

Media Kit - *Prelude to a Change of Mind: The First Book in The Lands of Nod*

Excerpts

“Not to change the subject,” Meg put in, “but could we talk about these things that happened to me?”

“Try not to think of these as things that have happened to you,” Ekaterina offered. “Rather, think of them as the first trials of an interesting new ability.”

“What kind of ability only happens when you’re too weak to control it?” Meg retorted. Jack mugged and grinned at her.

“Those are some of the very best,” he said, giving her one of his exaggerated winks.

“Jackanapes! Enough!” Ekaterina admonished. Then, turning to Meg, she spoke with reassurance, “Think of the first sounds one produces on an unfamiliar musical instrument. But after a little practice, a little discipline, the zoot horn croons as well as belches and the violin’s tonalities are made sweet. Perhaps you will find it evolves in a similar fashion.”

“Cousin, excellent!” Jack shouted. “You made a poem!”

“Contain yourself,” Ekaterina shot back. “We are having a discussion.”

“I don’t see how you can call it an ability,” Meg resisted. “I mean, it hasn’t happened because I wanted it to. I can’t make it happen.”

“Are you certain you cannot?” Ekaterina asked. “Events with the alternate Jackanapes occurred when your physical control was weakened by sickness, but your visualization of icandy came at a moment of deepest relaxation. A comfortable pallet and your imagination can duplicate the caresses of the Thrm.”

“But say, Cuz, ah, Ekaterina,” said Jack, “You know that is real choice, ‘...the zoot horn croons as well as belches and the violin’s tonalities are made sweet.’ You’re a genius.”

“Jackanapes, please let it go for now.”

“All right,” he responded. “But I might pop back home a little later and share it with everybody. I might even have to spin out a few variations. The Ekaterina variations. Variations on a poem by Ekaterina, elder of the Nondifferential Clan.”

Her voice carried the full measure of her exasperation.

“Would you please join us in our conversation for a few minutes? I am not at this instant prepared to discuss an accusation of poetry.”

He leaned back and looked away from her, but muttered, “Crooning zoot horn belches. Wow.”

Meg stared at her hands, her whole face trying to concentrate between her eyebrows. She

tapped her foot in a thoughtless gesture. In a moment she lifted her head and spoke to the small, brown woman before her.

“What does it mean that I have this ‘ability?’”

“How the heck should we know?” Jack dismissed her question. “You’re the only one that’s ever been.”

“Stay calm, dear,” Ekaterina advised her. “And let one of us know immediately if it ever happens again.”

“But,” Meg objected, “please don’t take offense, but how am I supposed to know which impossible, unexplainable things are reality and which aren’t?”

Jack let out so tremendous a sigh that his body appeared to deflate as he exhaled.

“The whole of all we’ve been saying,” he said, “is that it’s every bit of it reality.”

His tone softened some.

“Now here or there is altogether different. That, I’ll give you, is a matter of opinion.”

Quotes from the book

He smiled at the cavorting beings filling the space before him, even allowing himself a few snaps of the fingers and a bit of tapping of one foot. But when the piece ended, he switched the radio off and disconnected the battery. Through the sudden quiet of the music’s wake he heard the passage of a late flying ouislam disappearing outside in the night.

“Now that’s what I call a working first verse,” he congratulated himself. “Good poetry always moves from thought to action. So, then, what kind of action? But there’s only one action right for The Big One, right? So that’s easy.”

“Like I was saying, could you be, maybe, the most iconoclastic possibility for matrilineal-type infiltration since, for instance, the Blessed Virgin Mary?”

“Every prohibition is about two things. One is to say who yanks tight the reins on harvesting wealth from ordinaries like you and yours truly. The other is making plain folks into criminals and largening up the powers of the police.”

“In a word, death. That’s what you call it. We call it something else entirely. Something like a broken heart.”

“They’re, whatchacallit, empathis. Quote, ‘able to directly experience the emotional states of sentient entities in near proximity.’ That Kate, she let’s the tail wag the dog with those words of hers sometimes. Claims there’s a direct relating between the size of your vocabulary and the breadth of your character. I don’t think so. I hope not, at least.”

“One wrong word and I might screw the future. I say something; you hear something else. You make some choices, the drift of the consensual fabric curves to nestle those choices, right? And it’s too much. The fabric rips, you know, and chaos reigns. Death rages and all is lost. See what I’m saying”

“Jump requires a basic kind of oneness-with-all type of thing, surrender of self, that whole shebang. It’s, ah, how do you say it? Incompatible? Yes, incompatible with power lust. And power, sweet friend o’ mine, is what the general is all about.”

“They could be whole other universes, but your differences of matter and energy aren’t that important in finding the difference between, say, this consensus here and some other. I mean, we’re talking whole entire other worlds, but maybe all the matter and energy is not only not different but maybe is the same. Exactly the same. Like it’s one stuff that’s in more than one way of being real. See?”

“We looked at the emerging worldviews among humans on the Eurasian landmass, and the religions growing up around those worldviews. It didn’t seem to make much difference which version you considered, things looked bad. The sense of being *of* the earth was disappearing and this *displacement* was shaping development of human technology and its applications. . . . The Eurasian ideologies are founded upon the promulgation of suffering in order to maintain their ruling elites.”