

Book Lesson – **Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?** – Philip K. Dick

Chapter 1 and 2

1. Who are the two characters we are introduced to first?

The two characters we are introduced to first are Rick and Iran Deckard, a married couple who seem to be arguing a lot.

2. The couple keeps “setting their Penfield”. What do you think a Penfield does?

A Penfield seems to be a machine which is capable of changing your mood at any time. You can “set your Penfield” for anything like “being in the mood to watch TV” or “wanting to eat”. Very interesting device, in my opinion.

3. Most animals on Earth have died. Why did the owls die first?

Nobody knows why the owls died first but the radioactive cloud which settled on the planet killed all birds first because they flew around it before it settled on the ground as well.

4. Who started W.W.T (World War Terminus)?

Nobody remembers how the war came about or who even started it. People don't even remember who won.

5. The government has slogans such as “Emigrate or Degenerate”. What are the two main reasons people emigrated?

The two main reasons were that if you stayed and chose not to emigrate you would be considered biologically unacceptable. You'd be contaminated by the radioactive dust. Also, if you emigrated, you'd get a free robot.

6. Why were the Androids called “mobile donkeys”?

They were called mobile donkeys because they were a major incentive to get people to emigrate to Mars. Each family was offered one for free, provided they emigrated.

7. The book introduces John Isidore. Who is he and does John live with anybody?

John Isidore is “special” man who refused to emigrate and who lives alone.

8. John connects himself with an empathy box. What is an empathy box?

An empathy box is a simulation machine which puts people into that shoes of a man named Wilbur Mercer and, together, climb up a hill. It's a quasi-religious experience.

Chapter 3 and 4

1. What is the name of the animal catalogue Rick likes to look at?

The animal catalogue is called Sidney's Animal Catalogue.

2. What's the name of the Police inspector? What did he tell Rick?

The Police Inspector's name is Harry Bryant and he told Rick that another police officer (Dave Holden) was in the Hospital with a laser track through his spine.

3. There are new Androids coming out that have the Nexus-6 brain. Why do you think the police has been protesting these Androids?

The police have been protesting these Androids because police have to deal with escaped Androids and these are faster and smarter than the old ones, making them more difficult and more dangerous to catch.

4. What is something that humans have that Androids don't?

There are two main things that Androids don't have, one of them is the feeling of empathy and the other is the ability to link with the empathy box.

5. Why is that important?

It's important because it is by knowing this that police officers can identify and kill escaped androids. The police conduct Voigt-Kampff tests to see whether they have empathy or not.

6. Why are schizophrenics and mentally ill patients a problem for the Voigt-Kampff scale?

Because schizophrenics and some other mental patients can't experience in the same way, they could theoretically fail the Voigt-Kampff test, be deemed Androids and killed. That would be bad.

7. Why does Rick need to go to Seattle first? What is he doing there and why?

Rick has to perform the Voigt-Kampff test to a group of randomly selected people with an unknown number of Androids also in the mix. This is to see if Rick can still pick out the Androids even with their new Nexus-6 brain or if they are undetectable.

8. Why are Rachel Rosen and her uncle scared of Rick?

Rick is going to administer the test on their new androids. If Rick fails to assess which ones are androids and which ones are human, the Rosen Corporation won't be able to release them to market. That would be very bad for business.

9. What does the Voigt-Kampff test assess?

The Voigt-Kampff assesses the ability someone has to feel empathy. It looks at the body's natural and uncontrollable reactions to see if the subject feels empathy or not.

Chapter 5 and 6

1. What does the Voigt-Kampff test focus on?

The Voigt-Kampff test focuses on the bodily reactions that the subject experiences when asked the questions. The answers aren't important, what's important is how your body reacts. The questions focus on animals, mostly.

2. What happens when Rick tests Rachel?

When Rachel is given the test, she tests the same way an android would, implying she is an Android.

3. Why did the Rosens offer Rick an owl?

They want to bribe him. They basically want him to work for them and say that the test occurred and functioned normally.

4. Why did Rick decide to ask Rachel an extra question?

Rick was in a pretty rough spot. He seemed ready to accept his failure, take the bribe (the owl) and walk away, but Rachel kept referring to the owl as an "it". That was a red flag. There are so few animals in the world, they are precious. That's what tipped him off and made him decide to ask an extra question.

5. Is the owl they tried to bribe him with, real?

No, it isn't. It's an artificial owl.

6. What is Kipple?

Kipple is what John Isidore calls the dirt, rubbish and disorganization of his apartment.

7. We are introduced to a new girl. What her name? Is she nice? Why?

First, she says her name is Rachel Rosen, then she says Pris Stratton. She doesn't seem like the friendliest girl in the world. She seems a little impolite and implies Isidore is dumb or "special".

Chapter 7 and 8

1. Who does John Isidore work for and what does he do?

John works for Mr. Sloan and he is a driver for a prosthetic animal repair business called Van Ness Animal Hospital.

2. His first job of the day is to pick up a malfunctioning cat. Why did John say the cat looks real?

John thought it looked real because he was making noises like any animal would if it were dying. It panted and groaned erratically.

3. What did John Isidore do to fix it? Did it work?

John assumed its ten-year battery was dying so he thought he could recharge it on the way to the shop. He decided to look for the terminal inside the cat's mouth but just made things worse.

4. What did Isidore convince the cat's owner to do?

Turns out the cat was real, and it died on the way to the hospital. Isidore had to call the owner to tell her but she was so panicked that he was able to convince her to get an electrical replacement that looks just like the original. What turned out to be a real cat ended up being replaced with a fake one.

5. Why did Rachel Rosen offer Rick her help?

Rachel said that Rick would find it impossible to catch androids with the new Nexus-6 brains. She suggests coming with him to help Rick catch them.

6. Rick is sent to find an Android called Polokov. How did Rick "retire" Polokov?

Rick and an agent from the Soviet police get in the car, but Rick senses something is wrong and asks the agent if he is really the Android called Polokov. The Android admits he is, they fight, and Rick "retires" him.

7. What's Rick's next target?

Rick's next target is Luba Luft, a famous opera singer, who is really an android.

8. What is an Android "poop sheet"?

An Android "poop sheet" is a sheet of plastic with all the information a bounty hunter needs to catch an escaped Android such as last known location, name and job.

Chapter 9 and 10

1. What's Luba Luft's job? Is she any good?

Luba Luft is an opera singer. According to Rick she sounds like one of the best, although he finds it ironic that because even though she is a singer and is meant to show emotion, as an android she has none.

2. Does Luba have an accent? Does she have any difficulties speaking English?

Luba doesn't have an accent and her English is perfect, except when Rick tries to conduct the test, then she reveals she has trouble with the language.

3. Has Rick taken the Voigt-Kampff test? Is he an Android?

Luba asks him that question and Rick says he has done the test and is not an Android.

4. What do you think of Luba's answers to Rick's questions?

This is up to the student, but as for me I find them quite suspicious.

5. Luba Luft calls the police. Does the police officer know Rick? Why?

The officer doesn't know Rick or his superior. He says he has never heard of either of them. According to the officer there isn't anybody in the department with that name.

6. Why is the police officer going to a different police station?

The officer said that Rick's police station is the old one, it hasn't been in operation for years. It's disintegrating. He is heading to the current police station.

7. The officer takes Rick to the new station. What crimes is he accused of?

Rick is accused of impersonating an officer in order to gain access to a woman's dressing room and possible homicide, but Rick claims it's an Android.

8. An officer named Garland takes over the case. What does he find in Rick's briefcase?

Officer Garland finds Rick's android targets and he sees that Rick's next target is him (officer Garland).

9. Rick meets Phil Resch. What is his job?

He is a bounty hunter, just like Rick, but they have never met.

Chapter 11 and 12

1. Inspector Garland was left alone with Rick. What does he plan to do? Why?

His first instinct seems to be to kill Rick but it's difficult because Phil supposedly doesn't know they are androids and might freak out if Rick's dead.

2. Do you think Phil Resch is an Android?

Depends on the student. I don't think is an Android but inspector Garland (who is an Android), seems to think he is.

3. What happened when Phil Resch returned?

When Phil returned, inspector Garland pointed his gun at Phil and tried to kill him, but as Phil had suspected he was an Android he ducked in time and shot the inspector.

4. How did Rick and Resch escape the building?

Rick and Phil propped the dead inspector up on the desk, as if he was still alive and used the intercom to tell his secretary that he is not to be bothered. Afterwards he handcuffed himself to Rick and walked out as if he was his prisoner. Nobody suspected a thing.

5. Where did they find Luba Luft? How did they get her?

They first went to look for her at the Opera house (where she works), but an employee told them that she was at a museum/art gallery. They found her there. They took her to an elevator where she told Phil was an Android and out of anger, he shot her.

6. After killing Luba Luft, Rick Deckard wanted to quit. Why?

Rick felt that killing Luba was wrong, she didn't seem like a threat, she was a singer. He soon got over it though.

7. Rick gave Phil the Android test. Did he pass or fail? Was it what Rick had expected?

Phil passed meaning he is not an Android. Rick had expected him to be an Android.

Chapter 13 and 14

1. What had Isidore kept in the Bank of America? Why is he getting it?

Isidore had kept a bottle of wine in a safe deposit box in the Bank of America. He wants to surprise Pris with a nice meal.

2. What does Pris mean by this?

a. Isidore: “What’s a bounty hunter?”

b. Pris: “That’s right. You people aren’t supposed to know.”

She means that humans aren’t supposed to know that Androids are escaping the colonies on Mars and going to earth and that they are being hunted by the police’s bounty hunters.

3. Pris knows other Androids from Mars. What was Roy Baty and Irmagad’s job on Mars?

Pris’ friends ran a pharmacy on Mars, Roy was a pharmacist and Irmagad handled the beauty aids, the creams and ointments.

4. Is life on Mars nice? Why?

Life on Mars isn’t great. It’s lonely and boring and, according to Pris, feels old.

5. Why does Pris call Isidore a chicken head?

She calls him a chicken head because he is “special” maybe because of the radiation, his brain doesn’t work as well as normal people’s brain.

6. What defense does Roy set up in the apartment?

He set up some motion cameras and he attached a “Penfield” to it, so if someone comes in, they’ll be sent into a complete panic by the “Penfield” unit.

7. What do you think the Androids did to escape Mars?

The book doesn’t say but we’re to assume that they killed some people and stole their ship to come to Earth.

Chapter 15 and 16

1. The Androids had a vote on whether to stay at Isidore’s house or leave. What did they decide?

The decided to stay in Isidore’s house and fight.

2. What animal did Rick buy? Why? Was it cheap?

He bought a goat. He was still feeling depressed after the Luba Luft incident and thought it would make him feel better. Also, the salesman told him goats were one of the very best animals to have. It was very expensive.

3. Iran asked Rick to fuse with Mercer. Why did Iran tell Rick it was immoral not to fuse after getting the goat?

When you “fuse with Mercer” you create a spiritual link between you and everybody else fused at the same time. Rick was happy to get the goat and so it was his duty to “fuse” and share the happiness with everybody else.

4. Why did Inspector Bryant call Rick?

He called to tell Rick the address the Androids are at. Also, to tell him that he needs to go “retire” them ASAP.

5. Rick decides to fuse with Mercer. What did Mercer tell him?

Basically, Mercer told him that we all go through some contradictions in life, where we need to do things that don't necessarily agree with use. Mercer tells him he is not alone in suffering for his beliefs but that he must go through with his job anyway.

6. Why did Rick call Rachel?

He called her because supposedly she can help "retire" the Androids, although the more they talked to each other, the more it seemed that Rick has feeling for her and just wants to see her.

7. Why did the Rosen corporation want Rachel to help Rick?

The Rosen Corporation wanted Rachel to observe Rick and see how he catches Androids so it could modify its current models and make them better, so they are harder to catch next time.

8. Why did Rachel spend the night with Rick?

She said she loves him, that could be the reason.

Chapter 17 and 18

1. What's the Life expectancy of an Android?

It's about 4 years because scientists have never been able to figure out how to replicate cell replacement.

2. The next morning Rachel admits that no bounty hunter has been able to continue after being with her. What does she mean?

She means that it is her job to entice bounty hunters and after having spent the night with her, bounty hunters usually quit because they can't bear to continue killing Androids. All of them except Phi Resch.

3. The radio said: "ah jes wan ta tell ya, folks, that ahm sitten hih with my pal Bustuh, an we're tawkin en havin a real mighty fine time, waitin expectantly as we ah with each tick uh the clock foh what ah understan is the most important announcement of ..." Why did the author write it like that?

The author wrote it like that to simulate a southern American accent.

4. Do the Androids treat Isidore well? Is he unhappy?

The Androids treat Isidore like a work mule and just boss him around all the time, but Isidore doesn't mind, he just likes having company.

5. What did Isidore find while he was carrying the TV? What did the Androids do to it?

Isidore found a spider. When he showed it to the Androids, they decided to cut its legs off.

6. What was the big announcement on TV?

The big announcement was that Buster friendly said that Mercer and the empathy box which humans fuse to is a hoax. It was filmed in a cheap Hollywood studio and therefore Buster says that humans are being swindled.

7. Is Buster a human or an Android?

Buster is an Android.

8. Why was Isidore so preoccupied with the spider? Did the Androids feel the same way?

Isidore felt bad for the spider because the androids were torturing it. The androids could care less about the spider.

Chapter 19 and 20

1. Roy's alarm rings. Who is coming to the apartment?

Rick Deckard is coming and he's a man on a mission!

2. Who does Rick meet outside of the apartment? What did he ask him?

Rick meets Isidore outside of the apartment, he asks him whether he'll take him up the apartment where the Androids are hiding. Isidore says he won't.

3. After talking to Isidore, Rick meets someone in the apartment. Who was it?

Rick met Mercer in the apartment who told him that one of the Androids (Pris) was behind him.

4. Why was the first Andy the difficult one? How did Rick "retire" it?

The first one was difficult because it was Pris, the android that looks exactly like Rachel Rosen. At first, he thought it was actually Rachel, but something was off about her so he "retired" her and noticed she was carrying a weapon. She had intended to kill him.

5. Were the other two Andys hard to "retire"? How many did he end up getting in one day?

Not really, he was able to get them pretty easily. He ended up getting 6 andys in one day. Almost a record.

6. What happened to Rick's goat? Why?

Rachel Rosen had come and pushed Rick's goat off the roof. She might have wanted revenge for what Rick had done.

Chapter 21 and 22

1. What did Rick do after killing the Andys?

Rick flew away from S. Francisco in his hovercar and tried calling Dave Holden about the Andys he'd retired. Dave didn't answer.

2. While Rick was climbing the hill, someone threw a rock. Who threw the rock at Rick?

We don't know, the book doesn't say.

3. In your opinion, who are the good guys and who are the bad guys in the story? Why?

It's hard to say, on the one hand, the androids are just looking for freedom, but on the other hand, Rick is just following the rules and it's his job to catch them. In the end I think the humans are the bad guys because they want to simulate human intelligence into a robotic servant which is just cruel.

4. What animal did Rick find? What was wrong with it?

Rick found a toad. Toads were supposedly extinct, and Rick was super excited. It ended up being an artificial toad.