

<part 1>

Brief Biography of John Wyndham

Wyndham grew up outside of Birmingham and attended prep schools from the age of eight. After graduating, Wyndham began writing short stories and serial fiction pieces. During World War II, Wyndham served as a censor in the Ministry of Information and a cipher in the Royal Corps of Signals. He returned to writing after the war. Wyndham's brother, Vivian Beynon Harris, was also a successful writer. Wyndham married Grace Wilson in 1963 and moved to Petersfield, Hampshire, where he died. Wyndham is best known for pioneering a type of science fiction called "logical fantasy" (or "speculative fiction") that is based on extrapolating from current trends to imagine future realities and is more realistic than other forms of science fiction. *The Day of Triffids* is Wyndham's most well-known book, but *The Chrysalids* is often considered to be his best.

Historical Context of *The Chrysalids*

The Chrysalids is a novel that is deeply intertwined in historical events. Written not long after World War II and in the midst of the Cold War, the book looks at what might happen in a world that has been irreparably damaged by nuclear warfare. The ethnic cleansing favored by the Waknukians is similar to the Holocaust, during which Nazis ordered the murders of millions of Jews and non-Aryans. This cleansing is also similar to the Great Purge that occurred in the 1930s in the Soviet Union, during which the Communist Party imprisoned and killed dissenters. Much of the ideology represented by the woman from Zealander is related to Communist ideas—specifically, the belief that history is a series of struggles between different races or classes and the idea that communal action is preferable to individual action. Finally, the persecution of people for their physical appearance in *The Chrysalids* is similar to the racism prevalent throughout the American South in the years leading up to and during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

<part 2>

Full Title: The Chrysalids

When Written: Mid-twentieth Century

Where Written: United Kingdom

When Published: 1955

Literary Period: Golden Age of Science Fiction

Genre: Science fiction

Setting: Waknuk, Labrador (which likely correlates with present-day Wabush, Canada) in the distant future

Climax: The convergence of the group in the forest after Petra's call

Antagonist: Joseph Storm, and, more broadly, the Waknukian system of beliefs

Point of View: First person, from David's perspective (sometimes retrospectively and sometimes in the moment of the event)