Chapter 3 notes…

Seems obvious.

The purpose of the scene is to introduce the villain and the villain’s necessity—his want from the protagonist.

The weirdness of the ethereal world is interesting, but not completely innovative. Which is okay for this draft. But make a mental note that you need to make this “digital universe” different than what we’ve seen before. Is there an innovative technology that you can dream up that will make VIRTUAL REALITY, GAMING, and all of the other things now seem rather quaint in the not too distant future? The notion that people are literally “connected” to a digital hose of sorts in interesting and akin to the prognostications of futurists, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-means-and-how-to-respond/.

The purpose of this chapter is to raise the stakes and to give information to the reader that that the lead character does not have…that she is special and it is of utmost urgency for the villain to get her to the capital by own her own free will.

When the reader has more information than the character, you’re playing with dramatic irony. The big question is DO YOU WANT TO PULL OUT DRAMATIC IRONY so soon in your story?

Doing this is a big decision because it pulls the reader out of the suspense of being manipulated and worked over in much the same way as the protagonist.

For this kind of coming of age/action story…it’s best to just trust the action…trust the suspense…and parcel out this information that you’ve put in here dramatically. That is, you’ll want to use these revelations that the villain tells the ambassador later on…to drop as bombs on the protagonist.

This scene is a telltale sign that you’re worried that you’re losing the reader…that the reader won’t want to keep reading because he/she doesn’t have enough information.

This is not true.

The reader is desperate at this moment to just follow the straightforward story…what’s going to happen to Jesse next? What does she learn? What does she have to do to get herself out of the hole she’s dug herself?

Following the movement of the story from scene one which starts out positively…and ends negatively… And then scene two which starts negatively and ends positively…we need Scene three to move from positive to negative…

This is the scene that will establish the HIEARCHICAL WORLD. She’s saved by the numbered people, but to what purpose? This is the question we need to answer in this scene.

CHAPTER FOUR

This should be CHAPTER THREE. We’ve gone into the sanctum of the numbered and we’ve been introduced to Jessie’s Numbered Mentor…

Instead of the talk on the couch, I would have the mentor take Jessie on an early morning tour of the premises…show her the processes by which they “do their work.” She takes her basically on a tour of hell. You want to get some open air in this scene and describe the life of the numbered. If you ever saw the show MAD MEN in Season One there is a great scene when a copywriter takes Peggy on a tour of Sterling Cooper…he explains to her the lowdown of every department (his motive is obvious that he wants to impress her and get her into bed). Remember that the mentor will have a motive too for being “kindly” to Jessie. Offstage she should have been approached by the powers that be that if she were to get Jessie to “repent” and beg for a chance to go to the capital she will be rewarded.

CHAPTER FIVE is good stuff. Don’t give away the fact that Jessie is going to try and go home in Chapter four though… Also, I would not have the mother scream and be upset that Jessie is home.

CHAPTER SIX and the lights are great. This is an intense scene and a great movement from positive to double negative. The cliffhanger is perfect.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Don’t rob us of the suspense of whether or not they make it or not… Don’t open with Jessie safe

We need to know what happened on the run. I think you should take this opportunity to throw a wrench into the narrative.

THE LIGHTS NEED TO TURN RED!

83 and Jessie’s lights go red…They fail.

But what was expected didn’t happen… So you want to drop in some mystery here. Perhaps there’s some sort of internal investigation.

This is your first “man in a hole” narrative arc. And you need to put a very clear “bottom” to it. That is, you want the reader to understand that Jessie’s really in an impossible situation. There’s no turning back now and her actions are beginning to hurt other people. Perhaps you have the authorities punish someone else instead of Jessie (like they used to do with Kings…there were the court whipping boys who would get whipped when the King misbehaved…)

Great dialogue and explanation of the way of the world…it’s necessary here so it doesn’t seem cheesy. But consider putting the scene somewhere else. Remember you’re Steven Spielberg. He never repeats a shot or a scene, neither should you. Think of a different setting where they can have this heart to heart.

Also, I think the crux of this discussion should be about what the Hell is going to happen. They all saw the red lights on 83…AND NOT JESSIE! This could be the key to getting her to go to the Capital.

Also you want to remind the reader why Jessie is here in the first place. It’s because she refused the move to the Capital. We need to drop in why she is still refusing…why it’s so important to her that she not submit to authority. Remember that this is her denial of the CALL.

Perhaps we want he to confess that she’s not really that tough. In fact, she feels like a coward. The reason why she doesn’t want to go to the capital (beyond the fact that her brother went and never came back) is that she doesn’t think she’s good enough to make it there. To go and fail for her is far more frightening than to be a Numbered.

This could be the opportunity for Jessie to confess to 83…(let’s not forget that 83 is pretending to be something she really isn’t…she’s a tool of the government to get Jessie to submit of her own free will and thus her getting the red light and being issued the Kill order because of Jessie’s actions is the imptetus to get Jessie to submit finally…)

The rats arriving at the end is a nice touch.

CHAPTER EIGHT

This is a solid establishment of Jessie as an underground leader against the faction. The rats would wonder why she didn’t take the capital appointment though right? Remember that the point is that Jessie knows deep down that the only way to beat the faction is to get inside the faction. But she also knows that the temptations of the faction may be too much for her to resist. This is why she’d rather stay outside the system.

This scene is good as a follow up to her coming to grips with here situation. The transition to it though requires some work.

CHAPTER NINE

We need to set this universe in a particular time and place. Let’s consider the future of the earth with the environmental disasters etc. It’s going to be really really hot. So the workday must be in the night-time. So everything is reversed. People do not leave their houses during the day. The environment is too harsh.

Night time is daytime.

Also physical infrastructure is in great disrepair… It’s medieval in a way. The buildings and apartments are climate controlled for the uber rich. The poor, where Jessie is from have to fend for themselves so that’s why they do not venture out during the day.

Think about this world. What is the currency? What is the energy system? Probably solar power I would assume. So it’s the solar farms that keep the system going.

This is a solid scene. But again, it’s a repeat setup. Having the ambassador return is okay, but perhaps it’s not needed? The ending is good with the rats being shamed.

Have to think this through a bit.

Jessie’s want is to take down the faction as she states in an earlier chapter.

We need someone to ask her why? Why is she trying to take down the faction?

“It’s wrong is all. It’s made everyone a zombie and it took my brother…someone who taught me about life outside of the plugin…” Just spit-balling here. The reason is that we need to remind the reader that Jessie has a WANT…which is to bring back the good times when her brother was at home and the family obeyed the faction rules…but had something else going too.

CHAPTER TEN

Good escalation of stakes. We need to set up 83 as Jessie’s handler and manipulator though.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The idea of the physical plugs may be too much. Too much like Ethernet cables. Perhaps these poor people have to be physically plugged in (like people who can’t afford wifi) but in the capital, wifi rules…there is no need to plug in. Pluggers are losers.

Good stuff. Not sure about Mason being the one to tell her though.

And I think she needs to get her demands met…conditionally.

Maybe instead have 83 there. She’s the emissary?

Anyway, the question that we need to figure out is HOW DOES JESSIE GET OUT OF THE HOLE?

She’s being rescued instead of doing something brilliant to get herself out of the jam…

Tim,

Been thinking it would be fun to combine historical stuff with your novel.

Since you're creating a very 1% versus the rest universe, why don't we use the class/social terminology from the last time in the country's history that these factions were at odds...

I'm thinking the Robber Baron days when children worked in steel mills and mines for pennies.

Society was broken down at the mills and coal mines along the following lines:

RANK AND FILE...these were poor people who were treated like numbers who man assembly lines and did repetitive tasks over and over again.  Before union organization and collective bargaining and government intervention to favor union structures, the owners employed "management" to oversee these people.

So the world for people like Jessie was divided into rank and file (us) versus management (them).