

# *Citizen of the Galaxy* Lesson Plans

By  
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## **Introduction:**

*Citizen of the Galaxy* may be the single most mature, thoughtful, and serious work in all of the Heinlein juveniles. Indeed, there have even been readers who have argued that it was the best book Heinlein ever wrote. Taking as its theme the ageless villainy of slavery and the never-ending struggle for freedom in the human species, *Citizen of the Galaxy* was, for Heinlein and his young readers in 1957, a major blow struck during the Cold War against anyone who would chain other human beings. A deeply personal work, *Citizen of the Galaxy* remains one of the best books ever written about these issues, to be read alongside the Declaration of Independence, Henry David Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience", Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, John Stuart Mill's *On Freedom*, and a handful of other literary classics which declare themselves for the freedom of the human mind and body. Thomas Jefferson vowed "eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." Heinlein might well have taken that vow as the battle cry of this novel.

*Citizen of the Galaxy* follows the classic pattern of the bildungsroman, the novel of education. Thorby moves from a childhood with no freedom, to become one of the richest men in human civilization. Uniquely in the bildungsroman tradition, and in the juveniles, Thorby repeats this pattern of growth four times, as he is moved from one world, and one set of expectations, into another, seeking freedom and mastery in each level of this cycle, only to be moved to another culture, and another set of challenges. What Heinlein seems to be saying is that the growth into maturity never ends: as we grow in control and power, we are met with new challenges that force us to grow again (this is an evolutionary stance, but it also grows out of the writings of Emerson and Thoreau and other Americans who knew that the essential American experience was to create, and then recreate, the self).

The eleventh in the masterful series of juveniles (which we would call "young adult novels" today) that Heinlein wrote for Scribners from 1947 to 1958, *Citizen of the Galaxy* was written in a stunningly short period of four weeks, and originally titled *The Chains and the Stars*. The novel displays the strongest father figure in any of Heinlein's juveniles, Baslim, Heinlein's characteristically strong supporting cast (particularly women, who are far and away the strongest women in any literature being written in the fifties), and an amazingly inventive series of cultures. The novel can be used in more than English classes; any history, sociology, anthropology, or political science class could easily use its meditations on freedom and responsibility in a variety of cultures.

We hope you find the following lesson plans helpful, and that you will choose *Citizen of the Galaxy* or another Heinlein work to use in your classrooms. We would like to hear from you about your own experiences using Heinlein's works. Please email us!

**Edition Used:**

These lesson plans are keyed to the Del Rey paperback edition, as that is the most readily available.

**Date of Publication / Dedication:**

The novel was written in November of 1956, and published for the Christmas trade in 1957.

The novel was dedicated to Fritz Leiber, one of the greatest of all science fiction and fantasy writers.

**Chapter Summaries / Discussion Notes:**

Each chapter will be summarized, and pertinent details and issues explicated. Any of the details might be turned into extra credit questions, which require the student to do research on the internet or in a library. Heinlein often inserted historical, scientific, and literary references into his novels, as a way of gently urging the reader to explore these references. Vocabulary words which students may have difficulty with will be suggested, with particular attention paid to words Heinlein invented (which, unless we've adopted the word, won't be found in a dictionary).

I strongly urge that students learn vocabulary not by checking the dictionary, but by the following procedure: 1) say the word aloud (this begins to fix the word in long-term memory); 2) look for roots (Spanish speakers often have an advantage here, since the longer Latinate words in English often have a simple Spanish root, as in the word "facilitate"); 3) use context to make TWO guesses as to what the word means; 4) then, and only then, check the dictionary. Students need to be reminded to learn new vocabulary words, because they will often choose to simply skip the word they don't know, or in running to the dictionary, will fail to permanently learn the new word as they only place the definition into short-term memory. I require my students to learn at least seven new words a week; in this, Heinlein is very helpful, because he actually used a more sophisticated vocabulary in his juveniles than in his adult fiction. If teachers do not encourage students to acquire the new vocabulary, students often have a hard time with Heinlein's juveniles for precisely that reason: they are more difficult than today's more controlled, simplistic vocabulary in most young adult novels.

**CHAPTER ONE:**

The novel opens with a slave auction, but it also opens with a loss which Thorby feels more: he is being sold away from the group, away from those who knew him, away from a role he understood into the unknown: "...Now he was again nothing and nobody." In many ways, the themes of slavery and freedom are facets of the greater American theme of the creation of the self. Thorby is in particularly ignorant stage, with "feral eyes"; he is treated like an animal. Nearby, one step up from slavery, are the beggars. Above them all, are the rich, served by many. Heinlein is suggesting here one of the basic traits of any society run on the backs of slaves: there is precious little between the few who rule, and the many who serve. Slavery produces inequality (by extension, removing freedom removes the opportunity for equality, which was Heinlein's greatest fear in the fifties, as he faced the Communists in the Cold War and constantly

sounded the drums of war against those who would take away our right to know. This war began before the fifties, as we can see the same hostility towards dictatorship in the late thirties, in works like “If This Goes On.”).

The irony of spacecraft juxtaposed with slave auctions points up one of Heinlein’s best tactics: he often places the familiar next to the unfamiliar, and in so doing, makes the familiar seem strange, and the unfamiliar seem normal. Always, he aims to upset the status quo, to rattle our cages and get us to think – which is why, more than anything else, Heinlein continues to be read. Fifty years later, Heinlein still feels fresher at times than anything being written today.

The auctioneer is having a hard time selling Thorby, who is wild, and bears the scars of previous owners’ attempts to beat him into submission. Baslim the Cripple watches, and we meet the man who will save Thorby from slavery. Thorby glares back at him, unbroken. Nobody wants Thorby; the buyers complain. Thorby watches, wondering who will buy him, who will be his “new problem.” (Thorby clearly has pride, and has yet to be broken into slavery, despite many attempts). Thorby bites the auctioneer when he tries to show what Thorby’s ears look like; the auctioneer gets in trouble when he suggests rounded ears are the best, because the Syndonian in the audience has pointed ears. The auctioneer says that he will take any bid at all; Baslim offers two “minims.” (Students may need to be told what “stellars” and “minims” are, since they may not understand Heinlein is subtly suggesting a new money system). The Syndonian starts bidding Baslim up, while at the same time giving him money to be able to bid against him. The Syndonian watches over the sale, to make sure it’s legal. Thorby tries to run away; Baslim grabs his ankle and prevents it. He knows he will have another chance to escape, if he was patient: “...they always got careless if you waited.”

Baslim escorts the boy home, having Thorby beg for him. Baslim tries many different languages, which Thorby displays no response to (Baslim suspects he does understand some). So Baslim uses sign language and a few “cuffs.” Baslim never hurries; he always takes the “long view.” (One of the signs of Heinlein’s mature characters is that they are always willing to wait, except when the situation requires action. This is a trait shared by characters as various as Lazarus Long and Michael Valentine Smith). Thorby tries to escape again, but fails.

They go down a tunnel into the barracks; Baslim’s room is clean, neat, and well-secured. Thorby is surprised; this is better than anywhere he’s lived before. Baslim puts on an artificial leg, and a pair of pants. Baslim orders Thorby to wash (Heinlein often emphasized the importance of personal hygiene). When Baslim leaves the room to prepare a meal, Thorby tries to escape again, but can’t get out the locked door. Baslim orders him to finish cleaning up. Baslim tends to Thorby’s wounds, and even provides him with a shot of antibiotics for the infected wound on his leg. Baslim then offers Thorby dinner – but he opens the door so Thorby can leave if he’d prefer not to eat (having seen to it the boy is clean and healthy, he offers him freedom – a mark of Baslim’s generosity of spirit and love of freedom). Thorby flees, but later on, returns to watch from outside the door. Baslim forces him to choose: come inside, or go away.

Thorby enters, speaking his first word in the book: “Wait!” Baslim welcomes him, and closes the door – pointedly leaving it unlocked, so Thorby knows he can still leave if he wishes. Thorby wolfs his food down. After finishing, he vomits it all back up. Thorby cleans up and feeds him broth and some bread. Baslim asks him his name, and tells Thorby to call him “Pop.” Baslim removes his leg, turns out the light, and then listens. Thorby finally gets into bed (students don’t usually need to be told that there is nothing sexual here, but I do teach very poor students, who often have to share beds with other family members; your own students may have

a different take on this, and need to be reminded that very poor people often sleep in the same bed). Thorby breaks down crying, and Baslim holds him until he falls asleep.

## CHAPTER TWO:

Thorby's physical wounds heal; his emotional ones take time. Baslim gets Thorby his own bed, but allows Thorby to come into his own when he needs comforting after a nightmare. Baslim decides to hypnotize Thorby, but he hates hypnosis, as he "had an almost religious concept of the dignity of the individual" (Heinlein knew hypnosis as well, and felt the exact same way about the rights of an individual to control his or her own life – Heinlein despised prisons and the draft precisely because they removed an individual's power to choose). Baslim chooses hypnosis, because "this was an emergency." (Heinlein was often pointing out that expediency sometimes trumps normal ethical and moral behavior; far more would be lost by sticking to the letter of the law, than by violating it to support the spirit of the law. Thorby needs to be hypnotized, to help restore his *self* – which he has lost, and cannot recover otherwise). Thorby has no conscious memories of his parents; his only memories are of masters; he is truly illiterate and ignorant, a 'wild child' produced by society ignoring the rights and dignity of the individual. Baslim has no idea how old Thorby is, or if he is of unmutated human stock.

Thorby trusts Baslim, and allows himself to be hypnotized. Baslim starts working back through his memories. Baslim ultimately has to be brutal, on both himself and Thorby, because the need is great. Baslim implants in Thorby the post-hypnotic command to never have bad dreams again. Baslim isn't good enough to eradicate the bad memories, nor would he want to; like Heinlein, Baslim has a horror of doing anything to anybody against their will, particularly when it came to the mind (there are exceptions to this rule for Heinlein; he believed in corporal punishment for minors, because he saw it as essential to their upbringing; he also felt that once a human being has submitted their will to that of the group, as in joining the military, their right to refuse orders was surrendered, with a few exceptions; a human being who violates the rights of others was also surrendering his own rights, as can be seen in the execution of the child murderer in *Starship Troopers*).

Baslim teaches Thorby the ways of the beggar (and they are detailed enough to show that Heinlein knew how beggars worked quite well). When Thorby begins to grow stronger, and look less in need of alms, Baslim provides him with false afflictions. Thorby has no official place in the underworld, since he is a slave, and he has a license to beg – but he sees the underworld at work every day (this is part of the overarching plan of the novel: to take Thorby from the lowest of the low to the highest of the high). Theft is an "art"; Thorby is tempted to learn it. He returns home one day with stolen goods; Baslim must find a way to keep him from behaving immorally (and Baslim poses a question Heinlein became increasingly interested in the rest of his life: how does teach "morals to a stray kitten"?). Baslim points out that beggars make more money; he explains the penalties for theft. Baslim then offers to free Thorby, both because he wants to free him, and because he doesn't want to be held responsible for the penalties (he makes it out worse than it probably would be, but often, figures in authority exaggerate the consequences to create compliance – but the law did state that Baslim was responsible, and responsibility, for Heinlein, was as important as freedom). Thorby protests; he does not want to be free. Baslim then makes him a deal: he will not free him, so long as Thorby promises never to steal, and never to lie. He tries to teach Thorby that lying is worse than stealing, because a liar will never be trusted – once he is known as a liar. He also tells Thorby he'll leave with precisely

what he came in with: a breechclout and bruises. Baslim privately feels bad about being so harsh, then asserts that it was a harsh world, and he has to teach Thorby how to live in it. Later on, Thorby puts all the money he has gained on the table, so Baslim knows he is not hiding anything. They both fall asleep.

### CHAPTER THREE:

Baslim has already taught Thorby to read and write at least two languages, but he realizes he must do more for him. Thorby has begun to realize Baslim is not merely a beggar. Baslim's intensive education of Thorby is but another sign. One night, Thorby is awakened by Baslim, and when he turns on the lights, is shocked by how well-dressed Baslim is – and that he has two eyes! Even more surprising, the false eye has a camera, and Baslim has secret compartments in the apartment in which to hide such things. He makes Thorby memorize the face in one of the pictures. He tells Thorby to find him near the spaceport, in one of the bars; he tells Thorby to be sure to mention that he is Baslim the Cripple's son. Thorby finds the man, but has to signal him as to his identity. Thorby manages to get the cylinder from Baslim's eye into the man's hands. The spaceman takes off on the free trader *Romany Lass*.

Thorby begins to help Baslim more and more, as his education progresses. Baslim insists that Thorby can read a page in under three seconds, and juggle, and whatever else he needs to learn, with enough practice and motivation (Heinlein's interest in the capacities of the human brain to function more effectively was a constant theme throughout his career – as he does in so many places, Heinlein references Dr. Renshaw, who was an academic in the mid-twentieth century researching these issues). Baslim tells Thorby about Earth, and Dr. Renshaw, and what it truly means to be human: the mind, and not the body. It is Thorby who is the real cripple, not Baslim, but Baslim promises the crippling of his mind will be undone. Thorby becomes an obsessive reader and linguist. Thorby doesn't care for math.

Baslim talks to Thorby about what will happen to him if Baslim dies. Baslim wants to send Thorby away; even if Baslim frees him, what life is open to Thorby on this freedom-deprived world? Baslim wishes he knew where Thorby was from, but wants to send him to a world where there is no slavery, preferably a frontier world. Thorby refuses to leave Baslim, citing the very freedom to choose his own life that Baslim has taught him to cherish (in some ways, this is a sign of Thorby's growing education and maturity). Thorby gets up in the night and leaves, only to return four days later. On the day he left, Baslim freed him. Baslim never again suggests Thorby leave. Thorby has the slave tattoo lined out, and is a free man.

### CHAPTER FOUR:

Thorby is now collecting information whenever Baslim needs him to do so. Baslim returns to the problem of what Thorby will do after Baslim is gone. Baslim tells him to look up a man, give the man a message, and do exactly what the man tells him to do. The one man turns out to be any one of five different men. The message turns out to be three different messages, one of which will be used depending on which man shows up. Baslim hypnotizes Thorby to help him memorize all three of the messages.

Thorby is sent on a mission for Baslim, to deliver a message at the spaceport. Along the way, Thorby wonders how the Sargon got to be so powerful (this is one of Heinlein's constant themes: the gathering, use, and abuse of power). The man he is supposed to deliver the message

to has been replaced, and Thorby is chased and almost caught. Heinlein uses the chase to deliver one of his signature stylistic notes: a process (in this case, being chased) is examined, and summarized cleanly and neatly, thereby helping all his readers understand that process better than they ever have. This tactic is one of the reasons Heinlein is perhaps best seen as an educator; certainly, his readers constantly learned. A woman helps Thorby hide under a washtub, and then in a pushcart.

Thorby reports to Baslim, who goes to investigate while Thorby takes up the begging bowl. That night, Baslim hypnotizes Thorby, so he can learn a huge chunk of information. The next day, Baslim has gone out, and Thorby goes to beg. The Free Trader *Sisu* lands (this is the ship Thorby will soon be on), and its skipper, Captain Krausa, is one of the five men Thorby is supposed to contact after Baslim dies. Thorby tries to return home, but the police have the place covered; Thorby is warned to get away by the melon seller. Thorby finds a way into the apartment that isn't covered, evading the police until he reaches home, only to find that the police have been there first, and Baslim's artificial leg is smashed. Thorby weeps.

#### CHAPTER FIVE:

Thorby watches, to see if Baslim will come home. Thorby knows that if the police have Baslim, he won't ever come home again. Sargon's police work on the principle of guilty until proven innocent, and would torture Baslim. Thorby wants to rescue Baslim, but realizes that it would be impossible. Thorby leaves Baslim a note, in case he returns, then leaves, going to Joy Street to try and find out what happened to Baslim. Auntie Singham the fortuneteller warns him there's a reward out for him, and that Baslim has been executed. The police come, and Thorby hides in plain sight, working on the sign. He overhears that the police know Baslim was a spy, and that Baslim had in fact committed suicide by poison before he was captured (they then chopped off his head to fulfill the letter of the law). Thorby is wanted for questioning.

With Baslim dead, Thorby wonders what he should do – and remembers the message, and the captain of the *Sisu*. Thorby needs help to get to the captain, and decides to go see Mother Shaum, the owner of a bar who had helped them before. Thorby sneaks in through the roof. Mother Shaum will help him, although she chides him for all the trouble he's caused. She puts him in a concealed compartment, and tells him about Baslim's head: Baslim is smiling. Thorby sleeps. The policemen come, and Mother Shaum helps them to get done quickly.

#### CHAPTER SIX:

Captain Krausa comes to Mother Shawm's, after Mother Shawm has sent word to him. The captain is not impressed with Thorby. Thorby gives him the message in the Captain's own language. Krausa is upset at the news of Baslim's death. Baslim has asked Krausa to deliver Thorby to any ship of the Hegemonic Guard, and ask them to help Thorby find his family in the Hegemony. Krausa tells Thorby to come along, but Mother Shaum warns Krausa that Thorby is wanted by the police. Krausa realizes that he is putting his entire family and ship at risk to help Thorby, but Krausa insists that all debts must be paid (we do not yet know what debt the Free Traders owed Baslim).

Mother Shaum goes out in a sedan chair; she bribes the guard to let her pass. Thorby is hiding under her. Mother Shaum gets dressed up on the way, to be able to go through the nobles' gate. Mother Shaum throws a tantrum and gives the guards a tongue-lashing for daring

to challenge her; while she distracts the guards, Thorby slips through the gate. Captain Krausa slips him onto truck going to the *Sisu*, dumping out 100 pounds of “verga” leaves so Thorby has a place to hide.

Thorby leaves the planet.

## CHAPTER SEVEN:

Thorby has a very hard time at first, as he is breathing in the fumes of the leaves, and having the first nightmare in years about being in a slaver. Once he is awake, he feels much better. He searches his room, and is very confused: where is the door? Where did the bed go? He finds spacemen clothes to put on, and he realizes they must be for him. He tries them on proudly, getting them on backwards at first (he figures out the shorts are on wrong, but not the shirt). A visitor arrives, and opens the door. The man gestures doesn't respond to any spoken words. The door is left open, so Thorby goes exploring. Thorby is shocked at the size of the ship, but then becomes aware that he is being snubbed, and he regrets immediately coming onto a ship where he will be treated like a slave all over again. Thorby returns to his cubicle, only to find that he can't open the door, and that he must go to the bathroom soon.

One of the crewmen find him wandering around, and takes him back to his cubicle, and shows him how to find the toilet. Thorby asks to speak to the captain, but the man rebuffs him and leaves. Later, the crewman bringing Thorby his meal calls him “fraki” – the insult of all insults.

Thorby still can't figure out the way that the bed works, so he sleeps on the floor. Dr. Margaret Mader comes to visit him, and speaks to him extensively about his experiences growing up, and her own experiences. Thorby speaks English without a trace of accent (another clue as to his origins). She is an anthropologist (Heinlein puts a joke into Thorby's mouth when he asks “This is a science?”). She teaches Thorby all the controls to his room. She explains about the Free Traders (they speak Finnish on *Sisu*). Thorby is glad to finally be talking to somebody. She explains something of how the Free Traders operate as a culture. She becomes very excited when she learns that Thorby had been a slave, as well as a beggar. She asks if she can come back again, and he agrees.

Thorby sleeps in his bed that night, and enjoys it. The next day, he plays with all the various aspects of his room (half wondering if it is witchcraft). The ship alarm goes off, scaring him; when he looks in the hallway, people are running everywhere. It turns out to be general drills. Thorby is called to the Chief Officer, then rebels against the way he is chivvied along by the Free Trader sent to collect him. Thorby is taken to the Captain's mother, and repeats Baslim's message. The Mother orders the Captain to adopt Thorby, as the request was to treat Thorby the way Baslim did. The Mother points out that the rest of the Free Traders will be in debt to *Sisu* for paying off this debt, and their status will rise.

## CHAPTER EIGHT:

Thorby isn't all that happy about being adopted, but he goes along with it (he doesn't have much choice, and he remembers that Baslim told him to do whatever the Captain said). The ceremony involves sympathetic magic, bonding his blood with the ship; Thorby has seen such magical practices his whole life. Heinlein's depiction of this adoption ceremony is very detailed, and very believable, and another mark of his widespread knowledge and endless

invention. At the banquet afterwards, Thorby is insulted with the term “fraki” by a young member of his new family, who is reprimanded by another member – who then teaches Thorby how to use a fork (this indoctrination into proper manners continues the training Thorby received from Baslim; Heinlein often used this plot device, not least when he was trying to show his audience that one culture’s polite manners are another culture’s insults, but also when he was trying to convey to a post-sixties audience the importance of courtesy and politeness).

Thorby moves into new quarters with some of the bachelors; he begins to learn their language. Heinlein explores the complexity of a language rich in various words for familial relationships; the traders have more than two thousand names for relatives. Until Thorby learned a significant number of those, talking to almost any member of his new family might insult them. The Free Traders operate on a caste system of intense complexity, and Thorby must learn his proper relation. As the narrative comments, “It was easier to learn to be a beggar.” This is part of the structural pattern of the book, as Thorby moves into each new level, he must learn new rules. (Heinlein is trying to show that such is the pattern of our own lives: from the relationship with a parent (Baslim), Thorby moves into the often confusing relationships of an extended family. Heinlein separates those two, not unlike teaching composition through a variety of rhetorical strategies that any practicing writer would weave together, rather than artificially separating them. Heinlein is trying to teach his readers how to understand their own cultures, by leading Thorby into this series of initiations and learning curves).

Thorby meets with Margaret Mader, who acts as a sounding board for Thorby’s frustrations in learning about his new family. Dr. Mader offers to train Thorby in a more formal way, which Thorby gratefully accepts. With her help, Thorby learns very quickly (using the methods Baslim taught him). Dr. Mader explains the familial workings of the ship, which is run as a patrilocal matriarchy, which is backed up by the need for girls to leave the ship, to join some other ship, if they ever wish to have power (Heinlein points out that women run the Free Traders; if they didn’t, swapping women between ships would be slavery, an abhorrent choice in all Heinlein novels). Dr. Mader also explains that the Free Traders use customs and traditions as a way of coping with each other: “When things grow difficult you hide behind a pattern.” Dr. Mader suggests that Thorby needs to learn those patterns, if he wants to marry someday (a prospect which does not thrill Thorby).

## CHAPTER NINE:

In school, Thorby has difficulty with the cultural lessons, but he excels at those subjects Baslim taught him, particularly mathematics. As a result, Thorby gets put in charge of a starboard fire-control computer (which is one of the things Heinlein himself did in the navy, having been trained in an early analog computer and being in charge of one of those computers on the *Lexington*, one of two of our nation’s first aircraft carriers). Defending against possible attack during the long build-up to light speed (and the slow-down) was one of the hazards of being a Free Trader. Thorby is going to be trained by Jeri Kingsolver, his “nephew and roommate.” Thorby is uncomfortable, because a girl (Mata) does so much better than he does (and because she’s a girl, and he doesn’t know how to cope with the feelings she engenders). Thorby shows his prickly side, particularly when he accuses Mata of cheating and Jeri of rigging the situation. Thorby proceeds to hide behind formality as a defense (which is what Dr. Mader said those formal patterns were for in Ch. 8). Eventually, Mata asks him to play a game of “spat ball”, and Thorby agrees – and wins three games to one. After that, his training begins to go



better, and he keeps playing spat ball with Mata. Finally, Thorby makes a perfect run – and goes back to calling Jeri by his name. Thorby is then placed in a blind situation, in which he doesn't know who's in charge – himself, or Jeri (through a “killjoy” that hides the indicator). Thorby and Jeri then bet desserts as to who has control – and Jeri wins every time.

Finally, it seems there is a real attack, and Thorby scores a “kill” – only to find out it was a friendly craft, and Jeri removes his control to keep Thorby from killing a ship. But Thorby *thought* it was real – and he succeeded, according to the computer. So he has passed his initiation (initiations are highly important in Heinlein, particularly in the juveniles).

## CHAPTER TEN:

Thorby is promoted. The *Sisu* arrives at Losian, the first planetfall since Thorby left Jubbul. We learn that many of the women have not left the *Sisu* since coming to the ship as girls. Thorby wants to go ashore, but he can't, since he has too much work to do. Thorby realizes that he thinks of *Sisu* as his home, and that he is even thinking in the Free Traders' language now. He feels guilty, because he rarely thinks of Baslim anymore.

He remembers the only time Baslim ever got mad was at slavery, and what Baslim taught him: “...a man need never be free other than in his own mind.” (This is a very Thoreauvian statement; see the prison scene in Thoreau's “Civil Disobedience.”)

Thorby gets called to see the Captain, who invites him to go ashore, and gives him some spending money. Thorby thinks of the Losians as “fraki” because they won't haggle. When they get ashore, Thorby asks about visiting another Free Trader, to look at their computers, but is told that probably wouldn't be possible, as the other ship is run by a “superstitious lot.” A baby Losian runs up and wraps around their legs in greeting. The Captain talks with the baby's mother, then compliments Thorby on his run on the Losian craft. Thorby is invited to the Control Room when they return on board. The Captain apologizes for not taking the time to see him, and compliments him on the speed of his learning (and almost calls him a “fraki”). There is some sarcastic narrative commentary on engineers (which was Heinlein's main profession before becoming a writer). There is some fear of what radiation might do to babies, so only old men watch the engines. Thorby says he might like to be an engineer, but the Captain tells him it isn't possible, because there are obligations to Thorby that need to be met. They discuss Thorby's birth family, through some emotionally discomfoting moments. Thorby learns Baslim was an honorary member of the People, because Baslim did them a service. The Captain asks if Thorby wants to get married. The Captain promises to help him look at the next Gathering, which puts the issue far enough into the future to stop worrying about it (the Captain is split between his desire to keep Thorby, and his duty towards Baslim to return Thorby to the Hegemony; the delay will allow the Captain to see if Thorby might be one of the People by birth).

The Losians have a jet-powered skating device which makes Thorby fear for his life from the traffic rocketing around him – but they never hit either of the humans.

They are going to “become friends” again with the Losian they traded with, because Losian customs see buying and selling as an insult (although the Losians do trade, they have customs designed to make up for the insults). The Captain's advice about customs is in the lines of, when in Rome, do as the Romans do (Heinlein largely felt that way himself on his travels, and conducted himself so, whenever possible; the Soviet Union was a major exception). The ceremony is completed, to mutual satisfaction.

Thorby runs into Jeri, to find that Mata has been swapped to another ship.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN:

Thorby and Jeri argue about Mata being transferred; Jeri blames Thorby, since Mata was chasing him, and even asked to be adopted into a different part of the family, which was seen as scandalous.

Thorby misses Mata, and goes to see Dr. Mader, since she is the only one he can really talk to openly about these issues. Dr. Mader tells Thorby she is leaving too. She approves of Mata being transferred, and lauds Grandmother for being a great leader, one who sees the issues long-term (the concept of leadership was a lifelong concern for Heinlein). Dr. Mader tries to get Thorby to understand Grandmother's decision: "...most things are right and wrong only in their backgrounds; few things are good or evil in themselves. But things that are right and wrong according to their cultures, really *are* so." (One could trace the ensuing evolution of this statement through the next thirty years of Heinlein's writings profitably).

Thorby expresses discontentment with his situation. Dr. Mader suggests it's because he's been made a slave again, this time from the good intentions of the Captain. What Thorby has done is move from individual slavery, to the slavery of a way of life, of a community. The group is free; the individual is not (in Heinlein's view then, slavery exists on a variety of levels, and is rarely recognized by those enslaved within it). Thorby, in Dr. Mader's opinion, has tasted freedom, and cannot stomach being enslaved again (no matter how plush the collar): "Freedom is a hard habit to break." She gives a final warning to Thorby: escape *before* he gets married, or he'll never escape.

## CHAPTER TWELVE:

*Sisu* operates on the frontier of a sphere of space centered on Terra (the virtues of living on the fringe are enumerated). The Phoenician methods of haggling are still used for the symbiont Finstera. Comic books and pinup girls earn an immense price in jewels (one wonders if Heinlein is making a subversive comment here...). The crew begins to get ready for the Great Gathering.

Thorby saves the ship from a slave raider, and is honored by the ship. Thorby is seated with Grandmother, and the conversation remains awkward until Thorby hits on the gambit of asking about Gatherings – whereupon Grandmother talks endlessly about them.

"Since Thorby had no talent he became an actor." (Having lived in Hollywood, Heinlein knew whereof he spoke...). He has the role of the first Captain in a play. Thorby has to be taught how to kiss.

Grandmother dies on Woolamurra (which is a jump ahead to the next chapter's events, chronologically).

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN:

The *Sisu* stops at Woolamurra. Thorby is taken ashore, because their dialect feels familiar to him, so he helps with translation. Thorby thinks about taking Dr. Mader's advice and running away on this planet. Thorby is beginning to feel more and more constricted by the group pressures, and his acting partner Loen is making the moves on him (she asks all kinds of questions about multi-dimensional geometry – a subject Thorby learns that Loen teaches). Thorby remembers Dr. Mader's warning about getting married.

Thorby decides he wants to stay on *Sisu*, at least until after the Great Gathering.

Thorby and the Captain see a Hegemony ship, and the Captain feels guilty for not doing what he promised Baslim. The Captain still hopes to prove Thorby is of the People. The Captain objects to Grandmother setting up Thorby with Loeen, and decides it might be best to tell Thorby the full options open to him, including leaving on the Hegemony ship. When they get back to the ship, however, Grandmother is dead.

The Captain goes into grieving.

Thorby suddenly feels lost no longer.

#### CHAPTER FOURTEEN:

Thorby attends the Great Gathering, with over 800 ships together. Thorby goes with his friend Fritz, and catches a young pickpocket. He forces the boy to give back their wallets, then sets the thief free. Fritz questions him, and Thorby tells of his past. When the subject of Baslim comes up, he gets Fritz to tell him what debt the People owed Baslim. Baslim saved an entire Family. They ride a roller coaster.

The *Sisu* needs to split up into new ships, although they can't afford a twin ship (they were poorer than they should have been, from having helped start a new ship, then having that ship lost).

The Captain and his wife discuss buying a new ship (including one supposedly cursed), and the possibility of the Captain being named Commodore of all the People. The Captain relates that he has learned that Thorby is not of the People. His wife does not want Thorby to leave; the Captain insists that he has no choice (and resorts to using their named roles, rather than first names, to distance himself from his wife, and remind her of his duties to Baslim).

Thorby learns how to dance. He also answers questions about Baslim.

The Free Traders are planning a memorial to Baslim.

Fritz is taking Thorby's part in the play.

The Captain takes Thorby for a monorail ride, and has Thorby repeat the message Baslim gave him for the Captain. For the first time, Thorby can understand the words of the message, since he now speaks the language of the People. Thorby realizes he must leave. The Captain gives him some money, and says that Thorby doesn't have to go. But Thorby thinks he does have to leave, so the Captain delivers him to the Hegemony ship.

#### CHAPTER FIFTEEN:

Colonel Brisby doesn't believe Thorby is Baslim's son at first, but information soon begins to flow. Thorby is shocked to find out Baslim was Colonel Richard Baslim, Captain Krausa has to leave, for his mother's funeral, for which he would be late, save for Colonel Brisby's offer of transportation. Krausa and Thorby say goodbye (and for the second time, Thorby loses an adopted father, as well as having to enter into a new culture for at least the third time).

Thorby tries to pass along a coded message, which causes Colonel Brisby to call in the psych officer. Clearly, even though two years has passed, Baslim's information is still important.

After the grilling, there is a lot of military joshing going on (after the seriousness of the Free People, Heinlein seems to have felt a new tone was important to underline the changes

Thorby now faces). The officers reminisce about Baslim, who not only taught at the academy, but was once a marshal, who requested a demotion to take active command again. They recall Baslim rescuing the *Hanseas*. Baslim was the model for the active commander, and he now represents the standard to which all commanding officers must hold themselves.

The next day, Colonel Brisby arranges to have a search done for Thorby's true identity. There is a discussion over how to submit it, given that it might cost an enormous amount of money. Colonel Brisby orders his paymaster to find some way for the search to be both unlimited and free. The paymaster figures that the only way to both take Thorby and have the search done is to enlist him – and when it's time to let him go, to “admit” they had his age wrong when they enlisted him. Furthermore, the paperwork will be set-up to keep the whole thing in runaround while the search is being done. The doctor examines him, can't tell how old he is, but then recommends against enlisting him. The doctor believes that Thorby is like the dog who was loved on even days and kicked on odd days; he is “confused and depressed.” Colonel Brisby informs the doctor that Colonel Baslim raised the boy, and that there is nothing wrong with him. The doctor reluctantly agrees, although he logs his medical objection, so that Thorby can get a medical discharge if needed.

Thorby has a disturbed night's sleep, until he dreams of Baslim calming him.

Thorby only agrees to being enlisted, when he learns that this was Baslim's service as well. He calls being enlisted “adopted” – which makes this the third such “family” he has entered.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN:

Thorby thinks of the Hegemony men as fraki. He learns some new words from them. They respect him for his time spent with the Free Traders. Thorby receives his share of the profits from his time on the *Sisu*. Like the name of the ship, the Guard were a Hydra, of many different heads. Nobody seemed to care where anyone was from. Thorby knows more freedom than he has ever had before. All he has to do is deal with the status of a recruit, a junior – which he has now done with both Baslim and the Free Traders. (Heinlein is repeating this pattern of initiation, each time into a higher level of freedom and responsibility – normally, his juveniles are organized around that kind of initiation, but only once).

Thorby is challenged by another crewman, Decibel, to prove he understands fire control. *Hydra* has computers far more advanced than *Sisu*. The fire control officer wants Thorby to stay with him. Thorby feels accepted on board at last.

Colonel Brisby calls in Thorby, to discuss Baslim. They circle each other, wary of violating secrets, but they begin to talk openly of Baslim. Baslim was a spy, although Thorby objects to that term. Brisby says that there are three types of people who show up on the frontier: traders, outlaws, and slavers. The Guard are “the policemen and the mailman” – but Baslim hated slavers with a passion. Baslim had lost an eye and a leg saving the *Hanseas* from slavers; since he could no longer serve in a military vessel, he asked to go study slavery in the Sargony, in order to find a way to stop it.

Thorby learns that someone in the Hegemony is helping the slavers and the Sargony by building them ships.

Thorby is regularly interrogated by the psych officer, in order to further Baslim's work.

Brisby receives the results of the identity search: nothing is found. Thorby will be left in Combat Control for the time being.

Decibel begins to harass Thorby for having been a slave. When Decibel calls Thorby “slave”, Thorby throws a full bowl of mashed potatoes into his face. At Thorby’s trial before the mast, he is found guilty – but so is Decibel, who receives even harsher punishment.

Brisby blames himself, for not realizing how hurt Thorby felt when he learned there was no way to identify him. Then Brisby realizes that Thorby was too young to be identified by standard means when he was lost, so they send out his footprint. Within 48 hours, they know who he is: Thor Bradley Rudbek.

Three weeks later, he is on Terra. (This is the shortest time Thorby spends with any of his family. One has to suggest that Thorby attacking Decibel, and accepting the punishment for his actions, is a sign of his maturity in that world – this is not unlike the ending to *Have Spacesuit, Will Travel*, when Kip throws the drink into Ace’s face for somewhat similar heckling.)

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN:

The chapter opens with a paean to the beauty of Earth (and her “cool green hills”, which echoes the poetry of the blind Rhysling, from Heinlein’s “The Green Hills of Earth”). Thorby has never seen Earth before, and can’t follow Captain N’Gangi’s directions to view the shadows of the pyramids (the Captain’s name is an excellent example of the way in which Heinlein promotes a future without racism, by placing an African in a position of authority). At first, Thorby had not been very welcome on the ship, as the Captain was annoyed at being ordered to wait for him, but he worked hard and read, and the Captain gave him a warm farewell. Thorby is met by an officer from Galactic Enterprises, and he is brought to a lounge full of people dressed in very expensive clothes. One woman is dressed with a great deal of skin showing, which leads Thorby to realize he will once again have to learn a new set of rules for this culture.

The people turn out to be his relatives: his uncle John Weemsby (“Uncle Jack”) and his cousin Leda (an odd choice of names for a daughter, given that the most famous Leda is the one raped by Zeus in the form of the swan; given that Thorby is named for another thunder god, it would appear Heinlein is enjoying himself with his names, as he so often did). He also meets his grandparents (his father’s parents). Thorby is confused and embarrassed, and doesn’t know what to do. The rest of the people are employees (bodyguards, more than likely, as they act as screens when the family starts to leave). Uncle Jack takes charge, even subtly removing Thorby from his grandparents, then sending Thorby and Leda out of the room so he can go back to business. Thorby and Leda go up to the observation bubble, where Thorby sees snow for the very first time. Leda offers to take him skiing, and then has to explain what skiing is. Thorby has to explain his slight accent from Jubbulpore, and how he was a beggar. Leda is at a loss for words, despite having been trained her whole life to deal with any situation as a “superior female head-hunter.” Thorby describes it as the “happiest time of my life.” Leda knows that her father left them alone so “she could get to work” (clearly, she is meant to ironically and metaphorically “rape” this thunder god; this is an excellent example of the ironic inversions Heinlein loved to slip into his juveniles, knowing full well his restrictive editor Alice Dalgliesh would likely miss the references; teachers may wish to hesitate before pointing out the mythological references...). Thorby then reveals that he was a slave. Leda refuses to believe him (we learn Thorby has been gone fifteen years, and that Leda remembers him, as she is three years older). She tells Thorby something of his parents. Thorby shows her his slave tattoo, and she begins to sympathize. Uncle Jack comes in, and we learn that Thorby is Rudbek of Rudbek of Rudbek, or Rudbek

Cubed. We also learn that Thorby's father married into the family, which explains how Uncle Jack was able to sidestep the grandparents; Thorby's mother was the one who was born a Rudbek.

Thorby enjoys his bath tremendously (having complained on the way there that he was dirty; the desire for cleanliness is one of the many marks of maturity Heinlein used). Thorby is very uncomfortable with all the servants, and having three valets, and only submits when he is unsure how to proceed (shaving with a straight razor, dressing fashionably). He meets with Uncle Jack and Leda; Leda is again barely dressed, but has among her jewels a gem Thorby thinks looks familiar from the *Sisu* (Thorby keeps referencing all of his experiences with different cultures, which shows how well he has learned from each stage of his journey). Uncle Jack takes him to "just a family dinner" – at least eighty cousins, and assorted other family members and close family friends! Thorby memorizes all their names. Thorby thinks of Leda as "taboo" since she is his first cousin, and the narrative suggests she would have been "dismayed" at the knowledge. Thorby knows his family is wealthy, but he doesn't know his own status; when he is curtsied to, he responds by placing both his palms together. Thorby manages to survive the dinner, by imitating Leda, and remembering the formal manners he learned on *Sisu*.

Thorby begins to get a little frustrated with all the social circuit, and wants to talk business with Uncle Jack, who is rarely available. Months pass with endless entertainments; Thorby is enjoying all the new experiences, but grows tired of the "fun": "A Gathering was wonderful but a working man expects to work." One of Thorby's new acquaintances informs him that he's the heir; Thorby is very confused. Thorby asks Leda about it, and affirms it. Thorby grows agitated, wanting to know why he wasn't told. Leda says it was to give him time to acclimate.

Uncle Jack has a meeting with Thorby. When Thorby tries to find out what owning everything is, his uncle waffles, and offers him a "megabuck" to go spend. His uncle tries to get Jack to sign some papers, but Thorby hesitates, due to his Grandmother's training on *Sisu*. Uncle Jack puts the papers away, and explains that Thorby's parents left him in charge when they went off on vacation. He tells Thorby that his parents have to be declared legally dead, and Thorby has to appoint him to be his business manager. Since Thorby is over the age of eighteen, if he signs the papers, they won't have to wait for his parents to be declared dead. Uncle Jack tries to get Thorby to sign the papers again; Thorby again insists on reading them. Uncle Jack gives him the papers, and Thorby falls asleep without really understand them (they seem to be papers giving his uncle full control of the Rudbek fortune). As he falls asleep, he remembers to ask to see the papers his parents supposedly signed. He dreams of Grandmother's warnings to never sign anything he doesn't understand.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN:

Uncle Jack meets him at breakfast, and asks if he read the papers and understood them. Uncle Jack says he was "irritated" when Thorby wouldn't sign, but understands now, and asks that Thorby sign the papers now. Thorby wanted to tell his uncle where he hid the papers, but his uncle is busy talking about all of Thorby's personal possessions (which include Pitcairn Island, where Christian Fletcher and the survivors of the mutiny on the *Bounty* settled).

He offers Thorby his own car, which used to belong to Thorby's mother, as well as Leda's company (in other words, Thorby is being brushed off again). When Thorby insists that it is time to settle down to work, perhaps as a lawyer, his uncle suggests going to Harvard and

law school (again, trying to find ways to keep Thorby busy). Thorby again asks to learn something of the business before that. Uncle Jack offers to set him up with an office, then returns to the matter of the legal papers. Thorby admits hiding them, then his uncle asks him to go get them. Thorby wants to finish his breakfast. When his uncle asks where they are so he can go get them himself, Thorby again refuses to sign the papers. Thorby then asks to see the papers his parents supposedly signed. Uncle Jack says they're in a vault, and goes off in a huff. Thorby feels bad, but he doesn't understand what the rush is.

Leda takes Thorby to the family business, where he is given a magnificent office and secretary. Thorby gets drunk on the power; he now knows exactly what his status is, and he gets whatever he asks for. But he still isn't in the business. He gets snowed under by all the reading and viewing materials he asks for, and actually has the office next to his refitted as a library. He begins to question wanting to be a tycoon. Thorby begins to dream of his father Baslim, and thinks his father disapproves of him. Thorby starts really investigating, to find out what he actually owns. The distinction between owning something, and controlling it, becomes apparent.

What truly begins to disturb him is the realization that his family may be building slave ships. One afternoon, as he begins to think that there is no way he will ever understand this labyrinth of ownership (and there are suggestions that he is being deliberately confused by at least one "summary"), he decides to return a call to his grandparents. He is again inundated with the social responsibilities, but finally gets a chance for a private conversation. His grandfather is a historian. His father married into the Rudbeks, and took on the family name of Rudbek. Thorby learns that his parents were lost when his father was trying to discover as much as possible about the Rudbek empire. Thorby figures out that Leda is a distant enough relative to be marriageable ("in the other moiety"), and that his "uncle" really isn't his uncle at all. His Uncle Jack kept giving his grandparents money (and increased it), after their son died.

Thorby is trying to understand how he got from where his parents were supposedly going, to Jubblepore, because it was so far apart. He avoids arguing with his grandfather over slavery, out of respect. He does get into an argument over his grandparent's pacifist beliefs (we are only a couple of years away from Heinlein writing *Starship Troopers*, after all). Thorby is seriously considering joining the Guard, his father Baslim's outfit, and leaves to go investigate the possibility.

But first, he has to go find the papers his parents signed, to compare them with the ones his uncle wants him to sign, and then sign them so he takes care of that responsibility. He finds out he has been denied the original papers, and that nothing has been done to declare his parents dead. The judge upbraids him for not signing the papers his uncle wants signed. Thorby absolutely refuses to sign the papers.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN:

Thorby is convinced they are out to deny him the truth. Now, instead of swamping him with information, they stall his every request. After his secretary grows flustered, he tells her to go rest, and leave him alone. In this quiet time, Thorby begins to finally straighten everything out: 1) because he wouldn't sign, he's been put in "Coventry" (another reference to an earlier Heinlein story); 2) his Uncle Jack will continue to be in charge until his parents are declared to be legally dead; 3) that process is being stopped until he signs the papers; 4) he can't get the papers his parents signed; 5) his uncle controls everything Thorby owns; 6) his uncle is doing this so he can stay in charge (money isn't the issue: power is).

Thorby realizes that the issue was status, and that Thorby was not qualified to be the boss. He thinks seriously about signing the papers, but resents being pushed around. This is the heart of the novel: “He had been pushed around – and his strongest reflex was resistance to any authority he had not consented to; it had been burned into his soul with whips.” This is the theme of the novel, and one of Heinlein’s strongest beliefs. (People sometimes wonder how a libertarian like Heinlein could advocate the military, but they miss this distinction: if you choose to be under someone’s authority, it’s fine, because you *chose* it.) Thorby decides to stay, in order to be sure Rudbek isn’t involved in slavery (Baslim would have wanted that). He remembers the story of Gulliver, and sees himself tied down by his own Lilliputians. He begins to construct the connections between slavers, the People, the Nine Worlds, and Rudbek.

He decides to find out if his theories are correct.

## CHAPTER TWENTY:

Thorby has dinner with Leda. She wants to know what’s bothering him (he tells her it’s because he realizes he’s not meant to be a businessman, but it’s really because he wonders what he will do if it turns out Rudbek is involved with slavery). He wants a confidante, and suddenly asks Leda how much she tells her father of their conversations. She blushes, and suggests a walk together. She takes him to a place where there are no listening devices. She asks Thorby to trust her. He tells her everything; she confesses that her father has been throwing her at him (one of the typical signs of the Heinlein juvenile males is that they don’t know when girls like them; this is not unusual for young men, for those of you who have never been one...). Leda can’t understand why her father hasn’t let him see the papers his parents supposedly signed, until she asks about his shares of Rudbek. Thorby doesn’t know what those are. Leda says this is the reason he can’t see the papers; her father doesn’t want him to be able to vote his own shares. Leda says her father is ok, but she doesn’t love him; she will put Rudbek first, before her father, which makes Thorby more important. She tells him that the young man who told him about being the heir was fired.

Leda wants to know what Thorby wants to do. He says he really doesn’t want to be rich, that he just wants to go join the guard, but he decides to stay and fight. She suggests getting a good lawyer. They walk back into the wired area to avoid suspicions. Later, she suggests going skiing and gives him the name of a lawyer on their way to go ski: James J. Garsch. She warns him not to go back in the house and call, or he might wake up someplace behind lock and key. Leda says she is willing to fight her father, since he’s playing dirty. She tells him to go to one of his houses, the one in New Washington where Garsch practices. Leda says they have to get away from the guards, which Thorby wasn’t aware of previously.

They go sightseeing in New Washington, where they see the Lincoln Memorial Replica (Heinlein uses the idea of duplicating national memorials elsewhere as well). Lincoln reminds Thorby of Baslim; Leda says Lincoln founded America (this is a sad, comic moment). Thorby values him even more highly for freeing the slaves. Leda arranges to ditch the guards at the theater with an elaborate ruse.

Thorby gets to see Garsch, and tells him his story. Thorby tells Garsch he just wants back into the Guard; Garsch tells him not to be ridiculous, that “a man doesn’t quit his job.” (Thorby just doesn’t realize this yet, but Garsch is another in the series of mentors who train him to responsibility and adulthood). Garsch lays out a plan of action, beginning with Thorby getting his parents declared dead. Garsch tells Thorby his life may be in danger. Garsch tells Thorby



where to meet, at the Diplomatic Club. Garsch agrees to take the case. Thorby leaves, then changes his destination, and ducks into the Guard Headquarters.

#### CHAPTER TWENTY ONE:

He gives the receptionist the name “Thorby Baslim, Exotic Corps.” He meets Wing Marshal Smith. Thorby offers Baslim’s last report, and to join the X Corps. He explains the legal matters he must resolve. Smith tells him that slavery won’t ever be eradicated; it must be fought constantly. Smith tells him he must deal with being Rudbek of Rudbek first. Thorby wants to know if Rudbek is involved in slavery. Smith tells Thorby to show him what he has learned. Thorby says he is almost certain Rudbek is involved in everything but the slave trade itself. Smith says that Rudbek would claim that they were not responsible for what slavers did with the ships they sold them (the analogy of the man selling the knife a husband kills his wife with: is he morally responsible for the murder?). Thorby offers to go investigate, as Rudbek of Rudbek.

Leda is worried and upset about how long it took. Thorby tells Leda of his suspicions about Rudbek’s involvement with slavery, and that he was lashed.

Garsch tells Thorby he’s going to file for two motions: to get his parents declared dead, and to get him his stocks. Garsch also says it’s going to be fun – and expensive.

#### CHAPTER TWENTY TWO:

Thorby dreams that his uncle and the judge whip him.

Thorby is on the run; when he wakes up, he’s in South America.

Thorby recalls how he escaped, through Leda’s help.

He returns to Rudbek, meeting the press and Garsch. They go to court, where Garsch has brought so much press, and so many dignitaries, that the judge (who is crooked) can’t rule any way other than legally. Thorby gets his parents declared legally dead; he gets his shares.

Garsch says that the fight has just begun. Thorby never sees the papers his parents signed, but he learns that if he had signed the papers, he never would have been able to be free of their restrictions (without Uncle Jack agreeing to revoke the power of attorney). The wills are working through the courts. Uncle Jack has to leave Thorby’s home of Rudbek, since it belongs to him personally. Thorby moves Garsch into his uncle’s old quarters there. Almost a hundred suits are in play against the wills. His grandparents try to have him made their ward, as they believe him to be insane (due to the medical report in the Guards that listed him as “emotionally unstable.”). Thorby was found legally sane.

Thorby is going broke, due to all the expenses, and the refusal to pay him his royalties. Thorby eventually gets the right to vote his parents’ stock, and calls for a new election of officers for Rudbek.

Leda shows up at the meeting, to vote her own shares, which gives Thorby control of the company. Thorby fires his uncle and the judge.

#### CHAPTER TWENTY THREE:

Two years later, Thorby is fully in charge of Rudbek, and on a first name basis with Wing Marshal Smith. Thorby thinks he’s found a way to make slavery so expensive, it will

cease to be profitable. He has rehired the engineer his Uncle Jack had fired, Joel de la Croix. Joel wants to develop a defense against the paralysis beam slavers use to take a ship. Thorby calls it Project Porcupine. Thorby insists on a way to make it profitable.

Smith threatens to enlist Thorby, then send him right back to run Rudbek.

Thorby thinks about marrying Leda.

Thorby has done everything he could to fight slavery. In tough moments, he asks himself, “What would Pop do?”

Thorby wishes he could find ten men to take over Rudbek. Garsch enters, and ridicules the idea – although he has been helping Thorby as much as possible.

At the end, Thorby has accepted full responsibility for Rudbek, and won’t run off. Baslim appears, in his thoughts, and gives full approval for all that Thorby is trying to do.

### **Chapter Tests/Quizzes:**

Personally, I do not care for many published textbook tests/quizzes, as I often find them to not fit what we have actually discussed in class, or what the students have themselves found in the text. I therefore tend to make up my own quizzes and tests, and I also rely heavily on questions about relationships, more than I do questions about specific details of the books. I teach very poor readers, and I am far more concerned that they understand what is happening between the characters, than I am in what color shirt a particular character is wearing, or some other pithy little detail that teachers dealing with very good readers might ask to make sure that their students have read. I check to make sure they’ve read by insisting that they answer the following kinds of questions using specific details (and by always asking a question about the end of the chapter), but I allow them to choose the details themselves to fit the question. I train them to answer questions this way by giving them several sample questions, then answering them on the board, using their input to craft a model response.

I hope that the following questions are useful for quizzes and tests, as well as for classroom discussion. Again, I expect students to use specific details from the novel to answer these questions. If the extra credit questions seem appropriate for your class, you can add them to the quizzes, or use them as extra credit homework assignments.

### **CHAPTER ONE:**

1. How is Baslim able to buy Thorby?
2. How does Thorby react to being a slave?
3. How does Thorby treat Baslim at first?
4. How does Baslim treat Thorby?
5. Why does Baslim leave the door unlocked?

## CHAPTER TWO:

1. Why does Baslim use hypnosis on Thorby? What does he hope to accomplish through hypnosis?
2. Why does Baslim disapprove of Thorby stealing? What deal does he make with Thorby?

## CHAPTER THREE:

1. What secrets does Thorby find out about Baslim?
2. How does Baslim educate Thorby?
3. Why does Baslim free Thorby?

## CHAPTER FOUR:

1. How does Thorby help Baslim?
2. What happens to Baslim?

## CHAPTER FIVE:

1. Discuss at least two different ways that Thorby avoids being captured.

## CHAPTER SIX:

1. Why does Krausa choose to help Thorby?
2. How does Thorby finally escape?

## CHAPTER SEVEN:

1. How is Thorby treated by the people on the ship?
2. How does Dr. Mader treat him?
3. Why do the People adopt Thorby?

## CHAPTER EIGHT:

1. What new lessons must Thorby learn?
2. How does Dr. Mader help Thorby?

#### CHAPTER NINE:

1. What new responsibilities does Thorby acquire? What roadblocks exist for him to succeed in these new responsibilities?
2. What trick does Jeri play on Thorby? How does this help Thorby?

#### CHAPTER TEN:

1. Describe Thorby's experiences with the Losians.
2. What unpleasant news awaits him when he returns to the ship?

#### CHAPTER ELEVEN:

1. Why was Mata traded to another ship?
2. Why is Thorby unhappy, according to Dr. Mader?
3. What advice does Dr. Mader give Thorby?

#### CHAPTER TWELVE:

1. How does trading work with the Finstera?
2. How does Thorby help the ship?
3. Why is Thorby in a play?

#### CHAPTER THIRTEEN:

1. What does Thorby think about doing on Woolamurra? Why doesn't he?
2. What happens to Grandmother?

#### CHAPTER FOURTEEN:

1. What happens at the Great Gathering?
2. What do they learn about Thorby?
3. What debt did the People owe Baslim?
4. Where does Captain Krausa take Thorby? Why?

#### CHAPTER FIFTEEN:

1. What do we learn about Baslim?
2. Describe the trickery the officers have to go through to get Thorby on board.
3. Why does Thorby agree to go along with this plan?

#### CHAPTER SIXTEEN:

1. Describe the troubles Thorby has with Decibel.
2. What does Thorby learn about slavery?
3. How do they finally figure out who Thorby is?

#### CHAPTER SEVENTEEN:

1. Describe Thorby's "new" family.
2. Describe Leda.
3. Describe Uncle Jack.
4. What is Leda surprised to learn about Thorby?
5. Describe Thorby's new life with the Rudbeks.
6. Why does Uncle Jack get annoyed with Thorby? What does he want Thorby to do? Why does Thorby refuse?

#### CHAPTER EIGHTEEN:

1. Describe the conflict between Uncle Jack and Thorby.
2. Describe the argument Thorby has with his grandparents.
3. What does Thorby decide he wants to do with his life? What does he need to do first?

#### CHAPTER NINETEEN:

1. What does Thorby finally realize about the conflict with his Uncle Jack?
2. What does Thorby realize about Rudbek and slavery?

CHAPTER TWENTY:

1. How does Leda help Thorby?
2. Why does Leda help Thorby?
3. How does Thorby manage to see Garsch?

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE:

1. Why does Thorby go to the Guard Headquarters? What happens there?
2. Describe Garsch's plans.

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO:

1. Why is Thorby on the run?
2. What successes does Garsch have?
3. How does Leda help Thorby? Why does she help him?

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE:

1. Why can't Thorby join the Guard?
2. What does he hope to do against slavery? How?
3. What does Thorby feel Baslim would tell him at the end of the novel?

**Extra Credit Questions:**

CHAPTER ONE:

1. Why name the dictator "Sargon"?

CHAPTER TWO: (none)

CHAPTER THREE:

1. Who are the "Romany" in our world's history?
2. Who was Dr. Samuel Renshaw? What did he research?

CHAPTER FOUR: (none)

CHAPTER FIVE:

1. What is a honky-tonk?

CHAPTER SIX: (none)

CHAPTER SEVEN:

1. Who was Dr. Margaret Mead? Why would Heinlein create a character similar to her in Dr. Margaret Mader?

CHAPTER EIGHT:

1. What does *noblesse oblige* mean? Why did Dr. Margaret Mader use that concept with Thorby?
2. Explain the sociological terms Dr. Mader uses: sept; phratry; exogamy; moiety; endogamy; patrilocal; matriarchy.

CHAPTER NINE: none.

CHAPTER TEN: none.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: none.

CHAPTER TWELVE: none.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: none.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN:

1. Go through the list of ships' names in the beginning of this chapter (and elsewhere in this chapter), and explain why you would christen ships with those names.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: none.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: none.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: none.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN:

1. What is special about Pitcairn Island?

CHAPTER NINETEEN: none.

CHAPTER TWENTY: none.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE: none.

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO: none.

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE: none.

**Vocabulary Words** (these are all words I've had students ask me about):

p. 5: feral; wheedle; flank

p. 6: palanquins; idlers; vendors; porter; livery; dopplering; docile; din; dandy; varmint

p. 8: chattel; alms

p. 20: doss; grog; doxies; li (griva is a coined word for some kind of drug); grafters

p. 24: "struck dumb" (this phrase has little meaning for today's students)

p. 32: "bill of lading"

p. 45: speleologist

p. 47: retch

p. 58: tucker

p. 61: yammer

p. 62: succor; admonish; serene

p. 65: impregnable

p. 66: stevedore

p. 67: rhetoric

p. 76: moiety; purdah

p. 79: mendicant

p. 87: oafs

p. 91/92: see extra credit #2, Ch. 8

p. 108: tariff

p. 213: pedantic

p. 241: revocable

### **Essay Questions and Projects:**

1. Heinlein obviously has some very strong opinions about slavery and freedom (his boyhood church had been very active in the abolitionist movement before the Civil War). Compare and contrast his attitudes towards slavery with some other historical figure or period. You might choose the ancient Greeks and/or Romans, the colonial powers of Spain and Portugal during the renaissance, the American South before the Civil War, the abolitionists (such as William Lloyd Garrison or Frederick Douglass), or some other.

2. Compare and contrast the first six chapters of *Citizen of the Galaxy* with one of the autobiographies of Frederick Douglass. Pay close attention to the arguments about the value of reading in ending slavery, as well as the nature of slavery itself, as it impacts the human mind. You might close by considering why Heinlein felt it necessary, in the middle of the twentieth



century, almost a hundred years after slavery was abolished in the US, to take up the issue of slavery once again. Is the value of reading still the same in the fifties as it was for Douglass a century before? Is it still the same today?

3. Using Heinlein's description of the word "fraki", write an analysis of the ways in which insult words help to create a group's sense of its own identity and superiority. Think of the ways in which language allows us to define ourselves, and the words we use to describe others allows us to separate ourselves, uplift ourselves, and dominate others.

4. Consider Heinlein's discussion of the uses of language, through the Margaret Mader character. Compare and contrast that, with the way you and your friends use language to set yourself apart from your parents and teachers; think of the kind of slang that you use, the music you listen to, the movies you watch, and consider the ways in which you and your friends and peer group have created an identity separate from that of those older than you. Now, think about the way in which Thorby moves into this secret society, and compare that with the ways that you and your friends produce a group identity, and how you allow some people in, and exclude others.

5. The Free Traders have a very complex culture, with many customs and traditions. One of the purposes of these traditions is that "When things grow difficult you hide behind a pattern." Compare and contrast the use and purpose of this safety valve, with the patterns that dominate some group to which you belong: a class, your family, some organization, a peer group. Which patterns do you see running that group? How do those patterns allow the group to stay together? How do those patterns allow an individual a safe escape when things grow tense? You might consider these words from Dr. Mader as well: "Customs tell a man who he is, where he belongs, what he must do. Better illogical customs than none; men cannot live together without them... 'justice' is a search for workable customs."

6. Research the issue of slavery today, and consider this problem: why does slavery persist in a high-tech society such as we live in today? Use Heinlein's speculations on the nature of slavery as a starting point, and write an analysis of the reasons for slavery's continuation. Consider the role technology plays in actually allowing slavery to thrive (the cotton gin, for example, and the ways in which that rescued slavery from a slow and well-deserved decline).