHO PAIR

Two moments of freedom arriving through its apparent opposite.

“Although Carlos was injured, he survived — almost certainly because he had been chained to the rail.”

“He then told me that as soon as he truly submitted in his spiritual life, that he was quenched with an all-encompassing freedom.”

Where is each, and how far apart? What shape do they share?

II.12 • SHORT ANSWER

At fifty-five, Carlos asks why God does not simply appear and settle the question. He answers himself by quoting his father:

*I understand the concept that if you made it so that we knew for sure you were there, then this would take away our freedom, and as Dad always said, **taking away our freedom would somehow make our love, which is the most important thing on earth, fake.***

That one sentence is carrying three separate arguments at once. Name them.

One is a standard answer to a very old problem. *One explains something the reader has been watching happen for fifty years of journal entries. And one accounts for the title of Part Five.*

II.13 • ECHO PAIR

Two shackle images, one near the end of Part Three and one in the Epilogue.

“Your next president is not only brilliant and immensely qualified — but most importantly, completely free of the shackles of any political party.”

“Ideas, whether they be theistic or atheistic, unshackled from nationalism and the corresponding stifling of cultural development, now must compete in a marketplace of merit.”

Who says each? What is being unshackled in each case, and what does the pairing suggest about the novel's political sequence?

II.14 • ECHO PAIR

Two organizations, described by two people who have never met.

*It is **an army**, just not one with guns.*

*We're all animals. You, same as us. **We're just the smart animals who have the guns.***

Who is describing what — and what does the pairing establish about how power is actually acquired in this novel?

ANSWER GUIDE — SECTION II

II.1 · Who says *the few ruling over the many* first

Azadi, in Part Two, Chapter 11, redirecting a discussion about the Palestinian leadership: *the fundamental issue in Palestine is just another, albeit acute, microcosm of the problem worldwide and throughout history — the few ruling over the many*. Minutes later, alone with Anwar, she **globalises it into a disease**.

And the character who never uses it is Francesca — who supplies the Core Team’s mission, its thesis and most of its vocabulary. **Not in the email, not in the mission statement, not in the prayer**.

Her register is animals, saints, love, the Form of the Good. The political vocabulary belongs to Azadi — a division that holds for the entire novel, and the subject of question 10.

II.2 · The phrase’s silent appearances in Part One

1-E · 2-C · 3-D · 4-F · 5-A · 6-B

Chapter 1: ICE takes Rosey’s mother in front of her. And in the same scene, Alejandro rules his own house by beating his wife — *that beating you got last month will be nothing compared to the version you’ll get now*. The state and the husband, the same structure, in the same scene.

Chapter 2: commanders who place themselves in schools, mosques, and hospitals. Anwar asks about it and is beaten by his brother.

Chapter 3: Hector taking a neighborhood by force — *we’ll have half the city within a year*.

Chapter 4: a grandfather executed in a public square. *Our country isn’t a just country. It is run by people that are... bad people. Criminals really*.

Chapter 5: a cartel abducting a ten-year-old into slavery.

Chapter 6: two schoolboys forging their way into the ruling class, on the grounds that they are *destined to be leaders*.

The point of the exercise: the reader is shown the disease six times, in six chapters running, before anyone supplies its name. This is how the novel handles nearly all of its key terms — *saint, wisdom, freedom*, and *choose* are also effectively absent from Part One.

II.3 · Carlos saying it aloud for the first time

Answer: B. Three men who are, by any definition the novel offers, the few, claim the phrase for themselves within a single line of dialogue. Carlos has just picked up one of the most important political sentences he will ever use, and it is stolen before he finishes the thought.

The tempting wrong answer is A. Haipa is the moderate of the three; Jack says he is *slightly less ruthless*. A reader tracking character is right about him. But the question asks what the *exchange* establishes, and what it establishes is about the phrase, not the man.

C is true of Carlos in that room and irrelevant here. **D** inverts the scene.

II.4 · Two politicians refusing the same evidence

The first is Senator Phillip Saurian, a Texas Republican, refusing to look at the LSA's economic results. The second is Uvidende Velmenende, a European official, explaining why AIEdu belongs elsewhere.

Both are saying that a thing proven elsewhere does not apply here, and that the people it worked for are not situated as we are. **Saurian puts it as rank** — *they're not the world's leader, we are*. **Uvidende puts it as fit** — *AIEdu suits countries that lack our educational traditions*. **Neither is examining the evidence; both are explaining why they do not have to**. A conservative and a progressive, on two continents, arriving at the identical conviction from opposite directions.

Azadi named it in Part Two, in the same breath in which she named the disease itself: *It causes such a host of odious symptoms — but one of the most pernicious is the lie that people are fundamentally different*.

The novel's counter-testimony runs through the whole book: Anwar's *people are fundamentally the same everywhere*; the racism clip's right arm looking down on the left; the Latin America speech's *We — Are — The — Same*; and The Athens speech: *We are one world . . . one people . . . one tribe. It is an illusion that we are not*.

II.5 · What all three uses of *diabolical* describe

Answer: B. *A European bureaucrat's economics, the American two-party system, and state-worship in general — three structures, and every one of them a version of the few ruling over the many.*

And the word is never spent on a murderer. Hector is pure evil and like an animal in Carlos's journal. Mnyama is an animal by name and conviction. Neither is ever called diabolical. The demonic language is saved for systems.

The tempting answer is A, and it fails on one word. Jack and Rosey are Core Team. Sophia is not — *she is Carlos's daughter, a novelist, and has never been a member of anything*. **Change Core Team to Core Team or family and A becomes true, which is how close it is.**

But even then it would be the wrong answer, because it describes who happens to be speaking rather than anything about the word. Test it the other way: the Society uses the same register in reverse. Eva's Mentor calls True Democracy demonic, and says what is needed is an exorcism. Both sides reach for the same vocabulary, and both aim it at a system.

C is false, and instructively so — *none of the three speakers means anything supernatural by it. The word is doing moral work, not metaphysical work, which is why it can be spent on an arithmetic, a party system and a habit of mind*. **D is false** — *Jack's comes long before the conversion*.

II.6 · The phrase's changes of meaning

1-D · 2-C · 3-A · 4-F · 5-B · 6-E

A regional problem. Part Two, Chapter 11 — Palestine, then Iran, then *the whole world suffers from a disease*.

A theory of history. The Palestinian independence speech: *Human governance has evolved from the rule of the one, or the few, over the many — a system that still dominates much of the world — to representative democracy. It's time that we take the next step.* No longer a description of tyranny; now a stage everyone is standing on.

A commodity. Part Three, the Final Dynasty review. Azadi: *We're selling the most priceless commodity in the world — the end of the few ruling the many.*

A diagnostic that reads free countries. Part Four, on Africa: *hundreds of little versions of the "few ruling over the many" ... In Africa it's vivid but fragmented. Here in the US, it's subtle but concentrated — given the chokehold the parties have here.*

A condition that includes the well-meaning. Journal #15276, on Uvidende: *she and her ilk are the staunchest advocates of the status quo and robbing the masses of opportunities so that the few can continue to rule over the many.*

The definition of injustice. The Athens speech: *What justice is not is the many being ruled by the few. Never has been and never will be.*

And where it stops being about other people's countries: rung four.

Rungs one through three are all aimed outward — Palestine, Iran, the unfree world, a commodity to be sold to China. A reader in a democracy can follow all three with sympathy and no discomfort.

Rung four turns and includes them. Africa is named first, which keeps the reader safe for one more clause — and then: Here in the US, it's subtle but concentrated. The same disease, in the country that believes it cured it.

Rung five goes further and takes in the well-intentioned, and rung six drops the geography altogether. By the Athens speech there is nowhere left to stand outside it.

II.7 · Which characters never use the phrase

Answer: D. Not one antagonist in the book ever names the structure they embody. Hector speaks of winners and losers and the task of winners to rule. Mnyama speaks of animals and guns. Eva speaks of equilibrium, tension, and the Society's duty. Haipa comes closest and inverts it.

The tempting wrong answer is C, because Eva is the most articulate villain in the novel and spends whole scenes explaining the Society's theory of power in precise, self-aware language. She has a full vocabulary for *what the Society does* and no vocabulary at all for *what the Society is*.

This is not an isolated pattern. The same three characters never say *moral*, and never say *choose*. **The antagonists of this book are defined less by the opinions they hold than by the words they do not possess** — which is consistent with Grandpa's account of evil as a failure to have learned what to love, and with journal #8898's question about whether some people simply never contemplate the question at all.

II.8 · The dragon inside and the dragon outside

Answer: D. Two voices inside one man: *We're too scared to run and Just do what you're told. We decide what to be afraid of and what not to.* And Francesca, in the wrecked car: *Don't let your arms tell your legs what to do. They have no right to decide what you should fear. You can rise above the argument burning inside you — and choose.*

A few, ruling a many, inside one body, claiming an authority they do not have. **The interior version of the political thesis, staged in a dream, long before the Epilogue names the connection.**

The tempting wrong answer is C, and it is a genuinely rich scene for this question — a man calling a nation to freedom while voluntarily in chains, and surviving because of them. But the chaining is a paradox about freedom, not about internal rule. Nothing in that scene is governing anything else.

B is where he asks the question the dream will eventually answer. **A** is where he receives the answer from a stranger.

II.9 · Representative democracy as a version of the disease

Answer: B. Trace where the phrase has been. It was invented for the Palestinian leadership, applied to the Iranian regime, extended to drug cartels and the Chinese Communist Party. Every earlier use describes something a Western reader would already condemn.

Then, in the last speech of his life, the same sentence lands on the American Constitution, the Israeli Knesset, and every parliament on earth. Nothing in the phrase changed. Only its target.

The tempting wrong answer is C. It looks like a contradiction — he called Israel *a shining light in the world* and a democratic republic with freedom, fairness, equality and tolerance as fundamental principles. But he flagged the distinction at the time, in that same stadium speech: *Israel is a representative democracy... That's an important distinction — but it's not today's topic.* He deferred the argument for thirty-five years and then made it.

A is false. **D** overstates; the speech precedes the vote by weeks.

II.10 · Where Francesca's and Azadi's vocabularies meet

Answer: B. Sophia, reporting what her father taught his grandchildren: *he would say that worshipping the State — or in his mind the equivalent, worshipping the rule of the few over the many — is one of the most diabolical examples of loving the wrong thing.*

Azadi's political diagnosis and Francesca's spiritual one are welded into a single sentence: a form of government, classified as a disorder of love. Neither woman is alive to hear it, and neither ever used the other's terms.

The tempting wrong answer is A, and it is very nearly right — *nations are animals* does put Francesca's word to Azadi's problem, and it happens on the biggest stage in the book. What keeps it second is that The Athens speech uses *animal* in its pre-moral sense, as a creature that cannot choose. The Epilogue uses *love*, which is the half of Francesca's vocabulary that carries a verdict. The fusion is complete only when the political structure is called a misdirected love rather than an incapacity.

C is Francesca's scheme alone. **D** is Francesca's vocabulary being introduced, before Azadi's exists in the book.

II.11 · Two moments of freedom arriving through its opposite

The first is Part Three, in the aftermath of Red Circle Day, in narration. **The second is the Epilogue**, in Sophia's account of her father's conversion.

Chained, he survives. Submitted, he is free.

The first scene sets up the opposite expectation. *Self-imposed restraint in a battle zone reads as a fatal miscalculation, and a reader waits for the novel to punish the theatricality. It does the reverse, in a single flat clause: those who were free to run did, and died at a rate the text says only modern warfare could produce.*

And the second makes the same claim about God. Submission is not what costs him his freedom; it is what delivers it — quenched with an all-encompassing freedom. He binds himself to a rail and lives. He binds himself to God and is finally free.

The political paradox and the spiritual one are the same shape. The second sentence continues: *he realized that he had slayed the exact same dragon dwelling within himself that he had worked tirelessly to slay collectively in the political realm.* The reader is being told that the outer and inner campaigns were one campaign — and the chain at the guardrail is where the reader could have seen it first.

II.12 · Where the free-will defense and God's hiddenness resolve

Journal #15431.

It is the **classic free-will answer to the problem of evil**. It is the **explanation of God's silence** across fifty years of a prayer journal that receives no reply. And it makes the **Part Five title dependent on this concept**: love that is not free is not love, so fear cannot be defeated by compulsion — only by a choice.

Like *ought* and *the eternal now*, it is his father's.

II.13 · Two shackle images

The first is Carlos, at the rally announcing Rosey's candidacy. **The second is Sophia**, at the funeral, reporting what her father told a grandson.

The first unshackles a *person* from a party. The second unshackles *ideas* from nations. **And the sequence between them is the plot of the last two Parts**: parties are defanged by True Democracy, then nations are dissolved by the Third Phase vote, and what is released at the end is not a candidate but an argument.

And note what the second one does not exempt. *Theistic or atheistic — the marketplace is open to both*, which means the argument this book has spent its whole length making is entered on the same terms as everything else. *Nothing is protected. No claim is held back.*

And note where each is said. *The first is a campaign rally. The second is a funeral. A person is unshackled in front of a nation; ideas are unshackled in front of the world.*

II.14 · Two armies

The first is Jack, on the Final Dynasty — *a network in China built on word of mouth, with chiefs in each city who do not know one another*. **The second is Mnyama**, explaining to a village why nothing can be done about him.

Two types of armies, and the only difference is the guns. One takes a country, for good. The other takes a village, for a moment.

What the pairing establishes is that this novel is not neutral about which one wins. *The Final Dynasty brings down a regime with tanks in the streets and no weapons of its own. Mnyama holds a handful of villages and cannot hold them once anyone organizes against him. Consent scales; coercion does not.*

And it restates the book's central opposition in a register that is easy to miss. Rosey against Hector, Plato against the will to power, persuasion against force — *stated here not as philosophy but as two men describing what they command.*

SECTION III — ANIMALS AND SAINTS

Human nature and moral psychology: what people are, and what they can become.

What is morally wrong with people? Watch *fear* and *love* — who reaches for each, and who refuses to.

III.1 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Francesca's mission-statement email pairs two words: *we are more than just that **animal** we see at the surface*, and *we are called on to be **saints***. The title of Part Two pairs a different two. What has been substituted, and why does it matter?

A. *Criminal* replaces *animal* — and the difference is that the animal is what we are all prone to be, while the criminal is one who acts on it **B.** *Saint* replaces *angel* — and the difference is that a saint was once ordinary **C.** Nothing is substituted; the title is simply shorthand for her email **D.** *Criminal* replaces *saint* — and the difference is legal rather than moral

III.2 • TRACE IT

Find the definitions of *criminal* and *saint* in the novel. They are two consecutive sentences, in the last Part, long after the Part that depends on them. Then say who in the room is being described.

III.3 • ODD ONE OUT

Four characters who appear to subordinate morality to strength, nature, or interest. **Three of them rest on something that cannot be argued with — an appetite, a nature, a loyalty. One makes a claim that could in principle be checked. Which?**

A. Hector Ramirez — *We all want power. Power is our root motivation. It is our true purpose.* **B.** Mnyama — *We're all animals. You, same as us. We're just the smart animals who have the guns.* **C.** Zihao — *Our nation didn't get where it is by having leaders who quibbled over a squishy thing like the perceived morality of the uninformed masses.* **D.** Eva Goode — *We always do what's best for the Society — so it becomes ever more powerful and far-reaching.*

III.4 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Elimu's name means *education*. Mnyama's means *animal*. Hamu's means *eager*. In the scene where they meet, Mnyama's men behead Elimu in front of his eight-year-old son. What does the scene stage?

A. The animal killing education in front of eagerness **B.** The failure of missionary charity in Africa **C.** The novel's argument that violence outruns institutions **D.** A demonstration that Mnyama is more dangerous than Hector

III.5 • ECHO PAIR

Two moments denying that a moral order exists — one on a sidewalk, one in a private jet years later.

"You're not going to hell, my friend. There is no such place."

■ *“When we die, the only thing that changes is that we stop desiring power.”*

Who says each, and to whom? What is the relationship between the two moments?

III.6 · MULTIPLE CHOICE

Francesca’s charge to the Core Team is *to turn our animals into saints — both individually and collectively*. By the last page, has the novel shown that happening?

A. Yes, individually — Carlos’s conversion, Diego’s courage, David and Eva abandoning the killing — and collectively, in the Third Phase **B.** Individually yes; collectively the novel substitutes something else, because a system that removes the occasion for vice is not the same as a population that has become virtuous **C.** No — the novel’s own logic forbids it, since only individuals can make moral choices and collectives cannot **D.** The question is unanswerable, because the novel ends before the Third Phase has been tested

Morality and Its Absence

III.7 • TRACE IT

Find the first moral argument in the novel. *It is made by a schoolboy, it is correct, and it collapses within four lines. Then say what his name means.*

III.8 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

The word *ought* enters the novel in the first journal entry of Part Two — the same entry in which Carlos declares God dead to him. Where does he get it, and what does he do with it?

- A.** From his father, who always said *ought to* instead of *have to* — and he uses it sarcastically against God
B. From Rosey, and he uses it to describe the Core Team’s mission
C. From Francesca’s email, and he uses it to justify taking over her work
D. From Plato, via the *Republic*, and he uses it to argue with Jack

III.9 • ECHO PAIR

Two people explaining why they are not culpable.

“I have nothing to feel guilty about, and neither do you.”

“He reassured himself that he wasn’t hurting anyone directly. He was simply doing what was necessary to get ahead. And surely the country would be better off with him in power than the corrupt incompetents in other parties.”

Who is each? Which of them can eventually be reached, and why?

III.10 • TRACE IT

Find the two moments where Carlos poses a meta-ethical question he cannot answer. They are seven years apart, structurally identical, and both wait more than three decades for a reply.

Where to look. He is in his thirties both times, and both are journal entries. One is prompted by an atrocity in the news; the other by a conversation with his grandfather that he can only half remember.

III.11 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

The Athens speech explains why nations cannot be moral. What is the reason?

- A.** Nations are too large for any single conscience to govern them
B. Nations are run by politicians, and politicians are selected for the wrong qualities
C. Morality requires disinterested decisions, and a nation is structurally incapable of making one — *it’s not that they don’t act morally, it’s that they can’t*
D. Nations are artificial constructs, and artificial things cannot bear moral properties

III.12 • ODD ONE OUT

Four statements about moral responsibility. **Three claim that a person is not accountable for what they do. Which one is doing something else?**

A. “We’re all animals. You, same as us. We’re just the smart animals who have the guns.” **B.** “They’re all ‘just doing their jobs.’ And that’s hard to overcome. We all hate the ‘just doing my job’ defense. Deep down we know it doesn’t hold water. But practically speaking, it’s not going away.” **C.** “Power is our root motivation. It is our true purpose. When we die, the only thing that changes is that we stop desiring power.” **D.** “It’s the Catholic school torturing you like a ghost from the past. They have burned original sin into your psyche. Trust me. It’s total BS.”

III.13 • ECHO PAIR

Two verdicts on the same word, one delivered as a diagnosis and one as a defense.

“Our nation didn’t get where it is by having leaders who quibbled over a squishy thing like the perceived morality of the uninformed masses.”

“I don’t say these things lightly or in jest... Of the three great murderers of the twentieth century, Hitler and Stalin were truly evil. Mao, I think, was mostly just a buffoon.”

Where does each come from? What does the second one tell you about how to read the first?

III.14 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

The Athens speech applies its own category to Carlos’s own creation: *Even my beautiful, wonderful LSA is an immoral, temporary construct. It might be better than some or even many other countries in terms of freedom, justice, opportunity, but it is still an immoral animal, and it has got to go.*

Why does the novel need him to say this?

A. Because the argument is only credible if he pays for it first — and the LSA is the thing he would least want to lose **B.** To pre-empt the charge that he is building an empire under another name **C.** To demonstrate that his conversion has removed his attachment to worldly achievement **D.** Because a Part titled *Fear and Love* requires an act of love that costs something

III.15 • ECHO PAIR

The same man, two Parts apart.

“He knew he was treading on dangerous ground. But what choice did he have?”

“How do you decide between doing what’s right for your family and doing what’s right, period? How did I let myself get into a situation where that’s even the choice?”

Who is this, and what has happened between the two?

III.16 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

The Athens speech states: *Ultimately, we choose what to believe. We choose what to fear. We choose what to love.* Where do those three verbs come from?

A. From Francesca’s mission-statement email **B.** From Grandpa’s lesson about learning what to love **C.** From a conversation with Gabriella over dinner in Part Two, in the same order **D.** From Sophia’s *The Deliberation*, where Fear and Love argue before a jury

III.17 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Three passages, from three different arguments. Read them together.

On why God stays hidden: *if you made it so that we knew for sure you were there, then this would take away our freedom... **taking away our freedom would somehow make our love... fake.***

On why animals are exempt from moral judgment: *They do not have the capacity to rise above their circumstances and decide to do what is right regardless of the impact on themselves. **They do not make disinterested decisions.***

To the small nations, in the Athens speech: *Is it possible that your meek and mild country is that way because **it actually has no choice**? Is your country “moral” because it chooses to be — or because it has no choice?*

One test is being applied three times — to God, to animals, and to countries. What is it?

A. That without the capacity to have done otherwise, the thing is not what it appears to be **B.** That anything which cannot be observed cannot be judged **C.** That moral judgment requires an audience **D.** That freedom matters more than goodness

III.18 • ODD ONE OUT

Four accounts of what drives human behavior. **One of them contains a single word that makes moral choice possible. Which account — and which word?**

A. *All the surface things — money, fame, glory, even love, adoration, accomplishment — those are manifestations of our true desire, which is power. Power is our root motivation. It is our true purpose.* **B.** *We’re all animals. You, same as us. We’re just the smart animals who have the guns.* **C.** *We always do what’s best for the Society — so it becomes ever more powerful and far-reaching.* **D.** *People all have a powerful survival instinct that drives us to compete and seek winning at all costs. Yet we also have this inexhaustible fountain from far within us telling us that we are more than just that animal we see at the surface.*

III.19 • ECHO PAIR

Two men, a lifetime apart, saying nearly the same thing — to two different listeners.

“I think he said something about evil coming from the fact that we haven’t learned to discern what to love — and that some people love the wrong things their whole lives, often without ever realizing it.”

“Message is that only one special thing about being human. We get to choose what to love.”

Who are they, and what is the relationship between the two utterances?

III.20 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

In discussing the *superpower* with David and Eva in the barn, Carlos explains what his grandfather had meant: *He meant we either choose to love God — or something else. And I know from my own life experience, that “something else” is either ourselves, or something we create in our own minds that takes God’s place — or frankly, probably some combination of the two.*

Which characters illustrate each branch?

A. Hector chooses himself; Eva chooses something she created **B.** Eva chooses the Society; Hector chooses power; and Carlos, after he became famous, chose his brand **C.** All the antagonists choose themselves, and the distinction does not do any work **D.** The branches describe stages of a single life rather than different people

III.21 • ECHO PAIR

The same man on the same subject, some thirty years apart.

*These terrorist dipshits... **Why do they think murder is the only way to change a border?** ... If they aren’t willing to, now and forever, treat the terrorist animals in their midst as the criminals that they are, then this will never work... **I’m going to tell Anwar that it is them or me.***

*For those of you who view national borders as sacrosanct, untouchable, off-limits — realize that these things you view as permanent... **they are temporary.** Actually, “whimsical” is a better word... And keep in mind, **every time you saw a border change — and that happened everywhere all the time — people died.** Sometimes only “many” people died, other times “multitudes.”*

What has changed between them — and what has he had to give up to get there?

III.22 • SHORT ANSWER

Matthew 4:8. Again, the devil taketh him up into **an exceeding high mountain**, and sheweth him **all the kingdoms of the world**, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, **All these things will I give thee**, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

A high place. The world laid out below. Everything in view, offered to one man.

Which scene in *The Third Phase* is built on that staging — and what does the man in it say?

ANSWER GUIDE — SECTION III

III.1 · What the Part title substitutes, and why

Answer: A.

Francesca's pole is a *disposition*. The animal is what every person has at the surface — *a powerful survival instinct that drives us to compete and seek winning at all costs* — and it is in all of us, all the time. **It is not a category of person. It is a category of pull.**

The title's pole is an *act*. A criminal is someone who has followed the pull, and the Athens speech supplies the test: *they are the ones who treat people like they are just stuff*. **Not what he is inclined toward. What he did.**

Which is why nobody in this novel escapes responsibility by being called an animal. Mnyama says *we're all animals, you, same as us* precisely in order to be excused by it, **and the novel does not let him have it** — he chose, and the word for a person who chooses that way is the one in the title.

The tempting wrong answer is C, because the title *does* function as shorthand for her email and a reader who treats it that way loses nothing at the plot level. **What they lose is the one-word argument the title is making:** *the pull is universal, and the name changes only when you act on it.*

III.2 · The definitions of *criminal* and *saint*

The Athens speech, at its summit:

The history of the human race is chock full of criminals of all shapes, sizes and varieties — they are the ones who treat people like they are just stuff.

History is also filled with saints — they treat people, to say the least, as if they believed they were more than just stuff.

Who is in the room. *Carlos is not describing anyone in particular — the definition is general, and the speech is addressed to the species. But one example of it is sitting a few feet away.*

Gabriella was abducted at twelve, held in a basement, sold, and moved below the deck of a yacht as cargo. She was treated as stuff, in the plainest sense the word has, for ten years — and her husband's general definition happens to be an exact account of what was done to her.

III.3 · Which denial appeals to a good outside itself

Answer: C. Four lines later, in the same scene: ***The truth, Comrade, is we are doing this for the world.***

That is a claim that can be tested. The world exists whether or not he serves it, and whether forging a transcript is good for it is a question with an answer — *one he would lose*. **He is not denying that a standard exists. He is invoking one, dishonestly.**

The other three cannot be lost. *Hector names an appetite: whatever he wants is by definition what he wants. Mnyama names a nature: if we are animals, nothing follows that could count against him.*
Neither claim has any way of being wrong.

The tempting wrong answer is D, and it is genuinely difficult, because **Eva does believe she is doing good**. *We are, kind of, the guardians of humanity. We maintain equilibrium in the world.* She is not a cynic and she does not think of herself as wicked.

The distinction is that her good is circular. The standard she serves is the Society's own increase — *so it becomes ever more powerful and far-reaching* — and her stated endgame is that the Society and the world become the same thing. **A good that is measured by its own expansion cannot be failed**, which is why she can be devout and unreachable at once.

Zihao is lying about the world. Eva is not lying about the Society — and that is what makes her the harder case.

III.4 · *What the killing of Elimu stages*

Answer: A, and the reading comes from substituting the meanings for the names and reading the sentence again: ***the animal kills education in front of eagerness.***

And the transmission survives anyway. In journal #25280, Dr. Hamu Abara telephones Carlos to explain that he was orphaned at eight, that a charity gave him a tablet and an AIEdu subscription, and that he has named his unification of quantum mechanics and gravity the ***Elimu theory***, after his father.

Education is murdered; eagerness carries it forward and gives it his name.

The tempting wrong answer is C, which is true of the scene and true of Part Four, and which misses that the scene is built out of three names. **B** and **D** are readings the text does not support.

III.5 · *Two denials of a moral order, by the same man*

Both are Hector Ramirez. The first is in Part One, kneeling on a sidewalk, cradling his dying friend Paco, who has just asked *am I going to hell?* The second is in Part Two, on a private jet, instructing Diego Lucha on how the world works.

The first is a consolation. The second is a doctrine. Between them lies much of Hector's career — **and the suggestion is that the doctrine was already fully formed on that sidewalk.** He was not comforting a friend so much as reporting what he took to be the case.

Which is what hollows the consolation out. A man who tells a dying friend there is no hell has offered him a hope only if he is guessing — **and Hector does not think he is guessing. He offers a similar view to a live man in a jet as a description of reality.**

III.6 · *Whether the animals became saints*

Answer: B, though C is a serious position and a reader that argues its way there has read carefully.

The individual cases are unambiguous and the novel gives each of them room: a corrupt politician chooses courage on a bench; two assassins arrive to commit a murder and do not commit it; a sixty-three-year-old skeptic surrenders. Animals into saints, one at a time.

The collective case is different in kind. What the Third Phase delivers is a world in which nations no longer exist to make war, cash no longer exists to move drugs, borders no longer exist to hide behind,

and — journal #22718 — *those types don't have fortresses called nations to hide behind anymore.* Crime, corruption and war fall because the structures that carried them are gone.

That is an enormous achievement and it is **not sainthood**. It is the removal of the occasion for sin. Carlos concedes as much in journal #25000, in the novel's most honest sentence about its own project: *I think we can look in the mirror and say we are leaving the world a better place than we found it — at least in terms of politics and economics. As to the human condition — not sure much has changed there.*

The tempting wrong answer is A, and it is what most readers will feel by the last page, because the Epilogue is triumphant and the arc is complete. It is wrong because it accepts the Epilogue's mood as the novel's argument.

And the journal entry referred to above is the check on that mood. Carlos writes it near the end of his life, and Sophia does not quote it in the eulogy — so a reader who takes the funeral as the final word never hears the author of the achievement say that the human condition may not have changed at all.

C overstates the novel's position: The Athens speech says collectives cannot make *disinterested* decisions, not that collective improvement is impossible.

III.7 · The first moral argument in the novel

Chapter 6, a dormitory in one of China's top boarding schools, two boys and a forged transcript.

Haipa: *Well, it isn't just that. I mean something isn't less immoral just because there is less chance of getting caught.*

Zihao: *You are so naïve. This is China. We are the greatest country on earth. Our nation didn't get where it is by having leaders who quibbled over a squishy thing like the perceived morality of the uninformed masses.*

Haipa states the correct answer to Glaucon's challenge in the *Republic* — invisibility does not alter the wrong — and folds immediately.

His name means fear.

Fear knows the right answer and lacks the nerve to hold it. That is a more useful account of how ordinary people go wrong than anything Hector or Mnyama supplies — and it happens in Part One, to a boy who will one day help govern a billion people.

III.8 · How *ought* enters the novel

Answer: A. *He said I ought to. Even when I was little, he would always say "ought to" instead of "have to." He always gave me a choice — every reprimand was a moral lesson. Always trying to get me to make the right choice.*

And the same entry closes: *If you are all powerful like you claim, then give me 32 hours in a day and 9 days in a week going forward, cause it's the only way I'll be able to do all the things I "ought" to do.*

The word's first appearance is a man using his father's moral grammar to be sarcastic at a God he has just buried. Forty-two years later it carries the Athens speech's argument: *at least we have them — at least we know what the word "ought" means.*

The tempting wrong answer is C, because the entry is *about* Francesca's work and the reader will attach the vocabulary to her. It is worth noticing that she never uses the word. Her register is saints and love. **The women of this novel supply Carlos's nouns; his father and grandfather supply the grammar** — *ought, eternity and now are peas in the same pod, and choose what to love.*

III.9 · Two people explaining why they are not culpable

The first is Eva, walking through Farragut Square, dismissing David's guilt as residue from Catholic school. **The second is Diego**, at his first dinner with Hector Ramirez.

They sound alike and they are not alike. Eva denies that the standard applies. **Diego knows the standard exists, knows he is violating it, and constructs a rationalisation** — which is a different act, and it requires him to keep the standard in view in order to argue around it.

That is why Diego is reachable. On the park bench in Part Three the rationalisation fails and what is left is the standard he never stopped acknowledging: *There is such a thing as good and evil. You might have chosen to ignore that for a long time, but no more.*

Eva is the harder case, and the novel declines to close it. Asked in the barn why killing a man would be wrong, she answers *because it would have been unfair to you*, and then — ***I don't have a good answer right now.***

That is not a conversion, and it is not nothing. She has spent a lifetime with an answer for everything, and she has just said she has run out of one. **The novel gives her no verdict, and gives the reader no grounds for one either** — only a woman who looks down, then up, then down again.

III.10 · Two meta-ethical questions Carlos cannot answer

Journal #6389, age thirty, after a terrorist attack: *Why is the world so immoral? I want to know. Some people say that morals are relative and not absolute, and we just find our way. But that never made sense to me. If we are all just making up our own rules, then there really aren't any rules. But if there are absolute rules — then where do they come from — who decides?*

Journal #8898, age thirty-seven, recovering his grandfather's lesson as a fragment: *But what yardstick do we use to figure out what we ought to love?*

Both ask where a standard could come from. Both are stated with complete clarity by a man with no resources to answer them. Both are answered in the Athens speech, in a single sentence: ***Without a higher truth there are no true values.***

Thirty-eight years and thirty-one years respectively. *He can state the question clearly in his thirties, and waits until sixty-eight to hear it answered.*

III.11 · Why nations cannot be moral

Answer: C. The argument runs through the animal tier: animals are exempt because *they do not have the capacity to rise above their circumstances and decide to do what is right regardless of the impact on themselves. They do not make disinterested decisions.* Then the same test is applied upward: *Nations are self-interested. Nations are not moral. Nations are animals. We are more. They are not. They are less.*

And the crucial qualifier, which distinguishes an indictment from a diagnosis: *again, not their fault, it is just their nature.*

One distinction is worth stating plainly, because the claim is easy to misread. It is about agency, not about results. *A nation can do enormous good — the LSA and Palestine are among the novel's greatest goods — and still be incapable of a disinterested decision, because the good it does is the good of its own members. The charge is not that nations never do good. It is that they cannot do good for its own sake.*

The tempting wrong answer is B, and it is the argument the novel makes *everywhere else* — the Ship of State, the party system, Destiny and Saurian, the incentives that produce Mr. Lizard. A reader steeped in four Parts of political satire will assume the Athens speech's case against nations is the same case scaled up. It is not. It would survive a world of honest politicians, which is what makes it the more radical claim.

A confuses size with structure. **D** would rule out the LSA as well, which is just as artificial and which Carlos loves.

III.12 · Which claim about responsibility is not an evasion

Answer: B, Rosey at the announcement rally — the only speaker of the four who *affirms* that the excuse fails. *Deep down we know it doesn't hold water.* She is not excusing anyone; she is making an engineering argument, that moral suasion is an unreliable instrument at scale and the structure must therefore be changed.

A dissolves the moral tier. **C** replaces morality with nature. **D** diagnoses conscience as damage.

The tempting wrong answer is D, because Eva sounds like she is being kind and because *original sin* is the most theologically loaded phrase in the group. She is telling a man that the part of him that registers wrongdoing is an injury inflicted by nuns — which is the most complete denial of accountability in the four, and it is offered as comfort.

And notice what B has to live with. Rosey's claim is that moral suasion is unreliable at scale, so the structure must change instead. That is not a claim that moral argument never works — but the plot she is standing on was saved by exactly that: one man, on a bench, reached by nothing but the difference between right and wrong.

III.13 · Two verdicts on the same word

The first is Zihao, a schoolboy in his late teens, justifying a forged transcript. **The second is the Author's Note,** explaining why the three Communist Party leaders are drawn as they are — and

confirming that the Triumvirate's nicknames throughout the novel (Three Stooges, Three Blind Mice, Three Little Pigs) are deliberate.

The pairing is useful because it clarifies the register. Zihao is not written as a Miltonic villain who has reasoned his way to evil. He is written as a clever boy who found moral language embarrassing and never revisited the question — and the novel's judgment on the tradition he goes on to lead is that its greatest figure was *mostly just a buffoon*.

What that costs the book, and what it buys: it forecloses a certain kind of grandeur — the reader never gets a Zihao who is magnificently wrong. What it buys is the observation the novel actually wants, which is that catastrophic politics often begins with someone declining to take a moral question seriously in a dorm room.

III.14 · Why Carlos must give up the LSA in public

Answer: A. He has just told the audience there is a statue of him in the LSA's capital labeled *Father of Our Country*, and that he loves the place — *I cuddled and nurtured it, I read it bedtime stories, and I went to all its games and school plays*. Then: **But make no mistake. It has to go.**

He is asking every nation on earth to dissolve itself, **and he goes first, in public, with the one he made**. Every earlier application of the word *animal* to a nation was aimed outward — Russia, Iran, North Korea. **This is the only one aimed at something of his own.**

And notice the vocabulary he chooses. *I cuddled and nurtured it. I read it bedtime stories.* **He does not describe the LSA as a project or an achievement. He describes it as a child** — and then says it has to die so that the world can be made whole.

A father giving up a son to save everyone else is a shape with a long history (with obvious biblical connections), delivered by a man who converted five years earlier.

The tempting wrong answer is C, which is a genuinely available reading — he converted recently and the speech is full of the language of surrender. **It fails because the novel does not present this as detachment.** He calls it his baby and says it has to go in consecutive sentences, **and the cost is the point**. Detachment would not be a sacrifice, and a sacrifice is what the argument requires.

B is a byproduct. **D** is not claimed anywhere in the text.

III.15 · The same man, two Parts apart

Diego Lucha. The first is free indirect narration at his first dinner with Hector Ramirez, in Part Two. The second is his interior monologue on a park bench in Part Three, with a burner phone in his hand and Rosey's number entered.

The rhetorical question in Part Two — *what choice did he have* — is answered in Part Three by the man who asked it, at the cost of his career, his country, and his safety. He arrives at: *There is such a thing as good and evil. You might have **chosen** to ignore that for a long time, but no more.*

His name is Lucha, which the Character Map describes as *conflict or struggle* — **and notes that he wrestles with a significant moral dilemma.**

The word is a noun, and that is the point. Every other symbolic name in the novel labels what a person is — animal, freedom, wisdom, education, pride, fear. **His labels what he is in. A struggle is a condition rather than a character,** which is why he is the one antagonist who can come out of it somewhere else.

III.16 · Where the Athens speech's three verbs come from

Answer: C. São Paulo, thirty-nine years earlier. Gabriella: *Is belief something we choose — or something that happens to us?* Then, of herself: *Is fear something that happens to us, or something we choose?* Then Carlos adds the third: *I guess you could ask the same thing about love.*

Her conclusion: *all three — belief, fear, love — must be some combination of choosing and happening to us. Like the choosing and the happening are intertwined.*

Note what he changes. She said combination. He says choice. Whether he has resolved her question or flattened it is worth arguing — and journal #18459 arguably supports her, since he chooses and then something happens to him.

The tempting wrong answer is B, because *choose what to love* is unmistakably Grandpa's and it is the third verb in the list. Grandpa supplies one of the three. The triad, and its order, is Gabriella's.

III.17 · One criterion, three domains

Answer: A, and the three results follow in order.

Love without choice is not love. Which is why God stays hidden. **Behavior without choice is not virtue.** Which is why animals are exempt. **Peaceability without choice is not peace.** Which is why a small country's mildness proves nothing.

One test, three domains, and it is never named as one — running through the metaphysics, the moral psychology and the politics, with no character remarking on the repetition.

And the third instance is the one that stings, because it is aimed at the people in the room. The first two let an audience agree comfortably. The third asks a great many of them whether their national virtue is anything more than a lack of options.

The tempting wrong answer is D, which the second and third passages seem to support — **but it inverts the argument.** Freedom is not being ranked above goodness. **The claim is that without freedom there is no goodness to rank.**

III.18 · The word that makes moral choice possible

Answer: D, and the word is **yet**.

Francesca concedes everything Hector claims. The survival instinct is real, it drives us, it seeks winning at all costs — **she does not dispute a word of it.** What she adds is **a second thing, in tension with the first** — and the tension is where a choice becomes possible. *Living out that dance within ourselves is the foundation of human drama.*

Hector has one motive and calls it purpose. Mnyama has one nature and calls it fact. Eva has one loyalty and calls it duty. None of the three describes an interior in which anything could be weighed.

The tempting wrong answer is C, because Eva sounds like she is describing a decision procedure — *we always do what's best* implies deliberation about what is best. **It does not.** The Society's interest is given, and the only question is execution. **She never depicts a moment in which the outcome could go either way.**

Notice what this connects to. Hector, Mnyama and Eva also never use the word *moral*, and never use the phrase *the few ruling over the many*. **Three separate traces, one finding: the antagonists of this novel are defined by the vocabularies they lack rather than the opinions they hold.**

III.19 · Two men, a lifetime apart, saying the same thing

The first is Carlos's grandfather, recalled — vaguely — in journal #8898 at thirty-seven: *I really do wish I had paid more attention when they were trying to teach me things as a teenager. What was it again?* **The second is an unnamed, apparently senile old man on a train in rural Bolivia**, speaking broken English to two people traveling to murder Carlos, when Carlos is seventy-three.

And they are not speaking to the same man. The grandfather said it to Carlos, as a teenager. *The old man says it on a train to David and Eva — two people traveling to murder him — and it reaches Carlos only because they repeat it to him in the barn.*

Carlos's response in the barn: *You probably won't believe this, but my grandpa — in different words — told me that very thing a zillion years ago. I just now had the clearest recollection.*

The relationship is restoration. It comes back whole at seventy-three, carried by a stranger, to the two people it most needed to reach. Whether the old man is an angel is the question the scene refuses to answer. **David says they talked about whether it was some kind of angel**, and Carlos tells him *I wouldn't let go of that thought.*

And there is a third possibility, which the novel places very precisely. *As he fights back tears, his brain toyed with the idea that somehow his reincarnated grandfather might have showed up on a train to save his life.*

His brain toys with it. The thought is offered up from somewhere, and nothing in the scene says he accepts it — *he does not repeat it, does not put it to David and Eva, and turns instead to a different question: do you believe in God?*

And the same conversation produces the word Sophia will build the eulogy on: ***Oh, he just messenger. We all just messengers.***

III.20 · The three branches of loving something else

Answer: B, and the three-way spread is what makes Carlos's explanation useful.

Hector loves power itself — *our true desire... our true purpose* — which is the nearest thing in the novel to loving oneself without intermediary. **Eva** loves an institution she did not create but has made

into an object of worship, and her stated endgame is that it become everything: *Society with the capital S and society with the small s will be the same thing... It will truly be Utopia.*

Carlos's instance is the shortest and the earliest. *I'm going to make it the single top brand in the world — period* is a man in his twenties, **and it does not last.** After his mother's mission reaches him he begins to focus on other things much more than the brand, and for the rest of his life he loves his family and the work — **and finds those sufficient.**

Which is what makes his case the interesting one. He tested the third branch, briefly, and put it down. **The warning he leaves his grandchildren is about the perils of placing your own ego in the role of higher power** — a peril he sampled at twenty-three rather than lived inside for forty years — **and the Epilogue's claim that he slayed the exact same dragon dwelling within himself that he had worked tirelessly to slay collectively is about something subtler than a brand.** *It is about a man who spent four decades doing genuinely good work while carefully declining to ask who it was for.*

The tempting wrong answer is D, and it is not wrong so much as incomplete — Carlos does pass through the branches, and the novel does treat them as a progression in his case. **It misses that the branches are also a taxonomy of the antagonists,** which is what lets the barn scene function as a summary of the whole book.

III.21 · Two views of how borders move

The first is a journal entry written in fury, after an attack might derail their plans for Palestine. **The second is the Athens speech, addressed to the species.**

In the first, violence is an aberration, and it belongs to somebody else. *Terrorists are animals and criminals; the anger is aimed at one people for one failure; and it ends in an ultimatum — them or me.*

In the second, violence is simply the mechanism. *Every border that has ever moved, everywhere, all the time, was moved by people dying — and it is said without heat, as a description of how the world has always worked.*

What he gave up was the exemption. *The young man's anger requires a category of people who resort to murder and a category who do not. The older man has removed the second category — which is what lets him make the argument at all: if every nation was made this way, no nation can claim its own borders were made differently.*

There is of course a certain irony in play. *Carlos issued his ultimatum and meant it. But his cause — without his express knowledge or affirmation — was helped significantly by the violence of Anwar's brother.*

III.22 · A high place, and the world below

Part Two: Hector's aircraft. *He has just threatened Diego, dismissed his guards, and turned to the window:*

"I don't own it all yet," he murmured to himself. "But someday . . . someday."

Three things have changed from the passage, and each makes the scene darker.

The kingdoms are not being offered. They are being counted. Hector is doing an inventory — what he holds, and what is left to acquire — and the transaction he imagines has no other party to it.

Nobody is proposing anything. In Matthew the temptation exists because someone puts it forward. **Here there is no proposal, which means the surrender happened long before the aircraft.** What the reader is watching is not a temptation but its aftermath.

And he says it to no one. The guards have been sent out and the line is murmured to himself — **the one moment in the novel when he is performing for nobody. Which is the Ring of Gyges test, taken in the worst direction.**

And on his own terms it is not irrational. He holds that there is no reckoning of any kind — and if that is true, the kingdoms of the world are not a poor trade for a soul. **They are the only currency there is.**

SECTION IV — WISDOM AND JUSTICE

The Socratic spine: definitions, and what justice turns out to be.

What would a better ordering actually require? Watch **educate** and **rule** arrive at the same institution from opposite directions.

IV.1 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Five-year-old Rosey, watching her mother driven away in handcuffs, tells her aunt: *America has . . . liberty and justice for all. I'm not sure what those are, but I know they are good.*

What is that line doing at the front of the novel?

A. Establishing Rosey as precocious, which the plot will require **B.** Making the reader feel the cruelty of the deportation more sharply **C.** Introducing the Pledge of Allegiance as a recurring motif **D.** Posing the book's central question in the mouth of someone who cannot answer it — and stating the position Carlos will still occupy at sixty-eight

IV.2 • TRACE IT

Nearly every character introduction in Part One contains a stab at defining justice — the same cascade of failed definitions that opens the *Republic*.

Seven of them are listed below. Fill in what each takes justice to be.

Who	Their working definition
Rosey, aged five	
Anwar's brother	

Who	Their working definition
Hector (<i>and Paco, believing it</i>)	
Azadi's mother	
Zihao	
Carlos , journal #197	
Uvidende	

You have just answered question 1, which supplies the first row.

IV.3 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Two characters in Part One state opposite errors about justice. Who are they?

A. Zihao and Uvidende **B.** Hector and Paco **C.** Anwar and his brother **D.** Rosey and her aunt

IV.4 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

The Athens speech finally answers Socrates' question. What is the answer?

A. Justice is whatever an informed, fully participating population decides about the balance between freedom and order — Carlos supplies a procedure and explicitly declines to name the balance **B.** Justice is the condition in which each part of society performs its proper function **C.** Justice is the equal distribution of resources and opportunity across a population **D.** Justice is the protection of individual rights against collective power

IV.5 • ODD ONE OUT

The Athens speech offers four pieces of evidence that the human obsession with fairness is universal.

Three are observations about behavior. One is a philosophical challenge disguised as one. Which?

A. *Think about every action movie you've ever seen. The bad guys do something unfair. You get emotionally worked up and you sit at the edge of your seat waiting for the good guys to settle the score.* **B.** *Research on babies shows that concern over fairness starts almost from the point we can distinguish separate objects.* **C.** *How many times do you hear the word "fair" used in law courts or political discussions? How often does it come up in your family, in your personal relationships?* **D.** *What does fairness mean in a world made of deterministic random chaos? What does fairness mean in a world of moral relativism?*

IV.6 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

In the barn, Carlos asks his two would-be assassins why killing him would have been wrong. Eva answers first: *Because it would have been unfair to you.* He dismantles it in one line. What is the novel demonstrating?

- A.** That Eva is less intelligent than she believes **B.** That fairness cannot ground a prohibition, because any fairness claim can be outweighed by a larger one **C.** That utilitarian reasoning is incompatible with justice **D.** That Eva does not really believe killing him was wrong

IV.7 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

A novel with a Part titled *Wisdom and Justice*, whose hero spends his life pursuing a just world, ends with him saying: *mercy is greater than justice*.

What has the novel done, and is the ending earned?

- A.** It has abandoned its political argument in favor of a religious one at the last moment **B.** It has left the relationship unresolved, since a mercy that overrides justice would destroy the system Carlos built **C.** It has revealed that the political project was always secondary — which the Epilogue confirms by dispatching it in one sentence **D.** It has ranked two goods, and the ranking follows from something it established much earlier: justice is what a system can deliver, and mercy is what only a person can extend

IV.8 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

The Athens speech builds a chain of dependencies, stated in the order Carlos needs them:

To overcome pride, we need wisdom. And wisdom starts with recognizing that we are all, in our most essential selves, on a journey to seek higher truth. Without a higher truth there are no true values. And without values there is no wisdom — for what is wisdom in a world with no values?

Put the four terms in the order they *depend* on each other — what has to be in place first, and what follows from it.

- A.** Higher truth → values → wisdom → the overcoming of pride **B.** Education → love → wisdom → good government **C.** Freedom → choice → love → wisdom **D.** Wisdom → values → higher truth → God

IV.9 • TRACE IT

Follow Sophia's presence through the five Parts — how often she appears, and what she is doing. Then say what her presence tracks.

Start here. In Part One she does not exist. In Part Two she arrives as an infant. Count her speaking scenes in each Part after that — the number is small enough to hold in your head, and the direction is the whole point.

IV.10 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

The Third Phase opens with an epigraph from the *Republic*: there will be no end to the trouble of states until philosophers become rulers, or rulers truly become philosophers. Plato offers two options. Which does the novel take?

- A.** The first — Carlos and Rosey are philosophers who acquire power **B.** The second — the powerful are educated into wisdom through AIEdu **C.** Neither; it takes a third option Plato did not offer **D.** It rejects the epigraph's premise entirely

IV.11 • ODD ONE OUT

Rosey, describing the team to Azadi, draws a distinction in a single sentence: *Jack is brilliant and full of wisdom and James is literally a wizard on the computer.*

Four people the novel describes in the language of exceptional ability. Three of them are clever. Which one is wise?

A. Hector Ramirez — *clearly brilliant... well informed on nearly every subject, from the plants on his estates to the intricacies of jet engines* **B.** Jack — *brilliant and full of wisdom*, and the man Carlos calls first when something has gone wrong **C.** Eva Goode — *I love the Society so much. We're so clever* **D.** Zihao — *able to breach a school's systems as a schoolboy, and destined to be leaders*

IV.12 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

In the Athens speech, Carlos says: *those who say people are too stupid or too selfish or too evil to actually legislate are utterly small-minded — they are, what's the opposite of wisdom?* He looked down — searching for the word. *Ah, right, they are foolish.*

What is the novel doing with that hesitation?

A. Reminding the reader that Carlos is an athlete and not a philosopher **B.** Showing that he is tiring near the end of a long speech **C.** Observing that *folly* is a category the modern world has stopped using, and that a man has to hunt for the word **D.** Nothing; it is a naturalistic detail with no argumentative weight

IV.13 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

The Epilogue reports what Carlos told a grandson: *you can try to convince yourself that wisdom can emerge from the mundane alone, but it's a lie. True wisdom is a child of the sacred.*

What does that sentence do to the rest of the book?

A. It marks the last of several changes in what Carlos took *bring wisdom into government* to mean **B.** It converts the political program into an evangelistic one **C.** It contradicts the novel's insistence that True Democracy is available to believers and unbelievers alike **D.** It is Sophia's interpretation rather than her father's, and should be read as her theology

IV.14 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Carlos founded three nations, chaired four constitutional conventions, invented a voting system, and gave away a multi-billion-dollar company — all in service of a mission statement that reads *bring wisdom into government worldwide.*

By the novel's own accounting, what did all of it finally amount to?

A. True Democracy, the mechanism that makes informed self-government possible **B.** The dissolution of nations, which removed the structures that made war and tyranny available **C.** A free market for ideas —

which the Epilogue reports is what he himself would have named above everything else **D.** His daughter, who is the answer to the mission statement and who outlives him

ANSWER GUIDE — SECTION IV

IV.1 · What five-year-old Rosey has, and lacks

Answer: D. She knows justice is good and cannot say what it is. In the Athens speech, sixty-six years later, Carlos surveys the whole history of the question and can say what justice is *not* — *the many being ruled by the few* — and otherwise declines to specify, offering a procedure instead. The child and the world-historical figure are in the same epistemic position, and the novel opens and closes on it.

The tempting wrong answer is B, which is true and is doing real work in the scene — the aunt's private verdict, *this was no kind of justice*, is placed there precisely to sharpen it. But that is the emotional business of the chapter. The line about not knowing what the words mean is the philosophical business, and it is the one the book returns to.

IV.2 · Seven definitions of justice in Part One

Rosey — *liberty and justice for all. I'm not sure what those are, but I know they are good.* True belief without an account.

Her aunt, silently — *this was no kind of justice.* An adult's verdict, withheld from the child.

Anwar's brother — *we are going to be patriots like our father and kill the infidel.* **Justice as retribution.**

Hector — *they deserve what they're about to get, so think of this as dispensing justice.* And Paco, believing it sincerely as he raises his gun: *this is justice. They are murderous scumbags who don't deserve to live.*

Azadi's mother — *our country isn't a just country. It is run by people that are... bad people. Criminals really.* **Justice as the absence of criminal rule.**

Zihao — *you think what we're doing isn't fair, but I'm telling you it is the fairest thing we can do.* *We both know we will be far better leaders than any of them.* **Justice as desert.**

Carlos, journal #197 — *so unfair, he had his whole life in front of him. Why did you allow this?* **Justice as cosmic fairness, addressed upward.**

Uvidende — *life is so unfair. We will do everything we can to balance the scales.* **Justice as compensation.**

IV.3 · Two opposite errors about justice

Answer: A. Zihao holds that the deserving should rule, and therefore that putting the deserving in power by fraud is the fairest available course. Uvidende holds that the calling of humanity is to compensate the undeserving for their luck.

Desert-based justice and compensation-based justice — the two poles of every real argument about the subject — **planted in a Chinese dormitory and a Copenhagen hospital corridor within a few chapters of each other.**

They appear on opposite sides of the world, hold incompatible politics, and share no scene in the entire novel. **Two characters, both entirely confident, wrong in opposite directions.**

The tempting wrong answer is C, because Anwar and his brother *do* argue about justice explicitly and it is the most dramatic version of the disagreement in Part One. **It is a disagreement about facts and tactics** — whether the leadership is using children as shields, whether violence advances the cause — **inside a shared framework. Zihao and Uvidende disagree about what justice is.**

IV.4 · The Athens speech's answer to Socrates' question about justice

Answer: A. Politics boils down to finding the right balance between freedom and order... When we find the right answer to that balance then we will have justice. And immediately: ***I'm not here to tell you what that balance should be, but I am here to tell you how we find it.***

Two features are worth noticing. The positive account is **procedural** — justice is the output of a method rather than a predefined destination. The substantive account is **negative** — *what justice is not is the many being ruled by the few.*

The tempting wrong answer is B, which is Plato's actual answer in the *Republic* — each class doing its own work — and which a reader primed by the epigraph will expect a novel modeled on the *Republic* to reach. It arrives somewhere very different, and the difference is the book's whole quarrel with its model: Plato assigns functions; Carlos distributes the decision.

IV.5 · The four pieces of evidence about fairness

Answer: D. A, B and C establish that the fairness instinct is universal. D asks what could possibly ground it if the materialist account is true — and it is the hinge on which the whole passage turns, because the argument is not *people care about fairness* but *people care about fairness and that caring is unintelligible unless something outside us underwrites it.*

The passage ends: *Where do we put that passion, that intense all-consuming obsession with fairness that every single one of us has, in a world with no higher truth?*

The tempting wrong answer is B, because it is the only item citing external research and therefore looks like the load-bearing evidence. It is the most persuasive of the three observations and it is still only an observation.

Note to the reader: this is the opening move of *Mere Christianity* — the universal appeal to a standard as evidence that the standard exists — and Carlos cites C. S. Lewis by name earlier in the same speech.

IV.6 · Why killing Carlos would have been wrong

Answer: B. Yes, but you knew that from the start. You rationalized it because you thought there was some greater good would come from killing me — something that outweighed the unfairness. She concedes: *I don't have a good answer right now.*

Only David's answer survives: *If God is there, then we shouldn't kill you, despite whatever bigger-picture reason we might have, because you are His child, His creation.* And when Carlos asks what follows if He is not — *then I don't know.*

This is the climax of the justice theme in the novel. A whole book spent building a theory of justice, and at the decisive moment justice alone cannot ground the one prohibition that matters. The Epilogue then says so outright: *there is something more important than fairness, something that transcends justice.*

The tempting wrong answer is C, which describes what happens in the exchange — a fairness claim defeated by a greater-good calculation — and mistakes the target. The novel is not arguing against utilitarianism. It is arguing that *fairness by itself* has no floor, and that something outside the calculus is needed to put one there.

A is unsupported; Eva reasons well throughout. **D** is contradicted by her arriving at the gate at all.

IV.7 · Mercy ranked above justice

Answer: D.

The distinction is set up in the Epilogue's own political version, two paragraphs earlier: *in the context of our personal relationships, it only takes one to make peace but takes two to make war... With nations it takes two to make peace, and only one to make war.*

Mercy is a unilateral act. One party can extend it, without agreement, without reciprocity, and without a mechanism. That is exactly why it is unavailable to a nation — **which is why nations are stuck with justice**, and why Carlos's last instruction concerns something no constitution can be written to produce. *He spent his life building the best machine available for delivering justice, and he ends by telling his daughter that the higher thing is precisely the thing his machine cannot do.*

The tempting wrong answer is B, and it is the sharpest objection available. **If mercy overrides justice, what happens to the war on crime, to the courts, to the Deficit Elimination Act?** The novel's answer is in the barn, and it is **a boundary rather than a doctrine**: Carlos gives the assassins water and an escort — and then, **lock it behind them**. **Mercy is extended by a person and does not dissolve the institution.**

C says something true and does not answer the question. The Epilogue does dispose of the political achievement in a single line, **but that is a statement about the novel's priorities rather than about the relationship between the two goods.** *The question asks what mercy and justice are to each other.*

A misreads the timing. Nothing is abandoned at the last moment; **the ranking is prepared from Part Two onward**, in every scene where Gabriella carries guilt she does not owe and Eva carries none that she does.

IV.8 · The chain of dependencies, in order

Answer: A, which is the passage turned around.

Carlos argues from the problem backwards — *to beat pride you need wisdom, and wisdom needs values, and values need a higher truth.* **Read as a sequence of dependencies it runs the other way: higher truth comes first, and the overcoming of pride is what falls out at the end.**

And since the Athens speech defines pride as *fear of not being loved*, the chain terminates in the Part title: *higher truth, at the far end, produces the end of fear*.

It also explains something the reader has been carrying since Chapter 10. Carlos said *I have no clue what that means* about his mother's mission statement, and he was telling the exact truth. He had no access to the first term in the chain, so the last one was literally unintelligible to him. *Bring wisdom into government* was never a technocratic program, and a reader who took it as one for four Parts has made the same mistake he made at twenty-six.

The tempting wrong answer is D, and it is very close. It has the same four terms, and it ends where a reader familiar with the rest of the book expects the argument to end. The problem is the direction.

D makes wisdom the foundation and higher truth the conclusion — as though one reasons from wisdom up to God. The passage runs the other way: without a higher truth there are no true values, and without values there is no wisdom. Wisdom is what the higher truth produces, not what discovers it.

And note what the speech does not do at the far end. It says higher truth, and stops. Carlos does not say God, does not name a religion, and does not tell an audience of believers and unbelievers what the higher truth is — which is the same restraint he keeps for the entire speech. A reader may supply the word; the sentence does not.

B is Francesca's formula — true, and a different sentence.

IV.9 · Sophia's presence across the five Parts

The Character Map, before the novel begins: *named, and identified as the Greek word for wisdom.*

The Prologue: prominent, and it is not an accident. She is the one who presses him about God, and the one whose faith produces his involuntary blasphemy. **Before the story begins, the reader has already met Wisdom, awake at night, asking questions the book will steadily answer. Part One:** absent. **Part Two:** absent entirely. **Part Three:** three mentions, beginning with her adoption at nine months old and Carlos's discovery of unconditional love. **Part Four:** one mention — journal #14198: *Sophia is dead set on being a writer. Seems like that has been her calling since she was little.* **Part Five:** everywhere. She opens the Part with the Mother's Day story, converts her father with her first book, supplies the Fear-and-Love jurors with her second, is cited by him in the barn as an authority on Plato's Forms, officiates a wedding, and delivers the eulogy.

What it tracks: her presence maps onto her father's spiritual condition — **prominent in the Prologue, which is chronologically Chapter 24 and therefore late; absent through the years when he has little access to it; a single line while the vocation forms; and dominant in the Part where he converts, credits her, and dies.**

IV.10 · What the epigraph is transformed into

Answer: C. The Athens speech: *Socrates proposed that only lovers of wisdom should be the ones who make decisions for society. I agree... The difference, however, is that I believe something Socrates would hardly have believed possible — that a day would come when every last person on earth could*

quickly and easily be educated to an even greater degree than the best and brightest of ancient Athens. We are at the point, I believe, finally, that a rapidly growing percentage of people on this planet can be lovers of wisdom.

Lover of wisdom is the literal meaning of philosopher. The novel's answer to the philosopher-king problem is neither to find the philosophers nor to convert the kings. It is to make everyone a philosopher and then make everyone the king.

This is as close as the novel comes to stating its relationship to its own model, and it arrives near the very end.

The tempting wrong answer is A, and the novel appears to license it — Carlos and Rosey are, between them, the only political leaders in the book who succeed at anything. But if the novel meant option one, Carlos would have taken every opportunity to continue to rule.

IV.11 · *Cleverness and wisdom are not the same faculty*

Answer: B, and Rosey supplies the discriminator herself without pausing on it. **She has two gifted men on her team and reaches for two different words.**

Intelligence is a capacity. Wisdom is a relationship to what you do not know — and the three clever ones are alike in having no such relationship.

Hector is well informed on nearly every subject and in doubt about nothing, least of all what a human being is for. **Eva's own phrase is we're so clever**, which is cleverness admiring itself. **Zihao at sixteen is destined to be a leader** — certainty about his own entitlement, at an age when he has earned none of it.

Jack is the one who says he does not know. He is the security man who brings a suspicion to Gabriella rather than acting on it, the one who tells Carlos what he does not want to hear, and the one whose counsel is sought when the answer is not obvious. Which is the oldest marker of the thing: Socrates was called the wisest man in Athens on the grounds that he alone knew that he knew nothing.

And Francesca's formula settles it. Wisdom is the fusion of education and love. All four have the education. Three of them are missing the second term.

The tempting answer is C. Eva's is the only self-description in the set that names cleverness outright, and her work looks constructive from inside — **she is building an institution, recruiting for it, sustaining it across generations.** But she cannot tell the difference between being clever and being right, and nothing in her three decades on the page suggests she has ever entertained the possibility of being wrong.

The underlying point is one the novel never states outright. A cast of extraordinarily capable people, roughly half of them monsters, and no scene anywhere pauses to explain that intelligence and wisdom are different things. Mnyama supplies it without knowing he is making a point: we're just the smart animals who have the guns.

IV.12 · The hesitation before the word *foolish*

Answer: C.

He can produce wisdom fluently — it is his mother's word, his daughter's name, the term he has been circling for forty years. **He cannot immediately produce its opposite, because nobody says folly any more.** We say stupid, ignorant, misinformed, biased — **all of which are failures of information. Folly is a failure of soul,** and the speech has to reach for it.

Which is exactly the argument he is making at that moment: the people who think the public is *too stupid* have **mistaken a moral category for an intellectual one.**

The tempting wrong answer is A, and it is the reading a hostile listener in the arena would reach for. **The novel has spent forty years establishing him as a voracious reader with a Churchill avatar for a study partner,** and it stages the hesitation *inside* a passage of great fluency. **It is not a lapse in competence.**

IV.13 · Wisdom as a child of the sacred

Answer: A, and the interesting part is the sequence.

He did not spend forty years baffled. He spent them working with an answer that kept enlarging.

At twenty-six he says *I have no clue what that means* — and he is being literal. *At that point the sentence is his dead mother's, and he has nothing to attach it to. Through Part Two he treats it as a matter of access: give everyone a good education, and wisdom follows. That is AIEdu, and it is not a small answer. Through Parts Three and Four he treats it as a matter of structure: build a system in which informed people decide, and wisdom reaches government. That is True Democracy. And after sixty-three he adds the term the earlier answers did not have. Education and structure are necessary and they do not generate the thing by themselves — true wisdom is a child of the sacred.*

Each answer contains the last one. He never withdraws AIEdu or True Democracy — the Epilogue is emphatic that both worked — but he stops treating them as sufficient. *The mission statement did not become intelligible at the end; it became larger three times.*

The tempting wrong answer is C. *Carlos says it himself: this isn't a religious discussion... a host of believers, and a host of nonbelievers watching. True Democracy is offered to everyone regardless of faith, and the Palestinian constitution enshrines religious freedom.*

B overstates — the sentence is spoken to a grandchild and never becomes policy. D is unsupported: *Sophia is reporting a direct teaching, consistent with everything he says after sixty-three.*

IV.14 · What Carlos's achievements amount to

Answer: C, and it is worth noticing how strange a thing that is to name.

Sophia, at the funeral: I surveyed my family and the still living Core Team members and there was consensus that this last point, the truly unfettered, truly global free market for ideas, is what my father would feel is his greatest contribution to the world.

Not the nations. Not the voting system. Not the Third Phase. **A market** — and one whose commodity is ideas. The economic vocabulary and the intellectual vocabulary fuse in the final assessment of his life, and its enemy is named in the same paragraph: *the worshippers of the State always, every time, endeavor to stifle the market for ideas. Conversely, a free market for ideas is deadly to worship of the State.*

Which is why a market can outrank the institutions. The novel ends not with a political constitution but with the conditions under which every constitution may continually be challenged.

A and B are the achievements the plot is made of, and the Epilogue explicitly declines to rehearse them — I don't need to spend time replaying all that he helped bring about. They are the means. The market for ideas is what the means were for.

The tempting wrong answer is D, and a reader who has followed this section closely will reach for it, because Sophia is in some real sense what the mission statement produced. The distinction: Sophia is what *wisdom* turned out to be in this novel — a person who writes, and who was named for it. The free market for ideas is the condition under which such people can be formed everywhere and heard. One is the instance; the other is what he built so there could be more of them.

SECTION V — FEAR, LOVE AND TRUST

The interior life: belief, prayer, conversion, and the last movement.

What finally has to happen inside a person? By now the six verbs have sorted themselves. Watch who still reaches for **rule**, and who has learned to reach for **trust**.

V.1 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Gabriella's letter, read aloud in the Athens speech, supplies the novel's central image. What is it?

A. Fear and love are two languages, and trust is the translation between them **B.** Fear and love are on opposite banks of a river, and trust is the bridge **C.** Fear is a wall and love is a door, and trust is the key **D.** Fear and love are two nations, and trust is the treaty

V.2 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Haipa is one of the three Communist Party leaders who become the Great Triumvirate. The character map gives the meanings of all three names: Zihao is *pride*, Wuqing is *ruthless*, Haipa is *fear*. Which sentence in the novel makes two of those three the same thing?

A. *Pride is fear of not being loved.* **B.** *Nations are self-interested. Nations are not moral. Nations are animals.* **C.** *They rule by fear. By pandering to fear.* **D.** *We're just the smart animals who have the guns.*

V.3 • ECHO PAIR

Two people describing what has been done to them by an institution.

"It's the Catholic school torturing you like a ghost from the past. They have burned original sin into your psyche."

"Mostly he just didn't like being judged. He still shuddered when he thought about the Catholic high school he had been forced to attend, where the most judgmental people he'd ever met kept trying to convince him to 'judge ye not.'"

Who is being described in each, and who is speaking — or narrating? What does the pairing tell you about him — and which line in the Athens speech diagnoses him without ever having met him?

V.4 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

In Sophia's second novel *The Deliberation*, twelve emotions serve as jurors at the trial of Jesus, with Fear and Love acting as prosecutor and defense. Asked whether he has any response to Love's parable, Fear says: *"My job is to raise questions." Paused and smiled. "I don't have to have answers."*

Who does that describe?

A. Carlos, whose prayer journal raised the question for fifty years and refused to commit to an answer **B.** Eva Goode, whose entire method is the manufacture of doubt **C.** David O'Brian, who cannot let go of *progress toward what?* **D.** The Society's Mentors, who teach by posing questions to protégés

V.5 • ODD ONE OUT

Four moments when fear is presented. **Three of them the novel treats as a distortion, a manufacture, or a usurpation. In which one is fear justified?**

A. "The mission had been accomplished. Fear had been spread. Hatred had been stoked." **B.** "They rule by fear. By pandering to fear." **C.** "Good, Azadi, good. You need to be scared because we are running for our lives." **D.** "Just do what you're told. We decide what to be afraid of and what not to."

V.6 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Gabriella states one of the novel's central propositions: *If someone is wholly loving, truly wholly, one hundred percent loving, then they live utterly without fear. The opposite is also true — that was me — one hundred percent fearful, zero percent loving.*

What kind of claim is she making?

A. A binary — a person is in one condition or the other **B.** A scale, on which every person and every society sits somewhere **C.** A description of her own case that she does not intend to generalize **D.** A claim about fear alone, from which nothing follows about love

V.7 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Gabriella's metaphor of the bridge is claimed, in the Epilogue, to have a physical form. What is it?

A. True Democracy, which builds trust between citizens and their government **B.** AIEdu, which builds trust between cultures by educating them identically **C.** Carlos himself **D.** The Third Phase vote, in which the whole species trusts each other at once

V.8 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Journal #18459, at sixty-three, is the entry in which Carlos converts. What argument breaks him?

A. That the universe requires a first cause, and *there is something rather than nothing* **B.** That the beauty of creation cannot be an accident **C.** That his mother's prayers must have been answered, since everything she asked for came true **D.** That agnosticism is not a position — that saying you don't know is only saying you are human, and adds nothing

V.9 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Journal #8218, at thirty-five: told that free will is an illusion and feelings are only chemistry, Carlos concludes: *If I actually believed that I was just a bag of chemicals, then — to be blunt — I wouldn't give a sh-t about anything. So, I'm just not going to believe that.*

What is he doing?

A. Refusing an argument he cannot answer, out of stubbornness **B.** Rejecting a proposition on the grounds that it cannot be lived — which is the Athens speech’s argument, thirty-three years early **C.** Applying Pascal’s wager to determinism **D.** Choosing comfort over truth, and admitting it

V.10 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Journal #13432, at forty-nine: *To the outside world I’m the “most famous believer on earth” maybe other than the Pope, but here in our inner room they will see a pinnacle of hypocrisy. Believers will see this journal as an irreverent, disrespectful mockery, filled with prideful blindness. Non-believers will see it as an irrelevant dalliance with illusion, weak-willed trembling and fear before the unknown.*

What is the best account of what he is doing in that passage?

A. Placing himself outside both categories — the position journal #18459 will later demolish **B.** Anticipating the reviews his journal will receive when published **C.** Arguing that the journal should stay private **D.** Confessing his hypocrisy for the first time

V.11 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

Which sentence of Francesca’s, quoted by Carlos to Gabriella in Part Two, turns out to be a literal description of what happens to him?

A. *Wisdom is the fusion of education and love.* **B.** *Beliefs create who we are — when we change our beliefs, we recreate ourselves.* **C.** *There is a truth about God, and human actions, good or evil, don’t change that truth.* **D.** *Until you let Him live through you, you have not truly lived.*

V.12 • ECHO PAIR

Two accounts of the same conversion, given to two different people, decades apart.

“I don’t need to tell the public. I’ve been saying that to them for years, and I’m out of the public eye now anyway. I do feel bad about lying though. If I ever speak in public again, I’ll rectify that somehow.”

“Yeah, and I was lying. Not to excuse it, but I’m not the first person to be raised Christian who rebelled against his upbringing.”

Where is each spoken, and to whom?

V.13 • MULTIPLE CHOICE

The Athens speech draws a distinction that Carlos insists on: *I don’t mean, as so many misguided guides will tell you, to look inside yourself to find “your truth” — I’m saying something different. I am saying to look inside yourself to see what you already believe about **The Truth**.*

What does the distinction accomplish?

A. It positions Carlos against contemporary self-help culture **B.** It borrows Plato’s doctrine of recollection and applies it to faith **C.** It establishes that truth is subjective at the level of experience but objective at the

level of reality **D**. It relocates belief from something you assent to into something you discover about yourself — which reframes the hypocrisy problem

V.14 • ECHO PAIR

Two moments, thirteen years apart, in which Carlos's family talks about God in front of him.

*"Mom, yes, of course I want to be safe. **But my faith is in God. He chooses my path, and I go where He leads me.**"*

"Jesus Christ!" Carlos blurted out.

"Daddy! Don't talk that way."

*I just realized something. **Other people are praying for me. ... Does that change anything? Does it do any good? ... If you are there, do you change what you are doing because they ask you to? How could that possibly work?***

What has changed in how he handles the same situation?

ANSWER GUIDE — SECTION V

V.1 · The novel's central image

Answer: B. *I realized eventually that fear and love are on opposite sides of a river and trust is the bridge between the two. I slowly crossed the bridge.*

She then scales it to the species: *I think humanity is moving through history in a very similar way to how my life has gone. We started out fearful and untrusting and the way we governed ourselves reflected that.*

The tempting wrong answer is D, because the speech surrounding her letter is entirely about nations, walls, and borders, and a reader reconstructing the image from the argument will build a political metaphor. Hers is a geographical one — a person on one bank who has to walk across. The scaling to nations is a second move she makes afterward, and the modesty of the original image is why it lands.

V.2 · What Haipa's name means, and does

Answer: A, from the Athens speech. If pride is a species of fear, then Zihao and Haipa are the same condition under two names, and the government of a billion people consists of one emotion, its synonym, and cruelty.

Haipa also behaves like his name. He is the cautious one, the one who counsels against rash moves, whom Jack calls *slightly less ruthless*, and who is purged for softness. He is also the only one of the three who survives — Fear flees the country.

The tempting wrong answer is C, Anwar's line about the Palestinian leadership, which is the novel's clearest statement that fear is a governing technique. It describes what rulers *do* with fear. B describes what fear *is*, and only B collapses two of the three names.

V.3 · Two people on what an institution did to them

Both describe David O'Brian. The first is Eva, prescribing the Society as the cure. The second is the narration, in his introduction, before he has met her.

He is a man organized entirely around the fear of being judged — which is why the CIA suits him (*he preferred working in the shadows, away from people*), why he experiences concealment as *dishonesty grafted onto him*, and why the Society's offer of belonging lands.

The line from the Athens speech: *Pride is fear of not being loved. Concern about appearances, concern about your image, whatever you want to call it, is really just that.*

V.4 · Fear and Love as prosecutor and defense

The strongest answer is A. *Fifty years of a journal that raises the question and declines to settle it — until journal #18459 names the dodge for what it is: calling yourself agnostic is an airball, saying that you are a person who is a person.*

And Carlos describes the habit in exactly Fear's terms, without noticing. The journal is my entire prayer life — and I even refer to you maybe once a month at best... the talking to listening ratio is like 99/1. **A checking the box exercise, by his own account, kept faithfully for fifty years and used to hold the question open rather than close it.**

The tempting wrong answer is B. Eva does manufacture doubt professionally — *we have a full bag of doubt-seeds. We'll keep planting them* — and the description fits her tactics precisely. It fits her tactics and not her position: Eva is certain. *You can be sure. At least as sure as there's no Santa Claus and no Tooth Fairy.* Fear's line is the posture of someone who will not commit, and Eva has committed absolutely, to the wrong thing.

V.5 · *The one moment when fear is simply correct*

Answer: C. Azadi's mother, in Part One, telling her frightened daughter that **the fear is appropriate and should be obeyed.** The family is being hunted; the grandfather has just been executed; **fear is doing exactly the job fear exists to do, and it saves their lives.**

The novel does not begin as an argument against fear. It begins by conceding that fear is often right — **which is what makes the later argument cost something.**

A is the Tel Aviv bombing — fear as a manufactured product with a delivery mechanism, in three lines of white space. **B** is Anwar on the Palestinian leadership.

The tempting wrong answer is D, the nightmare, **because a reader may take the dream as a picture of legitimate self-preservation arguing with recklessness.** *Read it again: the ruling voice is not protecting anyone.* It is issuing orders and calling the terrified parts of him **worthless chickenshits** — and Francesca's reply denies it any standing at all: **they have no right to decide what you should fear.**

V.6 · *What kind of claim Gabriella is making*

Answer: B. She gives percentages, and she immediately applies the scale to history: *We started out fearful and untrusting and the way we governed ourselves reflected that. We slowly became a little more trusting and so **altered slightly the way we governed ourselves**, but still, the fear was there. **Slightly less pervasive, but always there.***

That is a graduated claim about civilizations, and it is what licenses her vote: not that the world is at zero, **but that it can move.**

The tempting wrong answer is C. She opens the letter by explicitly refusing to generalize from her suffering — *I don't want any of you to think that I have had a monopoly on fear* — **and a careful reader hears that as modesty about scope.** *She is disclaiming special standing, not declining to generalize.*

Two sentences later she generalizes to the entire species.

A misses the percentages. **D** misses the sentence's whole shape, which is an inverse relation between two quantities rather than a claim about one.

Note to the reader: the proposition is 1 John 4:18 — *perfect love casteth out fear.*

V.7 · *The bridge, in physical form*

Answer: C. Sophia, quoting a podcaster she heard in the days after her father's death: **Carlos, himself, was the bridge of trust that Gabriella was referencing in her letter in the Third Phase Speech.** And her verdict on it: *I thought that was pretty cool — and quite correct.*

This is why the novel spends so long on his grandparents, why the Character Map opens by explaining that Smith is the commonest surname and Carlos is meant as everyman, and why the Epilogue insists the telescoping of generations happened *principally because my dad was such a uniquely multiethnic individual that people worldwide trusted him.*

The tempting wrong answer is A, which is the institutional answer and which the whole political plot points toward. **True Democracy is what people cross to. It is not what carries them.**

And the dependency runs deeper than a metaphor. The arrangement could not be imposed. No force could have made a nation dissolve itself, and there was nothing to fall back on if the willingness had not been there. **Trusting the system means trusting humanity; and in the event, trusting humanity meant trusting one man that eight billion people had decided they could believe.**

The whole arrangement is carried across on a bridge that is a person.

V.8 · The argument that breaks Carlos

Answer: D. Claiming to be agnostic, which is the door I have always hidden behind, is a total airball. Humans don't "know" the truth about you. And everybody "knows" that no one knows. So, when I say I'm agnostic, I'm not saying anything... Saying that I am a person who is agnostic is just saying that I am a person who is a person.

From which follows the move that decides it: *faith is enough, because faith is all we have. And we all have it — one way or the other... We either put our faith in "You" or in "Not-You."*

The tempting wrong answer is A, because *something rather than nothing* is the one argument Carlos has carried for thirty-five years — journal #5820 concedes it is *the only evidence I see in your favor*, while judging that it *wouldn't hold up in court*. A reader who has followed his reasoning will expect the verdict to arrive on the evidence he collected. It arrives instead on a point about vocabulary, delivered by his daughter, in a novel.

V.9 · Refusing the determinist

Answer: B. The Athens speech: *I can't say what is going on in anyone else's inner monologue, but I think no one lives that way. I think no one actually believes that.* The mature version of the argument is that determinism is not merely unpleasant but unlivable, and that nobody's actual conduct is consistent with it. **Note what the novel does and does not claim: unlivable is not the same as false, and Carlos never says it is.**

At thirty-five he has the conclusion and not the reasoning.

The tempting wrong answer is A, and it is *his own* description of what he is doing. He presents it as a refusal — *There, now I feel better* — with no argument attached. Taking him at his word is reasonable and it is what the entry invites. What it misses is that a refusal to hold an unlivable belief is a species of argument, and the novel eventually says so.

C is a different move, and Carlos names Pascal explicitly elsewhere: *I was sort of trying to buy a call option on Pascal's wager — but that doesn't work.*

V.10 · *The most famous believer on earth*

Answer: A. He is a believer to no one and an unbeliever to no one. Fourteen years later he will conclude that this middle ground does not exist — *we all have faith, one way or the other. We either put our faith in "You" or in "Not-You" — and that occupying it was a way of declining to answer.*

Both B and C are true, but neither is the main point.

C is the surface business of the entry. *He is arguing that the journal should stay private; Gabriella has just asked him to publish it. He loses that argument, which is why the reader is holding the book — and the reason he gives for wanting it suppressed is the thing the question is about.*

B is also accurate. *He is imagining how each camp would read him, and the two sentences are written as reviews. But anticipating a reaction is not the same as occupying a position, and what the passage records is a man who has arranged his life so that neither camp can claim him.*

D is wrong on chronology: the hypocrisy is confessed in journal #7346, sixteen years earlier.

Note the entry's last line, which is the shift that matters: *Hold on, I just had the weirdest thought... is it the other way around — am I your imaginary friend?*

V.11 · *Francesca's sentence, quoted without belief*

Answer: B. He offers it over dinner, apologizes for it immediately — *Sorry. I grew up with a thousand sayings like that* — and moves on.

Journal #18459: *Right now, having, I guess, given myself to You, I feel empty and full at the same time.*

Journal #25000: *I didn't give something up when I chose to believe, I added something. It is illusion that you give something up.* And, in the same entry, the count: *I see 18 years of life filled with joy, preceded by 63 years of not being completely whole.*

A man recreated by changing a belief, exactly as his mother said, thirty-four years after he repeated her line to a woman he had just met and found it embarrassing.

The tempting wrong answer is C, which he also quotes in that same conversation, also from Francesca, also without conviction — and which he immediately judges: *It's a logical statement, but... I'm not sure how helpful it is.* It is the more theologically weighty sentence and the one a reader is likelier to remember.

D is Francesca's *secret of life*, which he recalls in journal #25000 — but he does not quote it to Gabriella, and he first dismissed it as *the most nonsensical of their slogans.*

V.12 · *Two accounts of the same conversion*

The first is journal #18459, the conversion entry itself, written to God, five years before the Athens speech. It is a promise made in private, with an escape clause built in — *if I ever speak in public again.*

The second is in the barn, ten years later, spoken to David and Eva — the two people who have organized their careers around destroying him, who came that day to kill him, and who have just told him they always saw him as the embodiment of everything wrong with the world.

What it costs: the confession in the Athens speech was made to an audience that loved him, at the summit of his authority, as part of a speech about pride. This one is made to enemies, in a barn, with nothing to gain — and it is made in order to give David something. It lands: *That hit home with David. He stared at the ground.*

The promise in #18459 is kept twice.

V.13 · Looking in, and looking up

Answer: D, and the consequence is worth sitting with.

Everything that I was, everything that I did, every single thing in my entire life screamed that I believed that there truly are such things as values. If belief is what you enact rather than what you profess, then Carlos — who professed faith he did not hold for forty years — was, in the deeper sense, believing the whole time.

The tempting wrong answer is B, and it is nearly right: the *Meno* is explicitly in this novel, Rosey uses it, Churchill discusses it, and *look inside to find what you already believe* is recognizably recollection.

And the Author's Note goes further still. Describing his own sudden conversion at twenty-nine: *Kind of like the scene from Plato's Meno referenced in Chapter 24, my conversion experience was a lot like "remembering."*

So B is not a stretch. It is second-best because Plato's slave boy recovers a geometrical truth he could not have learned, whereas Carlos recovers evidence about his own conduct. One is metaphysics; the other is self-examination.

A is a real note in the passage and too small to be the answer. **C** inverts him.

V.14 · Standing outside his family's faith, twice

The first is the Prologue, at age forty-nine, in a room with his wife and his teenage daughter. (**A side quiz for the reader: work out which two scenes in the novel the Prologue must fall between.**) **The second is a journal entry at sixty-two.** *The configuration is identical — their faith, his lack of it — and his response is not.*

In the Prologue it is involuntary and instantly buried. His daughter's testimony produces a blasphemy he does not appear to consciously choose, she corrects him, and the text records that Carlos took a moment to contemplate his next words — at which point his wife steps in and the subject is changed. He never contemplates them aloud. *Four sentences later he is checking the time and sending everyone to bed.*

In the journal there is nobody to interrupt him, and no reason to change the subject. The same discomfort is stated directly and stayed with — does it change anything, does it do any good, how

could that possibly work — and one line further on he adds the thing that keeps him from dismissing it: but Gabriella is the farthest thing from arrogant.

The distance between them is not belief. It is willingness to be alone with the question. At forty-nine there is always a room to leave. At sixty-two he is alone with it, and the only other party to the conversation is the one he is not sure is there.

A year later the same configuration produces journal #18459. What is being watched across these three points is not a man's opinion changing — it is a man running out of ways to avoid the subject.



THREE GAMES

A verb hunt, a matching puzzle and a crossword — all built out of the novel

You have earned a break. After eighty-seven questions, here are three that are mostly meant to be fun.

THE SIX VERBS

You were asked at the start to watch six words: **choose · educate · love · fear · trust · rule**.

Here are eighteen lines from the novel. For each one, name which of the six verbs it turns on — and, if you can, who is speaking. **Answers at the end of Part Two.**

Some lines turn on a verb that is never actually said in them. That can be the harder part of the game — but also, perhaps, the more interesting.

ROUND ONE — WHO IS SPEAKING

1. Our task, as winners, is to rule over the losers. Others — less honest than me — use softer, more poetic language, but all winners know this is true.
 2. Wisdom is the fusion of education and love.
 3. Life is so unfair. We will do everything we can to balance the scales.
 4. We are destined to be leaders. Our families have been telling us that since we were little.
 5. It's so hard for me to trust. I want to, I really do, but I'm . . . broken.
 6. We've learned how to thrive under these rules. If the rules change, we'll learn the new game.
-

ROUND TWO — WHAT IS BEING CLAIMED

7. You're like an innocent lamb that fate sent to slaughter.
 8. My job is to raise questions. I don't have to have answers.
 9. We are going to see how much we trust each other. Do we trust each other enough to cross that bridge?
 10. I have no basis to argue with him on the science other than to say that just doesn't feel right.
 11. She says that faith is enough.
 12. There is only one special thing about being human. We get to choose what to love.
-

ROUND THREE — THE ABSENCES

These six are not quotations. They are things the novel does, or purposely fails to do. Name the verb in each.

13. In the whole of Part One, this verb takes only venues, seats, phrasing and positions as its object — never a commitment.

14. Hector, Mnyama and Eva never use this word. **Not once, in any Part.**

15. A word that begins as something one person extends to another, becomes an instrument that holds assets during the Parts in which True Democracy is built, and returns to a person at the end.

16. Carlos declines the UN Secretary-Generalship, the presidency of the UAS, and the presidency of the United States. Rosey runs for office *completely free of the shackles of any political party*.

17. Uvidende and Destiny reach the same conclusion from opposite directions: that parents cannot be trusted with this.

18. Azadi's mother tells her daughter to feel more of it, and is right.

THE FORESHADOWING GAME

Almost nothing in this novel arrives without having been put in place earlier. A phrase, a joke, a childhood promise, a throwaway line in a journal — and then, much later, the thing it was for.

Match each plant on the left to its payoff on the right. Draw a line between them. The three rounds are not ordered by difficulty — each gathers a different kind of planting.

Answers are at the end of Part Two.

ROUND ONE — WORDS THAT COME BACK

A phrase spoken in one place, and returned in another — sometimes by a different person, sometimes by the same one, decades later.

	THE PLANTS		THE PAYOFFS
1.	At twenty-three, in a journal, Carlos describes a young woman he has just met as <i>kind of a mutt like me</i> .	A.	Part Five is titled <i>Fear and Love</i> , and its argument arrives in a letter from his wife.
2.	A grieving woman in a Copenhagen hospital corridor tells her mother: <i>we will do everything we can to balance the scales</i> .	B.	The Athens speech: <i>it took a multilingual mutt like me to come along</i> .
3.	Journal #2, aged thirteen: <i>now it's like I have seven parents! So much pressure!!!</i>	C.	Uvidende, to Carlos: <i>the calling of humanity is to balance the scales</i> .
4.	Carlos's father: <i>eternity and forever are not the same thing... eternity and now are peas in the same pod</i> .	D.	<i>Mercy is not ever present in our consciousness. Mercy resides at a much deeper plane within our souls</i> .
5.	Aged fifteen and friendless in Missouri: <i>kids are the same all over the world — they want the same things</i> . And, decades later, Anwar over dinner: <i>people are fundamentally the same everywhere and want the same things</i> .	E.	The Churchill avatar: <i>civilized people looking after the uncivilized masses</i> .
6.	Journal #5043: Carlos's father explains that <i>we have this longing to peek inside other people's inner monologues</i> .	F.	Sophia's eulogy reports on all three: the film <i>Superpower</i> , a renaissance in the arts, and generations telescoped into one life.
7.	Francesca's mission statement describes life as a <i>fascinating dance</i> .	G.	The Latin America speech: <i>All of them — and all of us, want to love and be loved. We —Are—The—Same</i> . And then the Athens speech: <i>we are one world . . . one people . . . one tribe. It is an illusion that we are not</i> .
8.	Francesca's email to the Core Team: <i>we also have this inexhaustible fountain from far within us</i> .	H.	Part Four's nightmare, in which Carlos's arms and legs argue about who decides what he should fear.
9.	Hector, in his aircraft: <i>others — less honest</i>	I.	Journal #18459: <i>No, it's actually more than</i>

	THE PLANTS		THE PAYOFFS
	<i>than me</i> — use softer, more poetic language.		<i>that. I'm Your child.</i>
10.	At twenty-three, in a manufactured government spectacle: <i>I feel so much love from all of you that my fear just vanished.</i>	J.	Journal #18459: <i>I see that you indeed are the Eternal Now.</i>
11.	Francesca's mission statement names three arenas — drama, literature and art, and history.	K.	The Athens speech: <i>I realized, again in here — pounding his chest — in my inner monologue.</i>
12.	On a late-night talk show, Carlos jokes that racism is like <i>my right arm looking down its nose at my left arm.</i>	L.	Journal, after reading <i>The Deliberation</i> : <i>a lot of the joy of life is experiencing that lifelong dance between ideas and feelings.</i>

ROUND TWO — QUESTIONS LEFT OPEN

Something asked, or something wanted, and then not answered for a very long time. **One of them is answered for a woman who does not live to see it.**

	THE PLANTS		THE PAYOFFS
1.	In a journal, Carlos weighs the evidence for God and concludes it <i>wouldn't hold up in court</i> .	A.	Journal #18459: <i>I'm so happy to be Your imaginary friend.</i>
2.	Carlos's grandfather says something about evil coming from not learning what to love, and Carlos asks: <i>what yardstick do we use?</i>	B.	Journal #18459: Not-You can't explain why there is something and not nothing... <i>I was trying to buy a call option on Pascal's wager — but that doesn't work.</i>
3.	Journal #8218, at thirty-five: <i>But if I'm more than a bag of chemicals, then what am I? Need to come back to that one.</i>	C.	In the barn, to two people who came to kill him: <i>you always presented yourself as this hard-core Christian believer. — Yeah, and I was lying.</i>
4.	Journal #13432, as a joke: <i>is it the other way around — am I your imaginary friend!!!!???</i>	D.	Journal #18459: <i>I am declaring that I choose You.</i>
5.	Journal #5820: <i>the only evidence I see in your favor is that there is something and not nothing.</i>	E.	Sophia's eulogy, quoting a podcaster: Carlos, himself, was the bridge of trust that Gabriella was referencing.
6.	Journal #4988: <i>God is dead to me.</i>	F.	Sophia writes a novel about the trial of Jesus, in a modern courtroom, with full due process — and it converts him.
7.	The Character Map notes that Eva <i>will confront the question: what is the Form of the Good?</i>	G.	In the barn, at seventy-three: <i>you can't answer the question "Who am I" until you have answered the question "Who is God."</i>
8.	Azadi tells Anwar the world's disease is <i>the few ruling over the many</i> , and that there is a cure: <i>you just met him.</i>	H.	Francesca's prayer, which he never reads: <i>He is chasing the shiny objects that this world has to offer. Please find some way to let him see the True Shining Object.</i>
9.	Carlos privately calls his own public professions of faith <i>a marketing ploy</i> .	I.	In a barn in Bolivia, Carlos tells Eva that God is, among other things, <i>Plato's Form of the Good</i> — and adds what Sophia taught him: <i>every chair, every ant, every rock is</i>

	THE PLANTS		THE PAYOFFS
			<i>different if it is a gift from God.</i>
10.	In his twenties: <i>this is three now, three!!, that I have fallen for; with salary, endorsements, my cut of merchandise sales... I'm totally killing it; and a plan to make his name the single top brand in the world.</i>	J.	Sophia's eulogy: <i>the need to recognize a higher power in order to have a measuring stick to know what to choose.</i>

ROUND THREE — THINGS DONE, AND PLACES KEPT

Not words this time. A choice of venue, a gesture, a hope for a child.

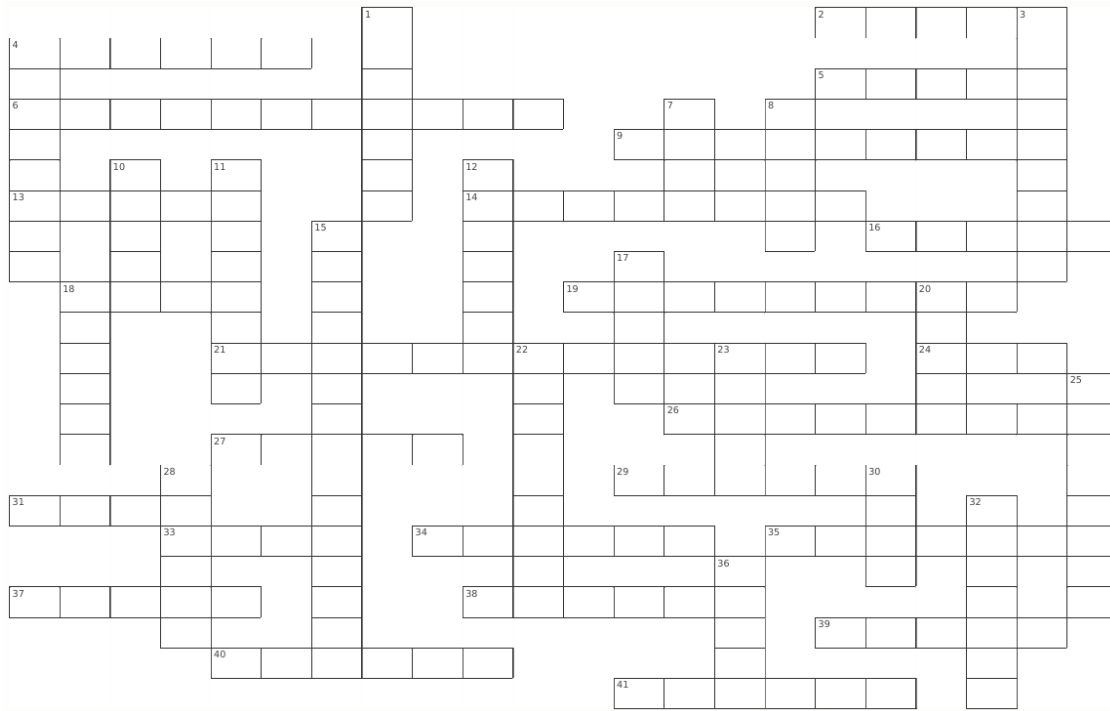
	THE PLANTS		THE PAYOFFS
1.	Carlos stages the AIEdu launch in the Ancient Greek wing of a museum.	A.	<i>I wished her luck with that one — she'll need it. Her fight becomes his life's work — and True Democracy becomes a pillar of the Palestinian constitution.</i>
2.	The Government of China stages a massive reception in Tiananmen Square — a World Cup celebration.	B.	<i>In the barn, at seventy-three: <i>I spent decades not believing in God — and was surrounded the whole time by people who were a heck of a lot like angels.</i></i>
3.	Protesters paint red circles on their chests, turning a symbol into a sea of defiance.	C.	A telephone call from Dr. Hamu Abara, who has reconciled quantum mechanics and gravity and named the theory after his father.
4.	Francesca had called the AI avatars <i>guardian angels</i> . At the launch, Carlos drops the word and compares them to a dog that loves you unconditionally.	D.	The Epilogue, on his conversion: <i>as soon as he truly submitted... he was quenched with an all-encompassing freedom.</i>
5.	At Tiananmen, Carlos voluntarily puts himself in chains — and the chains help keep him alive.	E.	Twenty-three years later the same square is nearly empty, and two ragged old men shuffle into it.
6.	A subsistence farmer named Elimu — <i>education</i> — tells his small son that his greatest hope is that the boy might one day go to college.	F.	He gives away a company, a presidency, a candidacy, and the country he founded — and <i>would never refer to them as "his."</i>
7.	Journal #4962: <i>It's my money!!!!</i>	G.	Francesca's prayer, written the same afternoon: <i>I also did not handle it well... I made him feel bad about himself and that crushes me.</i>
8.	Rosey, aged five, watching her mother handcuffed into a car: <i>I am going to fix this one day.</i>	H.	The last great public argument of his life is delivered on the stones of Athens.
9.	At twenty-three, Carlos meets a woman dedicating her life to democracy and	I.	New China's flag: <i>a deep flesh-colored background with a roughly painted red circle</i>

	THE PLANTS		THE PAYOFFS
	women's rights in the Middle East.		<i>slightly left of center</i> — red, ironically, now denoting the fall of communism.
10.	Chapter 10: an argument between Carlos and his mother, days before her death, recorded as <i>a sword in my belly</i> .	J.	Rosey becomes President of the United States — and her immigration argument on <i>RD Live</i> is the one the five-year-old would recognize.

THE CROSSWORD

Forty-three entries. Every answer comes from the novel — a character, a place, a term, or a word the book uses in a particular way. Several are in Greek, Latin, Swahili, Farsi, Spanish or Chinese, and the clue tells you which.

No proper names appear as answers unless the name means something.



ACROSS

2. In the novel's political vocabulary, the opposite of *back*
4. Greek for wisdom
5. Chinese for fear
6. Augustine's book, and the form this novel actually takes
9. Her letter supplies the bridge between fear and love
13. The bridge between fear and love
14. Her first name means ignorant (or clueless)
16. Whose eye view Carlos prefers to God's in politics
18. Where two assassins are given stools and water
19. Wrote the mission statement, and the prayer that ends the book
21. The Core Team's system: ninety minutes, both cases, then one vote (two words)
24. Her name is the Greek form of Eve
26. First nation Carlos helps found
27. Greater than justice
29. Paired with criminals in a Part title
31. What Carlos calls Rosey, and later himself
33. Eager; orphaned at eight; reconciles physics
34. What Carlos, in the barn, says the people around him turned out to be a lot like — and what Francesca had called the avatars
35. Carlos keeps one for seventy-five years
37. Murdered at thirteen; a promise is kept to him
38. Every one in this book is answered, though rarely as asked
39. Chinese for pride
40. The fusion of education and love
41. Swahili for animal

DOWN

1. Where Carlos is kidnapped as a boy, and where he later builds his dream farm

- 3. Square that hosts both a staged reception and a real uprising
- 4. Spent his life in dialogue, asking why
- 7. Allegory that subtly appears three times
- 8. Fear of not being loved
- 10. Diego's surname; Spanish for struggle
- 11. Not the same thing as forever
- 12. Paired with wisdom in a Part title
- 15. Latin name spoken once and never written; literally, the deep state (two words)
- 17. Something Carlos does not fully understand at his conversion, and which Sophia later explains — without naming it — is the true meaning of *the Third Phase*
- 18. What Gabriella says trust is
- 20. What Carlos pounds twice in the Athens speech, to show where he found what he believed
- 22. What the old man on the train called Carlos
- 23. Farsi for freedom
- 25. Plato's book; Francesca's favorite
- 28. Where the final great speech is given
- 30. Carlos asks what one is
- 32. What nations are
- 36. What the Society wants people to hand to a party

THE SIX VERBS — ANSWERS

Round One

- 1. **rule** — **Hector**, to Diego, in the aircraft. *Note the second clause: he predicts the respectable version of his own doctrine, which the Churchill avatar supplies many chapters later.*
- 2. **educate** and **love** — **Francesca**, quoted by Rosey. **The only line in the novel that fuses two of the six, and it is the Core Team's whole mission in six words.**
- 3. **rule**, disguised as fairness — **Uvidende**, in a Copenhagen hospital corridor, to her mother. *She says it again years later to Carlos, almost word for word, as a definition of social justice.*

4. **rule** — **Zihao**, justifying a forged transcript. **Destined** is the tell: the entitlement is treated as a fact about the world rather than a claim he has to defend.

5. **trust** — **Gabriella**, to Carlos. The word's first serious appearance, and the problem the rest of the book is built to answer.

6. **rule** — **Mnyama**. He calls them **rules**, which implies a legitimate structure he is skilled at working within. **What he actually has is fluency at exploiting their absence.**

Round Two

7. **love** — **Carlos**, to Gabriella. **A direct strike at unearned shame**, and the only kind of strike that works on it.

8. **fear** — **Fear**, as prosecutor in Sophia's novel. **And it is a portrait of her father during his years of disbelief**, which he reads, admires, and does not recognize.

9. **trust** — **Gabriella's letter, read aloud in the Athens speech**. She has just supplied the image of fear and love on opposite banks — **and then turns it into the question the vote is actually asking. Eight billion people are not being asked to agree about anything. They are being asked whether they are willing to risk each other.**

10. **trust** — **Carlos**, at thirty-five, refusing a determinist he cannot out-argue. **He trusts something in himself over an argument he cannot answer** — which is the shape of every conversion in the book.

11. **faith**, and therefore **trust** — **Carlos**, reporting Sophia. **The one verb of the six that he can only just now finally perform** as she can.

12. **choose** and **love** — **the old man on the train**, and originally Carlos's grandfather, sixty years earlier. The novel's whole moral thesis, delivered by a stranger to two people travelling to commit a murder.

Round Three — the absences

13. **choose**. In Part One the verb is entirely instrumental — a venue, a seat, a phrase, a position. **By Part Five its objects are You, what to believe, what to fear, what to love. The verb never changes. The direct object is the arc of the book.**

14. **choose**. The antagonists of this novel are distinguished less by the opinions they hold than by the verbs they never reach for. A person who never says choose has no vocabulary for having done otherwise.

15. **trust**. Human in Part Two, financial in Parts Three and Four, human again in Part Five — **going cold during exactly the stretch in which the institutions are built.**

16. **rule**. The word is used most by those who claim the right to it and least by those who exercise it. Plato's test, and both of them pass it.

17. *educate*. One arrives from a university seminar and the other from a career in administration.

18. *fear*. *Sometimes fear is justified.* The novel concedes this early on.

One last question, and there is no answer key for it.

Six verbs. Which one does the novel finally rank above the others — *and which one does it treat as the condition of all the rest?*

THE CONNECTIONS — FORESHADOWING GAME ANSWERS

ROUND ONE — WORDS THAT COME BACK

1-B · 2-C · 3-I · 4-J · 5-G · 6-K · 7-L · 8-D · 9-E · 10-A · 11-F · 12-H

ROUND TWO — QUESTIONS LEFT OPEN

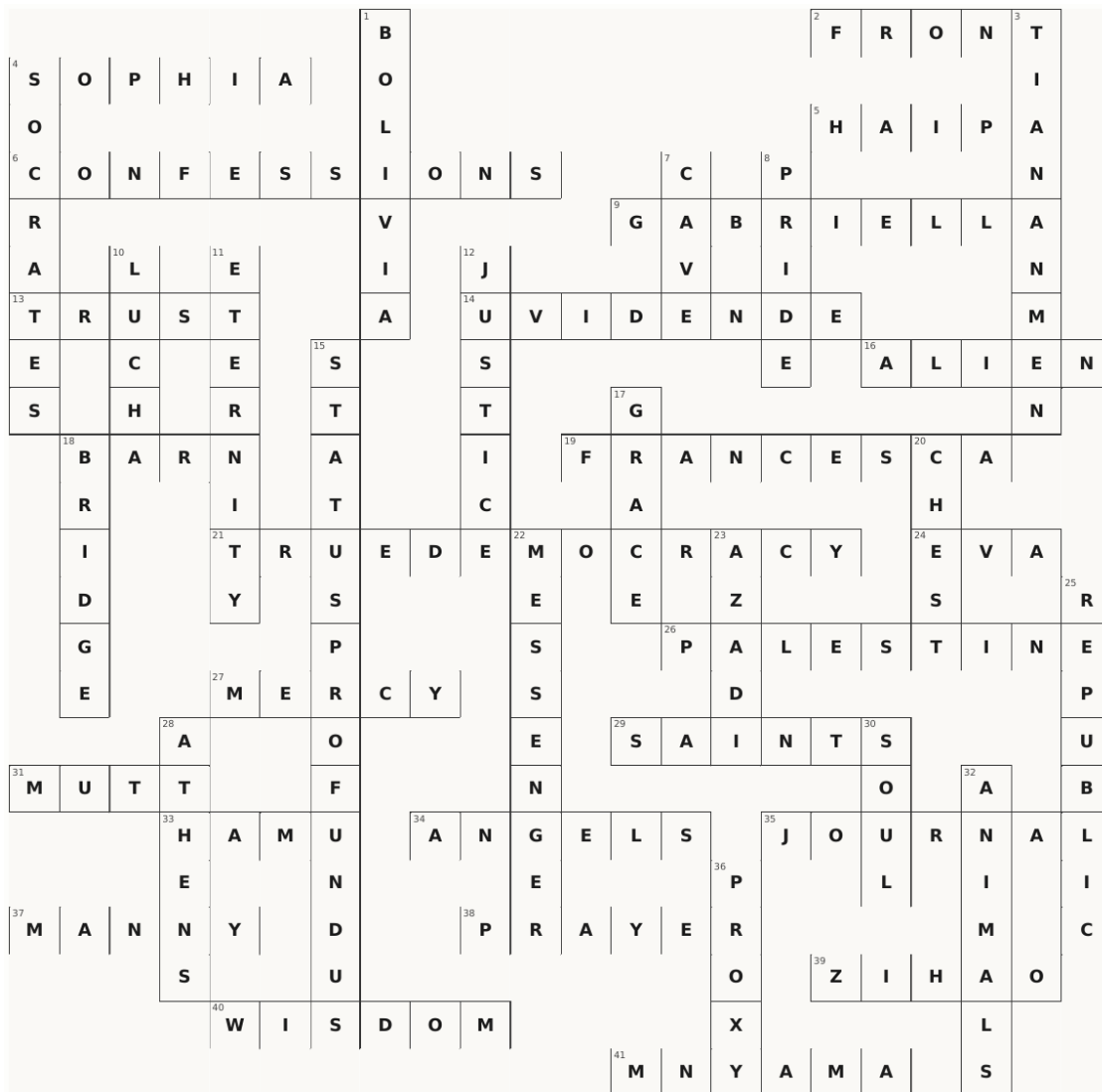
1-F · 2-J · 3-G · 4-A · 5-B · 6-D · 7-I · 8-E · 9-C · 10-H

ROUND THREE — THINGS DONE, AND PLACES KEPT

1-H · 2-E · 3-I · 4-B · 5-D · 6-C · 7-F · 8-J · 9-A · 10-G

ANSWERS — THE CROSSWORD

The completed grid



The answer list

ACROSS — 2 FRONT · 4 SOPHIA · 5 HAIPA · 6 CONFESSIONS · 9 GABRIELLA · 13 TRUST · 14 UVIDENDE · 16 ALIEN · 18 BARN · 19 FRANCESCA · 21 TRUEDEMOCRACY · 24 EVA · 26 PALESTINE · 27 MERCY · 29 SAINTS · 31 MUTT · 33 HAMU · 34 ANGELS · 35 JOURNAL · 37 MANNY · 38 PRAYER · 39 ZIHAO · 40 WISDOM · 41 MNYAMA

DOWN — 1 BOLIVIA · 3 TIANANMEN · 4 SOCRATES · 7 CAVE · 8 PRIDE · 10 LUCHA · 11 ETERNITY · 12 JUSTICE · 15 STATUSPROFUNDUS · 17 GRACE · 18 BRIDGE · 20 CHEST · 22 MESSENGER · 23 AZADI · 25 REPUBLIC · 28 ATHENS · 30 SOUL · 32 ANIMALS · 36 PROXY

A NOTE ON THE LONG ONES

The two longest entries in the grid are the two things the novel is arguing between.

21 Across, thirteen letters — *the system built in the open, whose whole method is that everybody can see it.*

15 Down, fifteen letters — *the one that has never been written down, and whose name is spoken aloud exactly once.*

And they cross. One runs across and one runs down, and they share a single letter — the U in **TR-U-E** and the U in **STAT-U-S**. The system built in the open and the one that was never written down meet at exactly one point in the grid, and neither can be completed without the other.

These two are the scaffolding of the puzzle, just as the political discussion is the scaffolding of the book.

PART THREE — OUTSIDE THE BOOK

Questions that leave the novel and go to the works it is in conversation with.

No prior reading is assumed. *Each section opens with a summary of the work, and the passages a question turns on are quoted where they are needed — so you can work through this Part having read neither book.*

That said, these are two of the greatest books ever written, and this Part is partly an invitation to them. Anything said here about either one is worth checking against the original, and several of these questions are better with a copy open on the table.

Why these two. Plato explains what the novel argues with; Augustine explains what kind of book it is. Plato supplies justice, government, education, wisdom and the Good. Augustine supplies memory, grief, conversion, prayer, time and the sustained address to God.

And Part Three repeats the novel's own movement — from political philosophy toward the interior life. *Indeed: spirituality, wrapped in a discussion of the ideal state.*

SECTION A — PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*

The dialogue named in the epigraph, and the one Rosey points Carlos back to. Sixteen questions, ordered from most accessible to most demanding.

BEFORE YOU START: THE *REPUBLIC* IN BRIEF

Everything the questions in this section rely on is below. Read it through, and refer back to it as you go.

A word of apology before starting. What follows is a short summary of what is, setting scripture aside, very likely the most analyzed book in human history — a book on which entire scholarly careers are spent, and about which serious people still disagree on nearly every page. A summary of this length cannot begin to do it justice, and this attempt is offered only as a way in. *If anything here interests you, go and read it.*

The occasion

Plato wrote the *Republic* in the fourth century before Christ, and it is the founding work of political philosophy in the Western tradition. **It is a conversation, not a treatise** — and Socrates narrates the whole of it himself, in the first person, recounting the previous day's talk to an unnamed listener.

He has gone down to the Piraeus, the port of Athens, for a festival, and is detained at the house of **Cephalus**, an elderly and prosperous arms manufacturer. *What begins as small talk about old age becomes perhaps the most sustained single argument in ancient literature* — **ten books, one night, and a question nobody in the room can answer at the start.**

Book I: four definitions of justice, and four failures

The question is what is justice, and it is not answered for nine books. *Book I is a demolition:*

Cephalus offers **telling the truth and paying your debts** — *the conventional, comfortable answer of a man who has never had to think about it.* **Socrates shows it fails** (*would you return a weapon to a friend who had gone mad?*), **and Cephalus leaves the room to attend to a sacrifice** rather than pursue the argument. **He withdraws rather than be refuted.**

Polemarchus, his son, inherits the position and hardens it: **justice is helping your friends and harming your enemies.** *He is answering for a father who has left.*

Thrasymachus, a sophist, loses his temper at the whole proceeding and **bursts in** with the cynical case: **justice is nothing but the advantage of the stronger. Rules are made by whoever holds power, in their own interest, and only fools obey them for their own sake.** *Note what he does not say: he does not deny the word means something. He keeps the word and fills it with power.*

And Book I ends with a principle Socrates states almost in passing. *Good men rule reluctantly. They take office not because they want it but to avoid being governed by someone worse — and the greatest penalty for refusing to rule is being ruled by an inferior. Wanting the job is disqualifying.* Book VII returns to this and enforces it: *the philosophers must be compelled to govern.*

Book II: Glaucon sharpens the knife

Thrasymachus is beaten but not convinced, and Glaucon — Plato's own brother, and no cynic — restates the cynical case at its strongest, because he wants it properly answered.

The Ring of Gyges. A shepherd finds a ring that makes its wearer invisible (in Plato's telling it is an ancestor of Gyges who finds it, though the story is universally called by the later name). **He uses it to seduce the queen, murder the king and take the kingdom. Glaucon's claim: give the same ring to a just man and an unjust man and their behavior becomes indistinguishable. Justice is only ever practiced by people who cannot get away with injustice.**

The comparison of the two men. Glaucon then asks Socrates to compare, not a just man and an unjust one, but: **the perfectly just man who is universally believed to be unjust — stripped of reputation, dishonored, tortured, and finally executed — against the perfectly unjust man who has a flawless reputation for justice and enjoys every reward of it. Which life would you actually choose? The device isolates justice from its rewards.**

And his brother Adeimantus adds a different complaint: *fathers and teachers do not urge children to be just — they urge them to seem just, because the rewards attach to the reputation.*

The city in speech

Everything after Book II is Socrates' answer, and the method is strange. He says justice in one person is too small to see clearly, so he will build an entire city and look for it at that scale — *justice writ large, and then read back down into the soul.*

What he builds: three classes (rulers, auxiliaries, producers); guardians raised in common with no private property and no private families; poets expelled because imitation corrupts; **and rulers who must be philosophers, or philosophy must take hold of rulers.**

The noble lie. In Book III, the guardians tell the citizens a founding myth — *that they were formed within the earth, and that God mixed gold, silver and bronze into different souls — so that each class accepts its station. A deliberate falsehood, told by rulers, for the good of the ruled.*

The four virtues. Book IV finds the city's excellence in four: wisdom, courage, moderation and justice. ***Justice is defined substantively: each part performing its own function and not meddling in another's.*** And the same structure is then found in the soul: reason, spirit and appetite, with justice as their right ordering. ***Note what is not on the list. Mercy is not among Plato's virtues, and has no structural role in the Republic at all.***

The Cave. Book VII. Prisoners chained facing a wall since childhood, seeing only shadows cast by objects carried behind them. One is freed, dragged up into the light, blinded, and eventually sees the sun. And when he returns to tell the others, they do not believe him — and would kill him if they could.

The decline: Books VIII and IX

Plato then describes how the good city rots, in a fixed order, with a matching soul at each stage:

	The city	The soul that matches it
1	Timocracy	ruled by honor, victory, the love of winning
2	Oligarchy	ruled by money, and the appetite to accumulate
3	Democracy	ruled by all appetites equally, none ranked above another
4	Tyranny	ruled by a single master appetite that devours the rest

The order matters, and so does the direction. Each stage is a further loss of internal government.

Book X: the poets, the soul, and the Myth of Er

The last book does three things, and the third is the one this section needs.

First, Plato returns to the poets and banishes them more firmly — **imitation is at a third remove from truth**, and drama in particular trains the audience to indulge the very appetites the Republic has spent nine books ordering.

Second, he argues that the soul is **indestructible** — nothing destroys a thing except its own peculiar evil, and the soul's own evil is injustice, which does not kill it. **So the soul survives the body.**

Third, the dialogue ends with a story. Er, a soldier, is killed in battle, and twelve days later comes back to life on the funeral pyre to report what he saw. Souls arrive at a place of judgment; the just are rewarded and the unjust punished; and then — the part that matters here — they are gathered to choose their next lives.

Lots are drawn for the order of choosing, and a heap of possible lives is spread before them: tyrants, athletes, animals, obscure private men. **Each soul chooses.** The first to choose grabs the greatest tyranny without examining it and only afterwards discovers he has chosen to devour his own children.

Plato's point: the choice is genuinely free, and almost everyone chooses badly — by habit, by the life they have just left, and without looking closely. The souls then drink from the river of Forgetfulness and are born.

Which is why the whole Republic ends with an argument for education: a soul that has learned to tell a good life from a bad one is the only soul that will choose well when the moment comes, and the moment comes without warning.

◆ **A1. MULTIPLE CHOICE**

The novel's epigraph is from Book V of the *Republic*: *there will be no end to the trouble of states, or indeed of humanity itself, until philosophers become rulers in this world, or until those we now call kings and rulers really and truly become philosophers.*

How many solutions does Plato offer there?

A. One — rule by philosophers **B.** Two — either philosophers acquire power, or the powerful acquire philosophy **C.** Three, the third being the education of the citizenry **D.** None; the sentence is a lament rather than a proposal

◆ **A2. MULTIPLE CHOICE**

In Chapter 10, Rosey tells Carlos his mother's favorite book was the *Republic*, and adds: *At its deepest, it's really a book about spirituality — wrapped in a discussion of the ideal government.*

Is that a defensible reading of Plato?

A. No — the *Republic* is a work of political philosophy, and the reading is a novelist's convenience **B.** It is unanswerable, since Plato left no statement of his own intentions **C.** Only in the sense that all ancient philosophy is religious **D.** Yes, and it is a minority reading with a long history: the central books are metaphysics and epistemology, the work ends on the soul's immortality, and its governing argument is that justice benefits the person who has it

◆ **A3. MULTIPLE CHOICE**

Book I of the *Republic* proceeds by demolishing definitions of justice. Thrasymachus arrives late, contemptuous, and asserts that justice is **nothing but the advantage of the stronger** — and that rulers are shepherds fattening sheep for their own table.

Which character in *The Third Phase* is Thrasymachus?

A. Hector Ramirez **B.** Zihao **C.** Mnyama **D.** Eva Goode

◆ **A4. TRACE IT**

Books I and II give Socrates a sequence of interlocutors, each with a characteristic account of justice and a characteristic way of failing. ***Part One runs the same cascade, in the same order, before Plato is ever mentioned.***

Match each of the five to the character who occupies the same position.

	In the <i>Republic</i>		In Part One
1.	Cephalus — the aged, comfortable, conventionally pious man: justice is <i>telling the truth and paying your debts</i> . Gently shown up, he leaves the room rather than pursue it.	A.	Hector Ramirez
2.	Polemarchus — inherits his father's position and hardens it: <i>help your friends, harm your enemies</i> .	B.	Carlos himself
3.	Thrasymachus — bursts in angrily: justice is nothing but <i>the advantage of the stronger</i> .	C.	Rosey's aunt
4.	Glaucon — no cynic, but restates the cynical case at its strongest, and supplies the ring that makes its wearer invisible.	D.	Haipa
5.	Adeimantus — a different and sharper complaint: children are not taught to be just but to seem just, because the rewards attach to the reputation.	E.	Anwar's brother

You met some of these people in Part Two, question IV.2. That question asked what each thinks justice is. This one asks which of Socrates' interlocutors each of them is.

◆ A5. MULTIPLE CHOICE

Book II: Glaucon asks Socrates to imagine a ring that makes its wearer invisible, and claims that the just man and the unjust man would behave identically once neither could be caught. The challenge is whether justice is chosen for its own sake or only for its consequences.

Where does that challenge enter *The Third Phase*?

A. In Hector's alley, where nobody witnesses the killing **B.** In a Chinese dormitory, where a seventeen-year-old says *something isn't less immoral just because there is less chance of getting caught* **C.** At the campfire, where Carlos is unobserved and could run **D.** In Diego's park-bench deliberation, conducted alone with a burner phone

◆ A6. ECHO PAIR

Two descriptions of a small class that governs without accountability. **The first is assembled from Books III-V of the *Republic*. The second is a single speech in *The Third Phase*.**

A class selected young, formed by mentors, permitted to lie for the city's good, loyal to the whole above family and faction, unaccountable to those it governs by design, and charged with maintaining the city's harmony.

*"We shape history. **We are, kind of, the guardians of humanity.** We maintain equilibrium in the world."*

Who is the second speaker — and, taking the six features of the first description one at a time, how many of them does her organization possess?

***A hint on the sixth.** Look at the word she chooses for what her organization maintains, and the word Plato chooses for what the guardians preserve.*

◆ **A7. ODD ONE OUT**

Plato's guardians are a small group, formed in private, who decide for everyone else and answer to no one. Four things in this novel are described below. Three of them work that way. Which does not?

A. *Status Profundus* — unwritten, compartmentalized, mentor-formed, unaccountable by design **B.** The Final Dynasty — verbal only, nothing recorded, chiefs in each city who do not know one another, nobody aware of anyone two levels away **C.** The Core Team — five people who write four constitutions and direct the affairs of several nations **D.** The ninety minutes — two competing presentations, prepared by opposing advocates, watched by a whole population before it votes

◆ **A8. MULTIPLE CHOICE**

Books VIII and IX describe the degeneration of the soul in a fixed order: the timocratic soul, ruled by love of honor and victory; the oligarchic, ruled by love of money; the democratic, ruled by whichever appetite presents itself; and the tyrannical, ruled by one master appetite that has driven out the rest.

Four moments from Part One, in the order the reader meets them:

At seventeen: *you always get picked first; the older kids want you on their team — and an interior life largely occupied by the fear of being seen to fail.*

Journal #3165, at twenty-one: *I have to focus on building the CarloS brand... **I'm going to make it the single top brand in the world — period**, with resentment at his parents' spending.*

Journal #4925, at twenty-six: *this is **three now, three!!**, that I have fallen for — three loves in succession, with no ordering principle among them.*

Journal #4962, at twenty-six: *So, I screamed at her... **It's my money!!!!***

What does the sequence describe?

A. A gradual loss of faith, unrelated to Plato's scheme **B.** Plato's sequence, in his order, ending with the tyrannical soul **C.** The oligarchic soul only, since Part One is about money **D.** An ascent, since Carlos ends Part One more successful than he began

◆ A9. MULTIPLE CHOICE

Glaucon's sharpest device in Book II is a comparison. Set the **perfectly just man who is universally believed to be unjust** — who will be *scourged, racked, bound, and finally crucified* — against the **perfectly unjust man who has secured a flawless reputation for justice**. Which life is better?

What does *The Third Phase* do with this?

A. It gives us both men: Francesca is the first, Hector the second **B.** It puts both in one person, and then asks a question Glaucon did not **C.** It rejects the thought experiment as unrealistic **D.** It answers Glaucon directly, in the Athens speech

◆ A10. MULTIPLE CHOICE

Book I establishes a principle most readers find counter-intuitive and Book VII enforces it: the philosophers must be **compelled** to rule, because anyone who wants the office is disqualified by wanting it, and *the city in which those who are to rule are least eager to hold office must be the best governed*.

By that test, which character in *The Third Phase* is qualified?

A. Rosey, who has to be argued into running over lunch **B.** Carlos, who founds three nations **C.** Both, since both eventually relinquish power **D.** Neither, since both actively pursue office

◆ A11. SHORT ANSWER

You have already met the posing of the Ring of Gyges in question A5 — Haipa in the dormitory, stating the right answer and abandoning it four lines later. This question is about the reply.

Journal #16955, at fifty-nine, written after Carlos reads a story his daughter wrote for Mother's Day:

What if we could make some choices about how our lives would be before we were born? What power that would be — incredible power actually. ... What kind of person would we be trying to create in ourselves?

If we could choose, before we were born, to not experience pain or grief, betrayal or persecution, would we? ... If we could choose to have a life where we never needed to forgive someone, would we? As I think about it — I don't think so.

Glaucon asks what a person would do if nobody could see. What is Carlos asking instead — and why is that a reply rather than a change of subject?

◆ A12. MULTIPLE CHOICE

Return to the epigraph's two options. In the Athens speech, Carlos says: *Socrates proposed that only lovers of wisdom should be the ones who make decisions for society. I agree.*

What follows?

A. He proposes that philosophers should be elected to office **B.** He proposes that the powerful be educated, beginning with heads of state **C.** He concedes that Plato was right and that True Democracy is a compromise **D.** He proposes a third option — that everyone become a lover of wisdom, and therefore everyone rule

◆ **A13. MULTIPLE CHOICE**

Plato's answer to *what is justice* is substantive: **each part performing its own function and not meddling with the others**, in the city and in the soul alike.

What is Carlos's answer, in the Athens speech?

A. The same, restated for a global polity **B.** That justice is the protection of individual rights against collective power **C.** That justice is the equal distribution of resources **D.** A procedure and a negation — *I'm not here to tell you what that balance should be, but I am here to tell you how we find it, and what justice is not is the many being ruled by the few*

◆ **A14. MULTIPLE CHOICE**

The Third Phase is advertised as a modern *Republic*. **Which of the following did it take, and which did it leave?**

A. It took everything of substance and modernised the presentation **B.** It took the question, the method, the images and the Form of the Good — and left the guardian class, the noble lie, the rule of the wise few, the decline of history, and Plato's confidence that justice is the highest thing **C.** It took the political theory and left the metaphysics **D.** It rejects Plato throughout, and the epigraph is ironic

◆ **A15. MULTIPLE CHOICE**

Sophia's Mother's Day story is called ***A Peek at What Came Before***. A soul stands at a porthole with a guardian, frightened, and is told: *you must be real before you can really come home...* ***You have to learn to love, and you can only do that there.***

Reading it, Carlos asks *if we could choose to have a life where we never needed to forgive someone, would we?* — and answers ***I don't think so.***

Which Platonic passage is the story reworking, and what has been changed?

A. The Allegory of the Cave — and the prisoner is now willing **B.** The noble lie — and the founding story is now told to a soul rather than to a city **C.** The Divided Line — and the ascent is now downward **D.** The Myth of Er, in which souls choose their next lives — and the choice is now about what one will have to forgive

◆ A16. MULTIPLE CHOICE

The *Republic* is not finally a book about government. Socrates says so when he explains why he is building a city at all: the question is what makes a life go well, and a city is only the soul written large enough to read.

In the Latin America speech, Carlos is arguing that people are the same everywhere, and he says what they all want:

Nearly everybody there — and nearly everybody here — wants the same things. **They want to learn what a good life is and to live a good life.** They want to love their families, contribute to society, build skills, and earn a living so their children and families can thrive and prosper.

What is the significance of putting *learn* before *live*?

A. It concedes that most people do not know what a good life is, which is why education has to come before politics **B.** It flatters the audience by assuming they already know **C.** It is a rhetorical flourish with no argumentative weight **D.** It suggests a good life can be learned from books alone

ANSWER GUIDE — SECTION A

A1 · How many solutions the epigraph offers

Answer: B, and counting them matters, because *The Third Phase* takes neither.

Plato's two routes both assume that philosophers are rare. Either you find the few and give them power, or you take the powerful and make philosophers of them. **The scarcity is the premise**, and everything in the *Republic*'s educational program follows from it — decades of selection and training for a guardian class.

Carlos and the Core Team take a third option, and the guide returns to it at question A12.

The tempting wrong answer is A, because *philosopher-king* is how the doctrine is remembered and because most people encounter the phrase without the second clause.

A2 · What Rosey says the *Republic* is really about

Answer: D. The Sun, the Divided Line and the Cave are not political. Book X closes on an argument for the soul's indestructibility and a myth about souls choosing their next lives. And the dialogue's central question is whether the *just man* is better off — a claim about a soul, for which the city is an instrument of magnification.

Which is why the sentence is doing double work. A reader who takes Rosey's line only as literary criticism will spend four Parts treating the political plot as the main event.

And the novel arranges its own title the same way. In the Athens speech, Carlos finally explains what the Third Phase means — and the explanation is political: Pre-Tribalism, Tribalism, Post-Tribalism. A reader reaches the end of the great speech believing the title has been accounted for.

Then the Epilogue says it names three more things — the physical span of a life, the psychological one, and, most of all, the spiritual. Sophia: the progression Dad would emphasize the most is the spiritual journey.

Which is Rosey's sentence about Plato, applied to the book she was standing in: at its deepest, it is really about spirituality, wrapped in a discussion of the ideal government.

The political discussion is the scaffolding, and the spiritual is the cathedral that The Third Phase was designed to build.

A3 · Who speaks for Thrasymachus

Answer: A. Hector's first scene: *They deserve what they're about to get, so think of this as dispensing justice.* And in Part Two, the shepherd analogy arrives entire — politicians are *necessary tools* and, if they fail, *expendable*.

The tempting wrong answer is C. *Mnyama's we're all animals — we're just the smart animals who have the guns sounds like the same doctrine, and is flatter and worse. Thrasymachus believes in a hierarchy: the strong rule, and that is what the word justice names. Mnyama denies there is anything to name. He is below Thrasymachus rather than beside him.*

And notice what he is doing with the word. Francesca's email grants the animal too — a powerful survival instinct that drives us to compete and seek winning at all costs — but as the surface of every person, not as a verdict. Mnyama takes a description of what we are prone to be and offers it as an excuse for what he has done. The novel's own distinction is in the Part title: an animal is what one is pulled toward; a criminal is one who acted on it.

B is closer to the Republic's own view corrupted — the best should rule, therefore fraud in service of that is fair. **D** speaks of duty, not advantage.

A4 · Matching Socrates' interlocutors to Part One

1-C · 2-E · 3-A · 4-D · 5-B

1 — Cephalus → Rosey's aunt. She supplies the conventional account — *we are very lucky to live in America, because it is the greatest place on earth* — while the narration records her private dissent in the same breath: *her aunt's first thought was that this was no kind of justice, but she didn't want to confuse her little niece. She has the objection and withdraws rather than make it. Cephalus exactly, including the exit.*

2 — Polemarchus → Anwar's brother. *We are going to be patriots like our father and kill the infidel. That is exactly what he would want us to do. He inherits the position from a dead father, literally* — and answers Anwar's question with his fists.

3 — Thrasymachus → Hector.

4 — Glaucon → Haipa. *See question A5.*

5 — Adeimantus → Carlos himself. *Adeimantus complains that children are not taught to be just but to seem just, because the rewards attach to the appearance. He is describing an upbringing, and Part One supplies one.*

A thirteen-year-old is ordered to write to God every day. He does not want to, is punished with dishwashing when he skips it, and complies — Mom read yesterday's journal entry, and I got in trouble... She said she is going to spot-check. He keeps it for seventy-five years, and for the first fifty he is going through the motions to please his mother.

And the habit produces exactly what Adeimantus predicted. At the George Washington speech he tells a stadium he prays every waking moment, and calls it a lie in the next journal entry: I'm not the first political leader to pretend to be religious.

Seeming, not being — and it took a practice begun as obedience to somebody else's faith to get him there. What Adeimantus does not foresee is that the practice might eventually work anyway.

A5 · The Ring of Gyges, and who answers it

Answer: B. Chapter 6 supplies the ring in modern form — *we have covered our tracks perfectly. This is utterly untraceable, and besides, we have done it on a stolen computer* — and **Haipa gives Socrates' answer**, correctly, and then folds within four lines to Zihao's *you are so naïve.*

Two things follow. **Plato's central challenge, staged with two teenagers — and the wrong side wins.** Which is the outcome Socrates spends nine books preventing. And **Haipa's name means fear:** the right answer to the Republic's founding question is stated by Fear and abandoned by Fear.

The tempting wrong answer is D. Diego's bench is the novel's purest moral act and it is not Gyges — he is in enormous danger, not invisible, and his problem is courage rather than incentive.

A6 · A class that governs without accountability

The second speaker is Eva Goode, and her organization possesses **all six.**

The villain of this novel is the Republic's central institution — and Eva uses Plato's own word for it.

Point by point: *knowledge of what's really going on* (a class with knowledge unavailable to the many); the **Mentor** and protégé structure (selection and formation); an entire methodology of manufactured narrative (the noble lie); *it transcends nations, religions, political parties — everything... we're only truly loyal to the one that really matters* (loyalty above family and faction); *a group that is above party, above Congress, and answers to no one* (unaccountability by design); and *we maintain equilibrium* (the city's harmony).

Karl Popper famously charged, in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945), that Plato's guardian class is a blueprint for the closed, totalitarian society — an unaccountable elite, formed in secret, licensed to deceive, loyal to the regime above family or faction. *Plato scholars have disputed the charge ever since; it is an interpretation rather than a fact about the text.*

Status Profundus is that charge dramatized — given a Latin name, and set against the hero.

Which means a novel advertised as a modern Republic keeps Plato's diagnosis and epigraph and rejects his solution — replacing rule by the wise few with the attempt to make everyone wise.

A7 · Which of the four is not built like the guardians

Answer: D, and the value of the item is in how uncomfortable A, B and C are.

D is the only one of the four that is not a body of people at all. It is a procedure — and a procedure with no membership is a procedure nobody can be recruited into, promoted within, or excluded from. **Which is the whole of the difference.** *Plato's answer to who decides is a class of person. This novel's answer is a method, available to everyone, that produces a decision without anyone having to be trusted with it.*

Azadi names the resemblance herself. The Final Dynasty is *practically its own secret society*, and Jack calls it *an army, just not one with guns*. The network selling the end of the few ruling the many is built exactly like the organization that embodies it.

And the Core Team is five people in a room — of whom Carlos and Rosey are, between them, the novel's nearest thing to a **philosopher king and queen.**

A8 · Plato's descent, traced through Part One

Answer: B.

Timocratic — *you always get picked first; the older kids want you on their team*, then the Olympics, the World Cup, *America's Next Hope*, and a seventeen-year-old whose whole interior life is the fear of being seen to fail. **Oligarchic** — journal #3165, at twenty-one: *I have to focus on building the CarloS brand... I'm going to make it the single top brand in the world — period*, and the resentment at his parents' spending. **Democratic** — journal #4925, at twenty-six: three loves in succession, with no ordering principle among them. **Tyrannical** — journal #4962: *So, I screamed at her... **It's my money!!!!*** And then #4978, which is rage at a God he has just denied exists.

Part One can be read as tracing Plato's descent, in Plato's order, and stopping where Plato stops — *at the tyrannical soul, ruled by a single appetite that has driven out everything else.*

Which is where Part One leaves him: screaming at his mother about money, and then raging at a God he has just declared does not exist.

A9 · Glaucon's two men, in one person

Answer: B. By the end of Part One, Carlos is publicly the golden child — a missionary's son, humble, beloved, faith worn openly — and privately a man who has told God *I spit in your face*. By Part Three he is telling a stadium he prays every waking moment and calling it a lie in the next journal entry.

He is Glaucon's unjust man who seems just, and the seeming is a manufactured product with a marketing team.

And the question the novel asks is harder than Glaucon's. Glaucon asks which life is better. The novel asks **what happens to a man who has the reputation for justice and knows he does not deserve it, over sixty years.** Its answer — that he eventually becomes what he was reputed to be — is not among the options Glaucon considered.

The tempting wrong answer is A, and it is half right: Francesca is genuinely the first figure, dies without reward, and is the only person the novel calls a saint. The device is more interesting when both halves are inside one man.

A10 · Plato's test of who is fit to rule

Answer: A.

Carlos accepts the presidency of Palestine without hesitation and is *more than ready to turn to their next dream* the moment he leaves it. Rosey: *"Me?" She stared at him. "What? Me run for President of the United States? What are you talking about?"... **I swear this never even crossed my mind. This is crazy. Who would ever vote for me?***

She takes it reluctantly, serves two terms, **refuses to endorse a successor**, and goes.

By Plato's own test, Rosey is the qualified one and Carlos never was. The novel does not say this. It arranges it.

C is tempting, and it is not wrong about the facts — it is answering a different question.

Carlos's divestments are enormous and genuine: a company, a presidency, a candidacy, a country. Anyone choosing C has noticed something true and important about him.

But Plato's test is not about giving power up. It is about how one comes to hold it in the first place — and by that measure, letting go afterwards earns nothing. A man who wanted the office and later surrendered it has still wanted the office.

Which is worth measuring against the two standard examples. Cincinnatus was at his plough when Rome came to him, took the dictatorship because he was asked, and returned to the plough when the emergency ended. Washington, offered a crown and then a third term, refused both — and the refusals are why he is remembered as he is.

Carlos belongs in that company on the giving up, and not quite on the taking. Nobody came to his farm. He took the presidencies of Palestine and the LSA because they were the way to get the thing built, and he took them readily. Cincinnatus did not want the job. Rosey had to be argued into hers over lunch, and was still saying this is crazy while she was being persuaded.

Plato would say the reluctance is the qualification, and would notice that only one of them had it.

A11 · What Carlos asks instead

Glaucon's question is about conduct: what would you do with an ability nobody else has? Carlos's is about character: what would you become, and what kind of person would you be trying to create?

And that is why it answers rather than deflects. Glaucon's challenge only works if justice is a cost — something you bear because you might be caught, and shed the moment you cannot be. Carlos is offered the ring in its purest form — not invisibility, but a say in his own life before it starts, with no one watching and nothing at stake — and what he chooses to keep is the pain.

A man who would choose, in advance and unobserved, to keep the things that made forgiveness necessary is not being just because he might get caught. Which is the thing Glaucon said nobody would do, answered by a man who does not know he is answering it.

Note also what he does with the word power. Glaucon's shepherd finds a power and uses it to seduce a queen and murder a king. Carlos finds the same kind of power in a story and uses it to decline an easier life.

A12 · What the philosopher-king becomes

Answer: D, and it is as close as the novel comes to stating its relationship to its model:

The difference, however, is that I believe something Socrates would hardly have believed possible — that a day would come when every last person on earth could quickly and easily be educated to an even greater degree than the best and brightest of ancient Athens. We are at the point, I believe, finally, that a rapidly growing percentage of people on this planet can be lovers of wisdom.

Philosopher literally means lover of wisdom. Plato offers two routes and both assume scarcity. Carlos accepts the premise and denies the scarcity — not find the philosophers, not convert the kings, but make everyone a philosopher and then make everyone the king.

And notice the register. He does not say Plato was wrong. He says *I agree*, and then names a condition that has changed. **That is the novel's standard move with every great mind it departs from**, and it uses it three times: with Socrates here, with Churchill in Chapter 24 — *I never imagined a world where every human being could be educated so quickly and efficiently. Had I known that, it's possible my views on empire might have been different* — and, by implication, with Madison.

The tempting wrong answer is A, which is how *philosopher-king* is usually cashed out and which the novel appears to license, since Carlos and Rosey are the only political leaders in it who succeed at anything. If the novel meant A, Carlos should have taken the American presidency and the UAS.

A13 · Justice defined substantively, and procedurally

Answer: D, and both halves are worth pressing on.

The **positive** account is procedural: justice is whatever an informed, fully participating population decides about the balance between freedom and order. Carlos explicitly declines to name the balance.

The **substantive** account is negative: he can say what justice is *not*.

Which leaves him in the same epistemic position as five-year-old Rosey — *liberty and justice for all. I'm not sure what those are, but I know they are good*. The novel opens with a child who cannot define justice and closes its argument with a man who defines it by exclusion and hands the rest to a vote.

A group should be pressed on whether that is humility or evasion. The case for humility is in question A14's material: Carlos's claim is that the definition is not ours to supply, because *without a higher truth there are no true values*. The measuring stick is external; what we build is the machinery for consulting it.

The tempting wrong answer is A. A reader primed by the epigraph will expect a novel modeled on the *Republic* to arrive at the *Republic's* answer. **Plato assigns functions. Carlos distributes the decision.** That is the whole quarrel.

A14 · What the novel takes from Plato, and what it refuses

Answer: B.

Taken: the question *what is justice*; the method of examining everyone; the cascade of failed definitions; the tripartite soul; the Cave; the Ship of State; the Ring of Gyges; the city-soul analogy; the philosopher-king problem; Book VIII's account of how democracies rot; and the Form of the Good.

Left: the **guardian class**, which becomes the villain. The **noble lie** — *the myth of the metals, told so that each class accepts the station it was born to*. **The novel does not merely decline it. It is built on the opposite claim:** *that every last person on earth could be educated to a greater degree than the best and brightest of ancient Athens*. **There are no bronze souls in this book.** Rule by the wise few, replaced by the manufacture of wise many. The **decline of history**, replaced by an ascent — Plato's five regimes run downhill, Sophia's three phases run up. And **the confidence that justice is the highest thing.**

That last one is where the novel finally stops being Platonic. The four cardinal virtues of Book IV are wisdom, courage, moderation and justice. **Mercy is not among them, and it has no structural role there comparable to the one it acquires here** — justice in the *Republic* is each part doing its own work, and a systematic exception to that would be a defect.

Carlos's last recorded words: ***mercy is greater than justice.*** *Mercy is not ever present in our consciousness. Mercy resides at a much deeper plane within our souls.*

A book that took its epigraph, structure and central question from the *Republic* ends by ranking above justice a virtue the *Republic* does not contain — and the reason is supplied two paragraphs earlier: *in the context of our personal relationships, it only takes one to make peace but takes two to make war. With nations it takes two to make peace, and only one to make war.*

Mercy is unilateral — one party can extend it, without agreement and without reciprocity.
Justice is not: *it needs a court, a rule, and someone to enforce it.*

Which puts True Democracy on the wrong side of the line. Carlos spent his life building the best instrument the Core Team could imagine for delivering justice — *ninety minutes, both cases, one vote, and a global government to carry it out.* **No procedure can be written that produces mercy,** *because mercy is precisely a departure from the rule, granted by a person who did not have to grant it.*

So the novel ends by ranking above its own achievement a thing that achievement cannot reach. Carlos's last instruction to his daughter is about the one good his system was never able to deliver — *and the barn scene shows him delivering it himself, in person, to two people who came to kill him.*

The tempting wrong answer is C, which is nearly right and gets the direction backwards. The novel keeps the metaphysics — the Form of the Good is named in the barn and again on the last page — and departs on the politics.

A15 · What Sophia's Mother's Day story is reworking

Answer: D. The *Republic* ends with souls at a lottery, choosing their next lives from a heap of fates — a warrior's, a tyrant's, a private man's. **This scene puts a soul at a porthole with a guardian, choosing whether to go at all** — and the thing being chosen is not fortune but **what one will have to forgive.**

And it answers a question the novel has been carrying since journal #197. The problem of evil is stated at thirteen — *you either aren't powerful or you aren't good* — and stands unanswered for forty-six years. **The answer, when it comes, is not an argument but a thought experiment:** given the choice in advance, we would not elect a life with nothing to forgive. ***Suffering is reframed as the condition of something we would not give up.***

B is the one worth pausing on. The noble lie is a founding story told to citizens about where they came from, so that each accepts the station they are given — *and Sophia's story is a founding story told to a soul about where it came from.* **The resemblance is real.**

But the two run in opposite directions. Plato's myth is told by rulers, to secure consent to an assignment. Sophia's is told to someone who is being asked to choose, and who is warned about what the choice will cost: you have to learn to love, and you can only do that there. One is a story that settles people into a place. The other is a story that sends someone out.

A and C are the two Platonic passages most likely to be reached for by a reader who remembers the *Republic* by its images rather than its arguments.

A and C are the other two famous passages of the *Republic* and neither is what the scene is built from.

A16 · Learning a good life before living one

Answer: A, and it is the Republic's own order of business, stated in a stadium in São Paulo.

Socrates does not ask how a city should be run. He asks how a person should live — and answers that nobody can live well without first knowing what living well consists of, which is why the education of the guardians occupies more of the dialogue than the constitution does.

Carlos puts the same two things in the same order, and then builds his life on it. Learn first, live second — which is AIEdu before True Democracy, and education before government in every Part of the book.

And notice what the sentence assumes about his audience. He is telling a continent that they are not worse than anyone else, and in the same breath that the thing they want most is something they have not yet been taught. That is a compliment and a diagnosis at once, and it is the least flattering thing he says all night.

The tempting wrong answer is B. The speech is full of genuine praise, and this sentence sits inside it — but praise is not what the clause is doing. If people already knew what a good life was, there would be nothing for AIEdu to do, and the rest of the speech would have no argument.

(In the book, AIEdu is in some places a metaphor for moral education and in others a metaphor for the Information Age itself.)

C misses that he says it slowly and crisply, at the hinge of the speech. D is contradicted everywhere: this novel's education runs on six adults, conversation, and a lifetime of argument, not on reading.

SECTION B — AUGUSTINE'S *CONFESSIONS*

The form the novel actually takes: a life recounted in the second person, addressed throughout to God. Sixteen questions, ordered from most accessible to most demanding.

BEFORE YOU START: THE *CONFESSIONS* IN BRIEF

Everything the questions in this section rely on is below. Read it through, and refer back to it as you go.

The book, and the one thing to know first

Augustine wrote the *Confessions* around 397, in the North African port of Hippo, where he was bishop. He was about forty-three, and had been a Christian for roughly a decade. It is often called one of the first great autobiographies in Western literature, and it has one feature that sets it apart from most of what followed.

*It is not addressed to a reader. From the first sentence to the last it is addressed to God, in the second person, as a prayer — and we are permitted to overhear it. Its best-known sentence comes a few lines into the first paragraph: **Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee.***

And it is written retrospectively, more than ten years after the events it describes. That produces two voices at once: the young man doing the thing, and the bishop who knows how it ends.

Augustine can tell you what he did and what it meant in the same sentence, because he is standing at the far end of it.

The life, in order

Book II — the pears. At sixteen, Augustine and some friends steal pears from a neighbor's tree. He did not want them; his own were better; they threw them to pigs. He spends pages on why, and concludes that the pleasure was in the transgression itself. **And then the decisive line: Alone I would not have done it.** The sin required company.

Book III — Carthage, and two turning points. He arrives to study rhetoric: *I was not yet in love, but I was in love with love* — a man in love with the condition rather than any person. He takes a mistress, who bears him a son.

*And he reads a book. Cicero's **Hortensius**, an exhortation to philosophy, encountered as a standard item in a rhetorical curriculum. It redirects his entire life — not to Christianity, but to the pursuit of wisdom itself. His one complaint about it: the name of Christ was not there.*

Book III also contains the sentence he is most quoted for after *restless*: *tu autem eras interior intimo meo et superior summo meo* — you were more inward than my innermost self, and higher

than my highest. *He had been looking for God **outside** — in cosmology, in argument, in the heavens. **The correction is that God is at once deeper inside him than introspection can reach, and above him.***

Books III-VII — nine years a Manichee. *He joins a fashionable dualist sect, and later analyzes its attraction with unusual candor. **By his own retrospective account — which is a convert's polemic rather than a neutral history of the sect — what drew him was: a total explanation** of everything; **intellectual flattery**, the sense of belonging to those who see clearly; **initiates**, an inner circle of the perfected; and, decisively, **absolution from guilt** — evil was a substance acting upon him, so his failures were not his fault.*

Book VI — the least flattering page in the *Confessions*. *He had lived faithfully with the mother of his son for some fifteen years. **His own mother arranges a socially advantageous marriage, and the woman is sent back to Africa — the child kept, the mother dismissed. Augustine records her grief, records that his own heart was cut and bled, and then records that he took another mistress while waiting for his fiancée to come of age. He does not defend himself.***

Book VIII — the garden in Milan. *The conversion scene, and its parts are worth listing because they recur everywhere in later literature:*

A story about someone else's conversion (*Ponticianus tells him about the desert monks*) · **an unbearable interior division** · **a retreat outdoors** · **a storm of weeping** · **a child's voice from over a wall, chanting *tolle lege* — take up and read** · **a book of Paul opened at random** · **and instant resolution.**

And when it is done, he goes and tells his mother.

Book IX — Ostia, and Monica's death. *Waiting for a ship home, Augustine and his mother stand at a window and reason upward together — from bodies to the heavens to their own minds and beyond — **and for a single instant they touch it. Then language resumes, and the moment ends.** Monica dies days later, saying she no longer has any reason to remain.*

Book X — memory, and the famous cry. *Late have I loved thee, O Beauty so ancient and so new, late have I loved thee! And, immediately after: **Behold, thou wert within, and I abroad.***

Book XI — time. *One of the most widely discussed philosophical passages in the *Confessions*. Augustine asks what time is, finds he cannot say (*I know what it is, provided nobody asks me*), **and arrives at two claims.** First, that God did not create the world **in** time, because **time is part of what was created**. Second, that God does not endure through time as we do, moment giving way to moment — **He possesses His life all at once**, while a creature is **stretched** across a past it has lost and a future it has not reached: **I am scattered in times whose order I do not understand.***

Monica

She prays for her son's conversion for decades. *A bishop, wearied by her persistence, tells her that **the child of those tears shall never perish.** Augustine attributes his conversion to her prayers more directly than to any argument he ever encountered — and never explains the mechanism.*

And she lives to see it. The conversion, the baptism, the shared vision at Ostia, and then her death — in that order. She is both the one who prayed and the one who saw it answered.

What to carry into this section. The Confessions is the ancestor of every book in which a life is examined rather than merely reported.

*Augustine is not finally asking **what happened to me**. He is asking **what kind of creature am I, that this could happen to me** — and that I could be brought out of it.*

◆ **B1. MULTIPLE CHOICE**

The *Confessions* is not a memoir. **One formal decision shapes the whole book, and a great deal of what was written after it.** What is that decision?

A. It begins in the middle of the author's life and works backward **B.** It withholds the author's name until the final book **C.** It mixes narrative with scriptural commentary **D.** It is addressed throughout to God in the second person — a prayer the reader is permitted to overhear

◆ **B2. MULTIPLE CHOICE**

Augustine wrote the *Confessions* at about forty-three, more than a decade after his conversion. Carlos writes his journal forward, from thirteen, with no idea what he will become. **What does the novel lose, and how does it compensate?**

A. It loses the double perspective — the older self interpreting the younger — and supplies it in the Epilogue, through Sophia **B.** It loses nothing; contemporaneous writing is more immediate **C.** It loses chronological clarity, and compensates with the chapter-age device **D.** It loses the reader's sympathy, and compensates by making Carlos likeable

◆ **B3. MULTIPLE CHOICE**

Monica prays for Augustine's conversion for decades. A bishop, wearied by her persistence, tells her *the son of these tears shall not perish*. Francesca prays for Carlos in nearly identical terms.

What is the single most important difference?

A. Monica's prayers are answered and Francesca's are not **B.** Monica lives to see it; Francesca dies thirty-seven years before it happens **C.** Monica prays aloud and Francesca in writing **D.** Monica prays for one thing; Francesca prays for many

◆ B4. MULTIPLE CHOICE

The *Confessions*' first great passage of grief is not for Monica. It is for an unnamed friend of Augustine's boyhood — *sweet to me beyond all sweetness of life* — who falls ill and dies, after which Augustine cannot bear his own town and becomes, in his phrase, **a great riddle to myself**.

Which character occupies that position in the novel?

A. Rosey's mother B. Paco C. Francesca D. Manny

◆ B5. MULTIPLE CHOICE

Book II's most famous passage: Augustine, at sixteen, steals pears he does not want from a tree whose fruit is worse than his own, throws them to pigs, and spends pages on why. His conclusion is that the pleasure was in the transgression itself — and, decisively:

Alone I would not have done it.

Which pair of characters is that sentence about?

A. Diego and David B. Haipa and Paco C. Zihao and Hector D. Destiny and Saurian

◆ B6. MULTIPLE CHOICE

Book III's hinge is a text. At nineteen, working through a standard rhetorical curriculum, Augustine reads Cicero's *Hortensius* — an exhortation to philosophy, now lost — and reports that it *changed my affections and turned my prayers to Thee*. It does not convert him. It redirects him.

What is the novel's *Hortensius* moment?

A. Sophia's first novel, which converts him at sixty-three B. Rosey reading Francesca's mission-statement email aloud in Chapter 10 C. Gabriella's letter, read cold in the Athens speech D. The *Republic*, which Rosey reminds him of in the same meeting

◆ B7. TRACE IT

Augustine spent nine years as a Manichee and analyzes the attraction with unusual candour: a **total explanation** of the world, **flattery of the intellect**, a **company of the initiated**, and — decisively — **relief from responsibility**. Evil was a substance acting upon him: *it was not we who sinned, but some other nature sinned in us*.

Find all four in Eva's recruitment of David.

◆ **B8. MULTIPLE CHOICE**

Book III opens with Augustine arriving at Carthage: *I was not yet in love, but **I was in love with love**... I sought what I might love, in love with loving*. And then the complaint that he could not tell affection from lust.

Which journal entry is the same observation?

A. #4925, on three loves in succession and the suspicion that the word has become useless **B.** #3165, on building the CarloS brand **C.** #5295, the test drive prayer for Gabriella **D.** #18001, that love is real in a way other things are not

◆ **B9. MULTIPLE CHOICE**

Book VI is where the *Confessions* is least flattering to its author. Augustine had lived faithfully with one woman for fifteen years and had a son by her. A marriage is arranged for social advantage; **she is sent back to Africa without a name in the text**, vowing never to know another man; and Augustine, unable to wait the two years until his fiancée comes of age, takes a second mistress.

Carlos, by contrast, waits four years for a woman who can offer him nothing and is worth nothing to his career. **What is the relationship between the two accounts?**

A. The novel is rebutting Augustine — rightly ordered love of a person, rather than renunciation, is the correction **B.** The novel is evading Augustine, since Carlos's own years of using women are reported only by other characters, played for comedy, and never confessed by him **C.** The novel keeps Augustine's *sequence* — appetite reordered first, belief converted long after — and declines only his register **D.** There is no relationship; the situations are not comparable

◆ **B10. TRACE IT**

The garden scene in Book VIII is built from seven parts, and between them they became a template for many conversion stories written since:

1. *A story about someone else's conversion* · **2.** *a shaming comparison — the unlearned seize heaven while the educated hesitate* · **3.** *a storm of weeping* · **4.** *a voice heard from outside* · **5.** *a text opened and read* · **6.** *the collapse of doubt* · **7.** *telling his mother*

Journal #18459 is Carlos's conversion.

Which of the seven reappear in it — and what stands in for the ones that do not?

◆ B11. MULTIPLE CHOICE

Book IX's vision at Ostia is a shared ascent — Augustine and Monica at a window, reasoning upward through created things until, *in one instant of understanding*, they touch it, and then sigh and fall back into *the noise of our mouths, where a word has both beginning and end*.

Journal #18459: *I may actually be having a mystical experience... Ah, but just for an instant* (whatever that is). **As soon as I objectified that experience, calling it mystical, it faded.**

Why do both fade?

- A. Because language resumes — and in both passages its return marks the end of the experience B. Because such experiences are neurological and self-limiting C. Because neither man was ready to sustain it D. Because both accounts are retrospective reconstructions
-

◆ B12. MULTIPLE CHOICE

Book X: *Late have I loved thee, O Beauty so ancient and so new, late have I loved thee! For behold, thou wert within me, and I outside... Thou wast with me, and I was not with thee.*

Which passage in the novel is the same recognition?

- A. *You have been right beside me all along, just begging me to take Your hand* B. *It's like the first 63 years I was seeing the world through shadows and the last 18 was seeing things as they really are* C. Both, and the second adds a count D. Neither; the novel has no equivalent
-

◆ B13. MULTIPLE CHOICE

Book XI contains the *Confessions'* most famous philosophical treatment of time. Augustine asks what time is, finds he cannot say, and arrives at two claims that the whole later tradition works from.

First: God did not create the world *in time*, because **time is part of what was created** — so the question *what was God doing before?* has no purchase.

Second, and decisively: God does not *endure* through time as we do, moment giving way to moment. **He possesses His life all at once**, while a creature *is stretched* across a past it has lost and a future it has not reached: ***I am scattered in times whose order I do not understand.***

Which sentence in the novel is that distinction, in eleven words?

- A. *Eternity and forever are not the same thing* B. *I see that you indeed are the Eternal Now* C. *You have a perfect memory, therefore we are eternal* D. *Why can't I just be in this moment?*
-

Augustine attributes his conversion to his mother's prayers more directly than to any argument he ever encountered.

Journal #18141, at sixty-two: *I just realized something... **other people are praying for me.** ... Does that change anything? **Does it do any good?** ... If you are there, do you change what you are doing because they ask you to? How could that possibly work? Seems arrogant to even think that.*

A. His father's argument, recalled from childhood **B.** The evidence of his own answered prayers **C.** The character of the person doing the praying **D.** Sophia's book, which he has just finished

Augustine's prayers are answered and he is told so. *Monica is given her son's conversion and dies days later; Augustine, in the garden, gets what he has asked for and knows at once that he has it.*

#1565, at seventeen, friendless in Missouri: *I just want mine back. **Please help me make the track team.** I don't ask for much.* **#4988, at twenty-six**, declaring God dead in the same breath: *if you are all powerful like you claim, then **give me 32 hours in a day and 9 days in a week**, cause it's the only way I'll be able to do all the things I "ought" to do.* **#5295, at twenty-seven**: *I'm going to give you a test drive... **My "prayer" is to nudge Gabriella my way. Please!!!*** **#5705, at twenty-eight**, before the AIEdu launch: ***Wish me luck — or provide some — if you are able.*** **#11485, at forty-four**: *if there is something to this "eternal now" thing, **help me understand it.*** **#12259, at forty-six**, weighing whether to go to Tiananmen at all — *If I do this, I could die. Like for real, I could die — and ending: **please don't let me die. I don't want to yet.*** **#20305, at sixty-eight**, on the eve of the Third Phase vote: *I'm torn whether to pray for the vote to pass or for **Your will to be done...** I think what I'm going to do is **alternate nights...** **Not exactly Gethsemane, but it is the best I can do.***

A. Each is granted quickly, and Carlos records his thanks **B.** Each is granted, but on a scale or a schedule he never recognizes as an answer **C.** Each is granted only after he converts at sixty-three **D.** Each is granted in exactly the form requested

◆ B16. MULTIPLE CHOICE

Book III contains the sentence Augustine is most quoted for after *our heart is restless*, and it is a claim about *where God is*:

Tu autem eras interior intimo meo et superior summo meo — you were more inward than my innermost self, and higher than my highest.

Augustine had been looking for God *outside* — in Manichean cosmology, in the heavens, in argument. The correction is not that God is elsewhere but that **God is simultaneously deeper inside him than anything he can find by introspection, and above him.**

Journal #15431, at fifty-five, gropes toward the same thing without the vocabulary. What does Carlos get right?

A. That there is an inner world and an outer world, and God is in neither **B.** That the inner world is the only real one **C.** That the inner world is a private version of the outer one **D.** That there are two worlds, both real, and that God is in both at once

ANSWER GUIDE — SECTION B

B1 · The *Confessions*' defining formal decision

Answer: D. Augustine is not telling us about his life. **He is telling *God* about it, in front of us,** and the entire book is a single sustained address to *You*.

The Third Phase runs on that form for its whole length — but it does not run on it alone. Forty-two journal entries, every one addressed to “you”, beginning at thirteen and ending at eighty-eight — **typed at the last by his wife because he can no longer move his fingers.**

Around them the novel does what the *Confessions* never does: scenes, dialogue, speeches delivered to stadiums and to the species, and a third-person narration that follows characters Carlos never meets and into rooms he never enters. ***Augustine's reader has only Augustine's account of the world. This novel's reader has Carlos's account, and also the world itself — including the many rooms where he is judged, opposed and discussed by people he has never met.***

Which lets the reader catch him being wrong. He decides God has ignored his prayer about Gabriella; the reader watches the marriage. He calls his professions of faith a marketing ploy; the reader watches a woman believe them. He files his mother's last conversation as a wound he inflicted; the reader is given her account of the same afternoon.

And the form commits the novel to a shape. A boy of thirteen ordered by his mother to write to God every day is a boy who will one day have to settle whether anyone is reading — and the reader knows from the second entry that the question is open.

That is the promise the form makes. It is kept in journal #18459, at sixty-three: I am declaring that I choose You. And it is kept again on the last page, in a prayer asking for exactly that, written thirty-seven years before it happened.

B2 · When each account is written, and why it matters

Answer: A, and this is the most consequential difference between the two books.

Every page of the *Confessions* is **doubled**. The young man acts and the old man interprets, in the same sentence. *I loved not yet, yet I loved to love* is not something a nineteen-year-old could say about himself; it is a diagnosis delivered from the far side.

Carlos has no interpreting self on the page. Entry #197 is written by a thirteen-year-old who has just lost his friend and does not know what he will become. There is nobody to say what it means.

The Epilogue supplies the missing voice. Sophia does precisely what the older Augustine does for the younger: she takes a life, reads it backward, finds the shape, and states the meaning — *he was a messenger; he slayed the exact same dragon dwelling within himself; mercy is greater than justice.*

The two books solve the same problem differently. Augustine is one man writing in two tenses at once — the young man acting, the old man interpreting, in a single sentence. Carlos writes in one tense only, always the present, and the interpreting is done decades later by somebody else.

What Augustine holds in one head, this novel divides between a father and his daughter.

B3 · Monica's prayer, and Francesca's

Answer: B, and the whole ending of the novel depends on it.

Book VIII gives Monica the news; Book IX gives her the baptism and then Ostia — the shared vision at the window, and her remark that she no longer has any reason to remain. **She dies days later, having lived to see the one thing she asked for.**

Francesca is killed when Carlos is twenty-six, estranged from him, after a fight about money. His conversion comes at sixty-three.

Augustine's mother gets the consolation. Francesca gets the result.

And it is the difference the ending is built on. Francesca's specific requests are printed on the last page of the book, and every one of them has been granted by the time a reader reaches them. *A reader who has finished the novel can check them off. She could not.*

A is false — *hers are answered, in full.* **C** is a difference of medium and carries nothing. **D** inverts the texts: **Monica prays for a great deal over many years, and Francesca's prayer is a short list with one thing at the end of it.**

B4 · Augustine's first great grief, and the novel's

Answer: D, and the correspondence is close: same age bracket, same function, opposite conclusion.

Journal #197: *You have taken Manny from me!! ...* **Why can't you stop those criminals? Why do they get to do whatever they want?** ... *So unfair, he had his whole life in front of him.*

Augustine's grief becomes an argument about disordered love — the fault was in loving a mortal as though he could not perish. **Carlos's becomes an argument against God's existence** — *you either aren't powerful or you aren't good.*

The novel eventually arrives at Augustine's answer, in a grandfather's half-remembered sentence twenty-four years later: *evil coming from the fact that we haven't learned to discern what to love.*

And one thing the Confessions has no equivalent for: Augustine's friend is never mentioned again after Book IV. Manny becomes *the global symbol for crimes against children*, and the reason Carlos declines three offers to run the world.

B5 · Alone I would not have done it

Answer: B. Both arrive with the correct conviction and **surrender it to a room rather than to an argument.**

Haipa states the Ring of Gyges answer correctly — *something isn't less immoral just because there is less chance of getting caught* — and then: *Haipa just sighed resignedly.* **Zihao seemed to be able to get him to go along with anything.**

Paco argues against the ambush — *it doesn't have to be us or them* — and the narration notes that his lack of confidence whenever he spoke with Hector **made it seem more like a question.** Then: *Paco steeled himself and nodded acquiescence.* And moments later, interiorly: *Yes, this is justice...* **Hector is right. He is dead by the end of the scene.**

The novel's own addition to Augustine's pattern: Augustine sins in company but never for a companion. Haipa yields to Zihao, Paco to Hector, and — later — David to Eva. **Three men in three Parts, each of whom knew better and had somebody standing next to him.** The verb that fails all three is **choose**.

B6 · The text that turns a nineteen-year-old

Answer: B, and three correspondences hold.

It is a text, read rather than argued. Carlos felt tears rolling down his cheeks.

It redirects rather than converts. He weeps, and commits himself to his mother's work — **but nothing in the scene resolves the question he opened the Part with**, and he will not settle it for another thirty-seven years.

And the redirection is toward philosophy specifically. Rosey's next move is to remind him of his mother's favorite book — **and to summarize it in a sentence:** at its deepest, it's really a book about spirituality — wrapped in a discussion of the ideal government.

And notice what he takes from that sentence and what he leaves. He takes the wrapping — the ideal government, wisdom guiding politics, education — **and spends four Parts building it.** The deepest layer she named for him in the same breath is the one he will come to last.

Augustine's complaint about the Hortensius was that it lacked the name of Christ. Rosey's summary does not lack it. Carlos simply does not hear that half.

And this is as good a place as any to say the thing this section has been circling.

The cover announces *The Third Phase* as a modern retake on Plato's *Republic*, and the epigraph is from Book V. All true — and all of it the wrapping.

The little secret is that the book is a retake on Augustine's Confessions. A life told forward to God in the second person, by a boy who does not believe and an old man who does — with the nations, the constitutions and the elections arranged around it.

Rosey says so in Chapter 10 without knowing what she is describing: at its deepest, it's really a book about spirituality — wrapped in a discussion of the ideal government. She thinks she is summarizing Plato.

The tempting wrong answer is A, which is the conversion text and is treated at question B10.

B7 · The attraction of a total explanation

What follows is Augustine's own retrospective account of what attracted him, rather than a neutral description of the sect.

Total explanation: First and foremost, it's about knowledge. **Knowledge of what's really going on.**

Flattery of the initiate: US presidents have been members. Leaders of other nations. CEOs, renowned scientists.

A company of the knowing: *There's a profound sense of belonging. Of exhilaration. You become part of something vastly bigger than yourself.*

And the relief: *It's the Catholic school torturing you like a ghost from the past. They have burned original sin into your psyche. Trust me. It's total BS... I have nothing to feel guilty about, and neither do you.*

And David is Augustine's own case. Augustine came to the Manichees as a lapsed Catholic with a mother who prayed for him. David comes to the Society as a lapsed Catholic *forced to attend a school where the most judgmental people he'd ever met kept trying to convince him to "judge ye not."*

Both are recruited at the point where a religion of guilt has produced a man who wants to stop being guilty.

B8 · In love with love

Answer: A. *This is three now, three!!, that I have fallen for, actually in love, maybe, I think. I'm starting to think that that word means so many different things that it is useless.*

A young man in serial love, suspecting the word has stopped meaning anything.

And the difference between the two accounts is the difference between a confession and a diary. Augustine locates the fault in himself. Carlos locates it in the women — *one turns out to be a gold-digging bitch, one turns out to be a selfish psycho and now this perfect one dumps me.*

He does not yet have the vocabulary to indict himself, and the novel lends it to his friends instead: Rosey's *he's a man whore*, and Azadi laughing.

And there is one more voice in the entry, which he quotes in order to dismiss. The third woman told him her reason: *my fame and crazy schedule are a double-edged sword, and she has "trust issues."*

He puts her words in quotation marks and rules on them in the next sentence — *but I think that was a front. She's just settling for someone boring.*

A woman who has been close to him says she cannot trust him, and he files it as an excuse.

The reader, who has just heard Rosey's assessment, is in a position to think she meant it — and it will be seven years before he tells a journal that his public piety is a marketing ploy.

B9 · Where the *Confessions* is least flattering to its author

Answer: C.

The appetite is already collapsing before the mission arrives, and the two entries come in this order.

At twenty-three, after his mother's rule against pursuing anyone on the Core Team, he finds himself with his first real friendship with a woman — and writes the tell: ***Maybe there are benefits to having some that are "off limits."***

At twenty-six, three years later: *Why is this whole man/woman thing so fricking difficult and complicated? Why can't we just go spread our tail feathers, pick a mate, and be done with it? That is not a man enjoying himself.*

Then grief, then work he did not choose — and by twenty-seven he is praying, experimentally, for one woman in particular.

And none of it has religious content. Which is exactly Augustine's order. Book VI has him already worn out by the arrangement and reasoning toward marriage years before the garden. **The reordering of appetite runs ahead of the conversion of belief in both books** — a few years in the *Confessions*, thirty-seven in the novel.

Which makes the tail-feathers entry a prayer he did not know he was making. Augustine's *grant me chastity and continence, but not yet* is a man who knows exactly whom he is addressing and does not want what he asks for. **Carlos wants the thing and has no idea whom he is asking** — writing in a prayer journal, in the second person, to someone he has declared dead.

B deserves a hearing, and its answer is in question B2: Augustine can indict himself because he is writing at forty-three about a man he no longer is. Carlos is writing forward at twenty-six with no interpreting voice available. **What the *Confessions* supplies as retrospection, the novel has to supply as gossip** — and the confession does arrive, in the Athens speech, about pride rather than lust.

B10 · *The fixed parts of the garden scene*

The story about someone else: not Antony but Sophia — *has just published her book. The book is about the trial of Jesus if it was in the modern-day United States, with full due process.*

The shaming comparison: *I wish I had been able to read it when I was young, and — from the most famous man alive, about his daughter — Sophia will do far more for Your Kingdom than I ever will.*

The reading, and the collapse of doubt: *faith is enough, because faith is all we have. And we all have it — one way or the other. Then: I thought I had carved out this comfortable middle path between belief and nonbelief, but the truth is that I have been a follower of Not-You until this very moment.*

The decision, in the imperative: *God, today I'm going to do it. I am declaring that I choose You... I submit to You.*

And note the verb. Everything before this has been happening to him. This is the first time the journal records him *choosing*.

And telling the mother — inverted. Augustine goes indoors to Monica. Carlos writes: *I'm going to tell Gabriella next and then Sophia. They will both be thrilled.*

His mother has been dead for thirty-seven years. He tells his wife and his daughter instead.

And two parts are simply absent. There is no weeping, and no voice from outside. What stands in their place is a manuscript by his daughter — **read in an armchair, at his own pace, over an evening. The interruption that reaches Augustine from over a wall reaches Carlos from inside his own house.**

B11 · *The vision at Ostia, and the instant that fades*

Answer: A, and the mechanism is identical in the two texts. Augustine and Monica *sigh* and return to the noise of speech, *where a word has both beginning and end*. Carlos loses it as soon as *I objectified that experience, calling it mystical*.

And there is a difference in the company. *Ostia is shared in the moment — Augustine and his mother reason upward together, and come down from it together.* Carlos is at a desk, at night, and the room is empty.

But he is not without company, and the entry before this one says so. A year earlier he had worked out who was praying for him: *I don't mean the masses in some political sense; I mean my loved ones.* Mom and Dad did for sure. I know Gabriella does. Sophia definitely.

He names four and says loved ones, which is a wider category than the four. A reader is entitled to assume Azadi and Rosey are inside it — *they have been at his side for forty years, and he is not a man with many others.*

And if Azadi is in it, something follows that the novel never pauses to state. She is a Muslim, praying for the salvation of a man who will become a Christian — *as he, later, prays for a world that includes her.* Neither of them ever remarks on it, and nothing in the book suggests either would find it strange.

Two of the four are dead by the time it happens. Augustine's mother lives to hear it; Carlos's parents do not — *and the wife and daughter who are still in the house are asleep down the hall.*

What he does at the end of the entry is go and find them. *The moment arrives alone and does not stay that way.*

B12 · *Late have I loved thee*

Answer: C. The first is journal #18459, at the moment of conversion. The second is journal #25000, at eighty-one, with the arithmetic done: *I see 18 years of life filled with joy, preceded by 63 years of not being completely whole.*

The lateness is the point in both. Augustine converted at thirty-two and called it late. Carlos converted at sixty-three.

And the same entry contains Augustine's other conclusion about what conversion costs: ***I didn't give something up when I chose to believe, I added something. It is illusion that you give something up.***

B13 · *Eternity against forever*

Answer: A, and Carlos's father delivers it as a family eccentricity: *Dad always says that **eternity and forever are not the same thing**. He says that **eternity and now are peas in the same pod**. I always dismissed that as just another one of his "weirdisms."*

Forever is duration — a line without an end. Eternity is possession of the whole at once, which is not a longer line but a different kind of thing. **A creature can have forever and still never have more than the instant it is standing in.**

The tempting wrong answer is D, and it is the entry's *other* half — **the same complaint Augustine makes about himself**. *Why can't I just be in this moment and not reminisce about the past or worry about the future and have those things pollute what is happening right now this second?* **That is being scattered in times, said by a man on an aircraft watching a sunset.** The distinction is what he cannot yet hold; the complaint is what it feels like not to hold it.

B is the strongest rival, and a reader may fairly say that A and B belong together. They do — the same man, nineteen years later, at the moment of conversion: **I see that you indeed are the Eternal Now.** His father's odd phrase, returned as an address.

What makes A the best answer is that it is the one carrying the distinction. B names the conclusion; A states the difference the conclusion depends on. A reader given only B has a beautiful phrase and no way to say what it means; a reader given only A can work out the rest.

C is worth pausing on, because it is a real position in the novel and it is not this one. It comes from Carlos's mother, remembered from her preaching — because you have a perfect memory, that means we are, in fact, eternal — and Carlos restates it in his own idiom: our bodies are hardware, our souls are software, and you are, like, the cloud.

But that is a claim about persistence: about whether a thing endures. It says we go on, held in a divine memory — which still pictures God as watching from inside time, remembering a past that has genuinely gone by. **Book XI's claim is the opposite: for God there is no past to remember.**

So C answers a different question. It asks whether we last. **Eternity and forever are not the same thing** asks what kind of duration God has — and answers that it is not duration at all.

B14 · Conversion attributed to a mother's prayers

Answer: C. He has just called the whole idea arrogant, and then, in the next breath: **But Gabriella is the farthest thing from arrogant.**

He has an argument against the idea and cannot apply it to his wife, because the charge does not fit her. He converts the following year.

The tempting wrong answer is B, and its failure is structural. **He has no access to the evidence of his own answered prayers** — it is scattered across forty-nine years of entries he has never reread, and he closed every file too early. The reader has the evidence.

And the parallel with Augustine is closer than the Monica comparison alone suggests.

Augustine has one intercessor. Carlos has three — a mother who is dead, a wife who is beside him, and a daughter who will convert him with a book — **and he converts the year after noticing them.**

B15 · Seven petitions, and what happens to each

Answer: B. Not one is refused, and not one is granted in the form it was asked.

The track team. *He asks to belong somewhere. He becomes the most famous athlete alive.*

Thirty-two hours in a day. *He asks for more time to do everything he ought to do — and he asks it in the entry where he declares God dead. He gets eighty-eight years, and the Epilogue's judgment is that he compressed many generations of political development into the span of one life. He asked for a longer day and was given a longer reach.*

Nudge Gabriella my way. *Twenty-seven days later: Well, as expected — You've done nothing. Gabriella is cold and distant. I'm clearly wasting my time with her. He is married to her for forty-eight years. This is the one that shows the pattern most plainly: he set a deadline, the deadline passed, and he closed the file.*

Wish me luck, or provide some. *AIEdU succeeds beyond any projection in the book, and ends up educating a substantial share of the species.*

Help me understand the eternal now. *Asked at forty-four about one of his father's sayings.*

Answered at sixty-three, in the conversion entry: *I see that you indeed are the Eternal Now.*

Don't let me die. *He goes, and he survives — and the narration attributes his survival to the chain he put on himself.*

And the vote. *This is the only one he prays for as a believer, and the only one where he cannot decide what to ask — so he alternates: one night for the outcome he wants, the next for God's will, hoping they are the same thing. The vote passes. Both prayers are granted at once, and he never has to learn which one was answered.*

It is also the only petition he compares to a model. *Not exactly Gethsemane — which is precisely the prayer where someone asks for the cup to pass and then defers, and the deferral is the part that counts.*

The intervals run from days to a lifetime, and the petitioner judges at a month.

The tempting wrong answer is D. *A reader may feel that some were answered exactly — he did survive Tiananmen, he did understand the eternal now, the vote did pass. But even those arrive decades late, or through a mechanism he never connects to the asking.*

B16 · *More inward than my innermost self*

Answer: D. *He hedges it three times and cannot stop saying it:*

*It's like there is **this world we actually exist in and then there's an outside world** with everything that is "not me"... So, which is the "real" world? I guess they both have to be — because without either one, neither would be real.*

*And where would you fit into all that? I guess if you are real, then you are in both. Yeah, if you are there, that's how it must be. **You are out there — not just trapped in here with me — but you are in here with me too.***

***That is** interior intimo meo et superior summo meo — arrived at by a man with no training, in a journal, perhaps even at three in the morning.*

And the same entry asks the question the doctrine answers. OK, so I'm really open to listening more... But what does that even mean? How could it possibly work? I'm being serious now. I don't expect you to send emails.

Augustine's reply would be that the expectation is the error. Nothing needs to be sent to a place, because there is no place where the address does not already reach — and the reason Carlos cannot hear anything is not distance but the direction he is listening in.

The tempting wrong answer is A, and it is a reasonable reading of the hedging — if you are real sounds like a man keeping God out of both worlds until the evidence comes in. *Read the sentence he lands on.* He does not say God might be somewhere. He says God would have to be in both — which is a structural claim, not a hopeful one, and it is correct.

And it is why the journal itself was never a monologue. A man addressing something that is more inward than his innermost self is not talking to himself and is not talking to the sky. Journal #22718 finally names it: at first, it was a monologue resisting the idea of it being a dialogue... then eventually, I finally realized that it was in fact a dialogue.

Congratulations Dear Reader.

I hope you have enjoyed the journey as much as I have.

John C. Adams

Author

The Third Phase

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