**Year of Wonders**: Chapter 9: **The Poppies of Lethe** – Questions & Notes

1. Download and read ‘Chapter 9 Analysis.pdf’ and then write ‘Done’. **Done.**

 **Narrative note:** This chapter can be seen as a **low pointx** for Anna.

You could potentially **compare** this scene (this low point) with a low point from The Crucible as a paragraph/section for your essay/test.

Then again, I’m not sure if there are any good **low points** from The Crucible that would make a good comparison… what do you think?

Extension 1: **narrative voice** = good textual feature analysis question:Read the opening paragraph and explore your thoughts on it.

Note how the **voice** of the writing sounds different to how Anna narrates for most of the book.

How is it different? Why is it different? What mood does it create or what effect do you think it is meant to have on the reader?
**Reflective, retrospective voice that means we know she has written this AFTER the events that are to happen; i.e. a tone of sadness and remorse comes in, because the narrator knows this is a ‘low point’ and so prepares us for it (and introduces herself as someone vulnerable of potential drug abuse)**

**Note:** FYI: a ‘poppy’ is what opium and heroin are made from. When Anna takes the poppy and has that dreamlike experience, and then the pains and pangs of desire for more, it is describing something similar to a heroin experience.

**Foreshadow:** in her ‘trip’, she has a vision of a golden city that is like the one she visits at the end of the book (Oran). Again, the author seems to endorse a sense of **mysticism** – that anything is possible…

1. Why does Anna go back to Mem and Any’s house? **She’s fiending for POPPY.**

**Symbolism and setting:** the next powerful scene of bonding between two women (Anna and Elinor) happens in the house of Mem and Anys; in some way calling on, or channelling, the powerful bonds of female companionship and support that seem to be the lineage of strong women like Mem and Anys (the same lineage/tradition which Elinor and Anna now seem to be continuing).

1. Character study: **Elinor Mompellion**

Read Elinor’s ‘story’ – from the top of page 150 until page 155 – midway down.

a) **Summarise** her story in brief dot-points.

b) How does this **deepen/develop** the character of Elinor and how we feel about/understand her? **Makes us feel a lot more for her and presents her as an even stronger (ironically) character than before. She is humanised and shows how understanding a person’s history/story makes it hard not to empathise with them. This is why hearing people’s (true *and* fictional) stories is so important and powerful – it increases empathy and understanding of humanity.

(although contrastingly, when we find out Michael Mompellion’s story, we perhaps feel *less* for him!)**

Extension 2: does this change how we view any of the other characters?
**Yep – Michael Mompellion, it falsely sets him up as more of a hero than he is, so that, when the full truth IS revealed later, it is more of a shock.**
2. How does the sharing of this personal story:

a) help to forge a strong and meaningful connection between the two women;

b) help Elinor to come out of her low-point **Read the “Chapter 9 Analysis” for your answer!**