

Champion: A Legend Novel Study Guide

Champion: A Legend Novel by Marie Lu

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Plot Summary

The Republic of America and its long-time enemy, the Colonies, are on the eve of drafting a peace treaty under the leadership of the Republic's new Elector Primo, Anden Stavropolous. Day Alton Wing walks through a futuristic San Francisco, the city in the Republic in which he lives with his brother Eden. He battles a headache, caused by a terminal brain tumor, with hallucinogenic medication and envisions Tess, a close friend, and June Iparis, the Republic soldier and now Princeps-Elect that saved him from execution. He explores the San Francisco nightlife in disguise, attempting to avoid the celebrity he has gained as a political hero for the people. He is kissing a girl in an alley when June contacts him over the permanent earpiece Day wears. Day is surprised, as they have not spoken in eight months, and even more surprised when June asks him to come to Denver, the capitol city, for an emergency meeting. She tells him that the Colonies, what used to be the eastern United States, has discovered a plague outbreak that they have traced back to the Republic and believe it is an act of war.

Day lands in Denver and a senator's daughter takes him shopping. Meanwhile, June watches the trials of Commander Jameson and Thomas Bryant, two traitorous Republic soldiers who assassinated June's brother Metias and attempted to assassinate Anden. They are sentenced to death. June and Day meet at a government banquet later that evening and quickly enter a conference room with Anden and the two other Princeps-Elects, Serge Carmichael and Mariana Dupree. Anden tells Day that the plague in the Colonies likely accidentally came from Eden, who was previously used by the Republic for experimentation and biological warfare. He asks Day to allow the Republic to experiment on Eden once more to find a cure and prevent invasion by the Colonies. Day refuses.

Later that night, Day wakes up from a nightmare with an excruciating headache. Eden and their caretaker Lucy try to comfort him and decide to call an ambulance. The medics take Day to the hospital and run tests while Day comes in and out of consciousness. When he wakes up, the doctors tell him that he has only a few months to live. Unaware of Day's situation, June goes to see Thomas in his cell before his execution. Commander Jameson gets her attention from her cell first and warns June that they are the same. Shaken, June continues to see Thomas. Thomas tells her the full story of Metias's death – the two were close friends and nearly lovers, but Commander Jameson ordered Thomas to kill Metias and he felt he had no choice but to comply. After the conversation, June goes for a run to clear her head. She talks with Anden on the track and sees a headline on a JumboTron that announces Day has been admitted to the hospital.

June goes to visit Day and they go to a small café for lunch. He tells her that he has a brain tumor and will likely not survive more than two months. An air raid siren goes off during their conversation, indicating that the Colonies are invading the city. Day and June evacuate with Eden and Anden to an underground bunker where a series of subway trains take citizens out of the city as Colonies ships bomb the city. Day is angered to learn that poor parts of the city do not have bunkers, and refuses to leave



until he is assured that the poor will be given access to the wealthy sector bunkers. June learns that Commander Jameson and Thomas have escaped during the bombing, and Eden tells Day that he wants to give himself to the Republic to find a cure. As June, Anden, Eden, Lucy and Day walk towards the evacuation train, Day and June see Tess being held as a prisoner in a nearby room with a few other Patriots – members of an underground resistance that fights for unification of the Colonies and Republic. Day demands their release, and they agree to go above ground to fight against the Colonies.

June, Anden, and the two Princeps-Elects fly to Ross City, Antarctica to ask for aid. June is awed by the Antarctic technology, which assigns every citizen points for performing good deeds. The Antarcticans refuse to aid the Republic unless they give up territory. June and Anden discuss the role of emotion in politics and reminisce about their families, who are both deceased. Meanwhile, Day reconnects with Tess and prepares to attack the Colonies invaders. He and the Patriots place bombs on the landed Colonies ships and disable their weapons. He and Pascao, another Patriot Runner, narrowly escape the soldiers' retaliation as Thomas sacrifices himself to save them. Once safe, Day collapses from another headache.

Day wakes up in a hospital in Los Angeles. He receives a secret call from the Chancellor of the Colonies who asks him to publicly surrender to the Colonies in exchange for Eden and June's safety, and gives him three days to decide. June returns to Los Angeles and sees soldiers cooperating with citizens to find placement for the recent evacuees from Denver. The JumboTrons, which usually display Republic news and propaganda, suddenly display a message from the Colonies that encourages citizens to fight against the Republic in exchange for money. Anden takes June to the hospital where Day is waiting. He shows her an isolated room where Tess is being kept – she is infected with the mutant plague.

June and Day return to her apartment to talk. They express their love for each other and then sleep together. In the middle of the night, Day wakes up from a nightmare. He gets out of bed without disturbing June and leaves. He walks through the city back to the neighborhood where he grew up. He finds his old home and goes inside. He thinks about his brother John, mother, and father, who were all killed by Republic soldiers, and cries. Unbeknownst to him, June has woken up and follows him. She watches him and feels guilty for being part of the patrol that killed his mother.

The doctors and lab technicians at the hospital begin to experiment on Eden to find a cure and Day tries to comfort him. June sees Commander Jameson in disguise while she waits for a jeep to take her to a Senate meeting and follows her. Commander Jameson turns on her and nearly kills her before Republic soldiers come to June's rescue. They take June to the hospital with Anden and Day tells them that he has a plan to defeat the Colonies. In the Senate meeting later that Day, June proposes a fake surrender to the Colonies to give them time to build forces and take their enemy by surprise. Day and Pascao mark doors throughout the city with "LISTEN FOR ME" and Colonies ships approach.



Back at the hospital, the lab techs tell Day and June that Eden's blood cannot provide them with a complete cure to the plague. June realizes that she carries the missing element and offers herself for experimentation. Day contacts the Chancellor and agrees to surrender to him, then places bombs on the landing docks around the city with Pascao. Day broadcasts to the citizens that they need to fight against the Colonies, much to the surprise of the Chancellor, and the bombs begin to go off. The city erupts into a war zone and June starts to help evacuate the hospital. Day joins them and tries to evacuate Eden, but Commander Jameson begins shooting at him from a rooftop. June finds her and after a difficult hand-to-hand fight, throws her off the roof. June finds Day bleeding in the street below.

The narration jumps forward five months. The Colonies retreated and a peace treaty was drafted after Antarctica intervened, and Day has been in a coma since the attack on Los Angeles. June goes to the hospital one morning and the doctor tells her that he has woken up, but no longer remembers her. She decides to keep her identity a secret to prevent hurting him. Ten years later, Day and Eden visit Los Angeles. June sees them on the street and Day recognizes her. The two are re-introduced to each other.



Chapter 1 - Day, Chapter 2 - June

Summary

The novel begins with Day Altan Wing narrating from the present tense, first-person point of view. Describing himself as a “sixteen-year-old-most-wanted-criminal-turned-national-hero” (3), he remarks on the disguise he wears and how well he blends into his current location. He has lived in San Francisco, a city in the Republic of America, for eight months with a character named Eden, but does not explain their relationship. He describes San Francisco as dilapidated and half-submerged under the ocean, hinting at a dystopian future. He explains that the Republic makes him wear an earpiece and microphone at all times, but he is not completely loyal to them. He is surprised that the graffiti in the city contains positive messages about the Republic’s Elector, Anden, the leader of the country because the leadership of the Republic has never been on good terms with its citizens. He describes himself as the link keeping positive relations between the public and the Elector, but wonders how strong the link is.

Day reminisces about the last eight months, in which he took care of Eden in Denver, afraid he would be taken by the Republic for experimentation. Day’s health started to decline for a reason unclear to the reader, and he moved to San Francisco with Eden and a caretaker named Lucy. Day shifts back to the present tense and stops in front of an upscale club, feeling his “metal leg” (4). He smokes a doctor-prescribed hallucinogenic cigarette and sees a girl named Tess next to him. He reminisces on the last time he saw her in person, during a failed assassination attempt on Anden by the Patriots, a rebel group trying to reunify the Colonies and the Republic. The hallucination of Tess tells him that she and the other Patriots are in hiding because a peace treaty between the Republic and the Colonies is imminent, but the reader is unsure who the Patriots or the Colonies are. Day asks the hallucination about a character named June, and thinks about seeing her in Denver for the last time when he lied to her that Eden was ill instead of him. He explains that he has a brain tumor and is seeking treatment in Antarctica. A hallucination of June appears, but does not say anything.

Day enters the club and tells a soldier a false name, along with a fake rank in the air force, which he attributes to a person named Kaede, for reasons the reader is unsure of. He sits in a booth alone until a girl approaches him and asks if he is Day. He tells her she is mistaken, but she asks to dance anyway. Day agrees because she reminds him of June, who he explains is something called a Princeps-Elect. The girl kisses him and he obliges her, pretending that she is June. They leave the club and continue to kiss in an alley until the voice of Captain David Guzman comes over Day’s earpiece. The Captain tells Day that he has been invited to attend a banquet in the Capitol Tower in Denver for Independence Day by the Princeps-Elect, June Iparis. Day does not commit, suspicious that June truly initiated the invitation. However, June soon contacts him over his earpiece. She tells him that the peace treaty between the Republic and the Colonies is in danger of failing because of a plague outbreak on the warfront that the Colonies are blaming on the Republic. June ends the call and Day is filled with dread.



Chapter 2 begins with June Iparis narrating in the present tense after her conversation with Day. She thinks back to the night before, when Anden came to her home worried. She thinks about the sexual tension she felt with him while he told her that the peace treaty was ending because of a plague. She thinks about Eden, who was used by the Republic as a biological weapon after plague experiments were performed on him. Still in the past tense, June listens as Anden explains further – the Colonies believe that the plague outbreak is an intentional act of war, and that the Republic is withholding a cure. There is no cure, but Anden hints that Eden may be able to help find one. He asks June to convince Day to give up Anden for further experiments, believing that she is Day's biggest weakness and the only one with the power to convince him. June returns to the present tense and reveals that Eden is Day's younger brother.

June's narration jumps forward to a few hours before the banquet. Thomas and Commander Jameson, two former Republic soldiers, are on trial, and June remembers the trials of Razor, a former double agent with the Patriots, and the Senators who tried to assassinate Anden. She sits in the courtroom and makes a ring with paperclips. She thinks about her new position as Princeps-Elect, which is the training preceding leadership over the entire senate, and spots the other two Princeps-Elects in the courtroom. The first is Mariana Dupree, the second Serge Carmichael, and both dislike June for her age and lack of political experience. June then looks at Thomas, who killed her brother, and Commander Jameson, who stares back at her emotionlessly. June shifts her thoughts back to Day and thinks about the kiss they shared the last day she saw him. She feels guilty for her role in Day's loss, although the reader is unsure what this role is.

Anden interrupts June's thoughts to ask if she is okay, and then begins the trial. The senators and the Princeps-Elects vote on Thomas and Commander Jameson's guilt, and Anden announces that both have been found guilty and sentenced to execution. June struggles to distract herself from the proceedings, but cannot shake the image of Thomas killing her brother Metias or Day's mother out of her mind. She then thinks about Thomas as a teenager when he and Metias were friends. She comes back to the present to watch Thomas accept his verdict. Commander Jameson, however, addresses the Elector with threats on his life, referring to him as "still just a boy" (31). Anden ends the trial and June feels anxious for the future.

Analysis

Day's narrative about fashion and class build a sense of isolation between him and his peers. Day's only friend in San Francisco is his brother, Eden, and his loneliness becomes clear when he smokes his hallucinogenic cigarette. He envisions friends from his past – June and Tess – who he misses dearly but feels he cannot reach out to. His physical isolation is heightened by the isolation he feels by those around him. When he goes out he wears a tattoo of flames on his face unlike the others in the city, who wear more patriotic designs, because he feels he is still not loyal. Although he is now a Republic soldier, he does not feel as though he fits in among the others. He also feels isolated based on class. When Captain Guzman calls him and invites him to the



banquet, he rolls his eyes over the use of elaborate language. While he now has the comforts of a wealthy lifestyle, he feels uncomfortable with the mannerisms of the upper-class and feels as though he is only a part of their world as a celebrity token. His isolation builds a sense of dissatisfaction for the reader.

June's insecurity and guilt prevent her from acknowledging the influence she holds over her future. June's first narrative paragraph in the novel introduces her feelings of guilt towards Day. She feels as though she is manipulative and feels self-hatred for who she has become. This guilt prevents her from celebrating the successes of Anden's new policies or her own personal achievements. Similarly, she feels inadequate compared to her two fellow Princes-Elects due to her lack of experience and age – despite Anden's enthusiasm over her participation. The lack of self-confidence and guilt over past events prevent her from enjoying success as well as from preparing for the future. This self-hatred creates a tone of despair and hopelessness in the narrative.

The events of the trial foreshadow possible events and character developments in the novel. Thomas's response to his sentence is concise and loyal, revealing key aspects of his character. Commander Jameson, however, gives the Elector words of warning. She remarks heavily on Anden's age, hinting that youth may become an important theme in the novel, and she warns that her sentence will be a failure. The reader is uncertain if her words refer to her own execution or of Anden's protection of the Republic. Her warning creates a sense of suspense and uneasiness for the reader and foreshadows potential conflict with Commander Jameson in future narrative.

Discussion Question 1

When June calls Day, he hopes that it is not her and then that it is her. How does this thought build the relationship between the two characters?

Discussion Question 2

Lu emphasizes the word "guilty" throughout Chapter 2. What purpose might this emphasis serve to the text?

Discussion Question 3

Does youth prevent a person from having an impact on those around them? How much does experience play a role in decision making?

Vocabulary

doppelgänger, hallucinogens, ominous, weary, foreboding, entwining, epaulettes, unflinchingly



Chapter 3 - Day, Chapter 4 - June

Summary

Chapter 3, narrated by Day in the present tense, begins with his arrival in Denver with Eden for the Independence Day banquet. Day leaves Eden with Lucy and heads into a shopping district with a Senator's daughter, Faline, to find appropriate clothes. He sees soldiers on the street, increased from the usual number, and wonders if he and Eden should leave the Republic. He watches fireworks for Anden's birthday and notices that the people on the streets are wearing red and gold for the holiday. He emerges on the steps of Colburn Hall, the Capital's banquet hall, to applause by the gathered crowd. He walks into the hall through elaborately decorated pillars and under a massive portrait of Anden. As he questions why he is there, he spots June, who looks uncharacteristically uncertain. He sees Anden next to her and feels out of place among the wealthy attendees.

Chapter 4 begins with June narrating from the banquet, just before Day's arrival. Her instinct tells her that Day will show up, but she doubts that he is coming. Anden brags to the Senators about June's progress as Princeps-Elect, and she notes his nervous appearance, although he hides it well from the others. June dismisses herself and walks through the ballroom looking for Day. Loudspeakers begin a national pledge and June sees Day, who stays silent through the pledge, Faline on his arm. She approaches the two of them. Faline compliments June and leaves. June and Day exchange a short, tense greeting before he starts asking about the banquet. She leads him to Jasper Chamber, a private banquet room, and he takes a seat next to her as Serge and Mariana file in. Day asks about the silverware on the table, and Serge remarks "you're not accustomed to forks and knives where you're from?" (45). Day responds to the comment by responding that where he is from, knives can slit throats. June holds back from laughing and notices that Day looks sick.

Anden enters the banquet room and after an awkward greeting with Day begins to explain the purpose of the private dinner. He tells Day that the peace treaty between the Republic and the Colonies has failed due to a virus outbreak on the warfront. He explains that the Colonies blame the Republic and are demanding a cure that does not currently exist. Serge interrupts, saying that the Republic can handle more war with the Colonies. Mariana rebukes his statement, and the two begin to argue until Day cuts them off and asks Anden to proceed. Anden explains that the virus originated with his father, the previous Elector's, biological experiments – specifically, a virus created from Eden's blood. He tells Day that the only way to prevent war with the Colonies is to take Eden back into Republic custody for experimentation. Day only responds with "no" and gets up to leave. June follows and he asks to talk to her in private.

Day leads June by the hand to a private room and she feels flustered by the contact. She thinks about the ruby necklace she wears, which Day gave to her the last time they saw each other. June reiterates Anden's explanation and pleads with Day to hand over



Eden, reminding him about what they saw in the Colonies, although the reader is unsure what she is referring to. Day tells her no again, and asks her if she would make this request with no political influence. She thinks that logically, the Republic needs Eden, but Anden cannot promise Eden's safety and Day has already been through too much – both experimentation on Eden and experimentation on himself. Day interrupts her thoughts and tells her that he came to the banquet to see her. June asks if he is sick, and he tells her he has had the flu. She catches his lie, but he tells her that he is only off because he is worried about Eden. Day denies the Elector's request a final time and leaves, warning that if the Republic tries to take Eden against his will, he will turn the people against Anden.

Analysis

Day's difficulty adjusting to an upper class lifestyle draws attention to the salience of class identity. Day expresses discomfort and disgust at the formalities of the upper class throughout the chapter. He starts the chapter by remarking on the absurdity of an "emergency banquet." His lower-class life has been marked by food scarcity, and the excess in the Senate is shocking to him – especially in the face of an emergency. He makes further jabs at the Senators throughout the chapter. In addition to his disgust, Day fails to pick up on the mannerisms and traditions of the wealthy. He dresses in what he considers to be luxurious clothes for his arrival, but Faline quickly points out that his dress is far from adequate for the event. During the banquet, he is noticeably confused by the extensive array of silverware and looks to June for help using the correct utensils. Day ends his narration of Chapter 3 reflecting on his discomfort: "No matter how much money the Republic throws at me, I will forever be the boy from the streets" (38). His reflection highlights the depth of class identity – that is, that monetary wealth alone does not determine class. Although Day is now technically rich and can afford nice clothes and jewelry for June, he fails to recognize and act in accordance with the more subtle markers of class and still feels essentially lower-class.

Both Day and June feel disillusionment with their current lives and the Republic. Their dissatisfaction continues to build the tone of hopelessness in the novel. Day's narration parallels June's in the previous chapter – he expresses guilt, uncertainty, and dissatisfaction with his situation. He wonders if he and Eden should simply give up on the Republic and find something new, and fails to identify any reason to stay. Day notices an air of uncertainty about June as well, and her own narration reflects this. She attempts to think logically about her request to Day to take Eden, but her logic falls short of an answer. When she and Day part after the banquet, she feels as though she is missing something. The characters' uncertainty creates mounting tension in the novel by creating matching uncertainty for the reader.

June's ignorance of Day's illness highlights the distance in their relationship and foreshadows the importance of his illness in the novel. June points out Day's sick appearance multiple times throughout Chapter 4. Although Day's illness is a significant part of his life – it caused him to move to San Francisco and will soon take his life – he hides it from June to protect her. However, June notices a change in Day's appearance



and demeanor and wonders if the illness is more serious than she initially thought. The lack of communication shows the distance in their once-close relationship, as well as Day's desire to protect June. June's attention to his appearance also highlights the importance of the illness to the plot – it is a focal point for June and this hints that it will become a focal point in the novel.

Discussion Question 1

What factors contribute to class identity in the real world? How does Day's experience at the banquet reflect real life class tensions?

Discussion Question 2

Day stays silent through the National Pledge at the banquet. What might this indicate about his character and his opinion of the Republic?

Discussion Question 3

June observes her surroundings in specific detail, while Day describes his setting in a vaguer manner. What does this contrast reveal about the characters' background and personalities?

Vocabulary

cobbled, mimic, claustrophobia, aristocrats, precocious, courteously



Chapter 5 - Day, Chapter 6 - June

Summary

Day narrates Chapter 5, beginning with a nightmare in which doctors check Eden's progress out of blindness caused by plague experiments. Eden makes a rose out of paper while Day waits for paperwork until an alarm blares. Day looks out the window to see Colonies airships attacking San Francisco. He picks up Eden and runs, but Republic soldiers take Eden from him. An airship fires at the hospital and kills Eden.

Day awakes from his dream with a headache, safe in his temporary housing in Denver and next to a "transmission box," or radio, tuned to a channel he suspects the Patriots might use. Eden asks if he is okay, and Day asks him to get his medicine. Day stumbles to the kitchen for water, blind from the pain. Eden follows wearing a device that beeps if he gets too close to a wall, and Day laughs at the sight. An hour passes as Day's headache intensifies. Eden comforts him, and Day feels grateful that no one else can see him in his disabled state. Worried that this is worse than other headaches, Eden calls an ambulance and wakes Lucy. He and Day reminisce about their childhood to distract from the pain of the headache. Day thinks about his father, mother, and older brother John, who were all killed by Republic soldiers, and tells Eden to call June if the Republic ever tries to take him. Another wave of pain hits and Day fades in and out of consciousness as medics carry him into an ambulance.

Someone tells Day to swallow, and comments that whatever he just consumed should help his headache. Day blacks out and wakes up in a hospital room, his headache gone. A medical monitor next to his bed detects that he is awake and a voice tells him through a speaker that Eden is coming to see him. Eden bursts through the doors and runs into a drawer. Day struggles to think of Lucy's name while Eden cries at his side. Eden tells him that he was unconscious for ten hours and that he thought he was dead. A doctor comes in and asks Eden to leave. He explains to Day that the tumor in his brain is not shrinking fast enough, and they need to find new medication. He tells Day that he likely only has one or two months to live and that he should start making preparations for his death.

Chapter 6 is narrated by June beginning on the morning after the banquet. Anden tells her that Thomas has requested to speak with her before his execution. June agrees, and her narration skips forward to the point where she enters the penitentiary that houses Thomas. She observes the details of the cells as she walks down the hall. Commander Jameson surprises June from her cell and mocks her. She tells June that Anden will fail to keep the Republic safe and that she and June are alike. Shaken, June proceeds to Thomas's cell. Thomas thanks her for seeing him and she tells him that he no longer needs to be so loyal to the Republic. He responds that he will be loyal until he dies, and tells June that he wants to tell her the details of her older brother, Metias's, death.



Thomas starts to tell June about the night he killed Metias. He tells her that Commander Jameson called him and told him that Metias was a traitor against the Republic and had to die that night or he would commit treason. Thomas had known that Metias was hacking into the private deceased civilians' database. He pleaded with Commander Jameson for Metias's life, but she refused and threatened to kill him herself. Thomas met Metias in front of a hospital, where he allowed an injured boy admittance despite both their suspicions that he was lying about his injury. Metias looked at Thomas, who knew that he was attracted to him. Thomas asked to speak with him privately, using his attraction as a lure, and the two walked into an alley. He asked Metias about their relationship, and he told him it could not happen as Thomas was his subordinate. Thomas kissed him. June interrupts Thomas, overcome by grief, but she hears Metias's voice in her head. It tells her that everything will be okay, and she asks Thomas to proceed with his story.

Thomas continues, telling June that just as he reached for his knife an alarm sounded from the hospital. Metias snapped back into his military role and ordered his soldiers to search the hospital for the boy he had admitted before running from Thomas. Thomas looked for him, paranoid that Commander Jameson had seen his failure, and found Metias on the ground. He told Thomas that he had been stabbed by the boy, who he now recognized as Day. Thomas explains to June that he pictured Republic soldiers torturing Metias and stabbed him. As Metias died, he made Thomas promise to not hurt June. He called Commander Jameson, who congratulated him on a job well done. Speaking again in the present tense, Thomas apologizes to June. She feels sad for him, but calls him weak. He tells her he did everything right and does not understand why he is being executed while Day, a criminal, is a celebrity. As she walks out the door, she tells him, "because Day chose to walk in the light" (85).

June continues her narration a few hours later as she goes for a run with her dog, Ollie. She encounters Anden, also working out, and he tells her that the Republic is attempting to ally with Antarctica – a now powerful country. He tells her that he still needs Eden, and June warns him against turning against the one person the people of the Republic trust. He responds that he has no other choice since his father, and by extension himself, is responsible for the war in the first place. Their conversation is interrupted by footage of Day in the hospital on a screen nearby. The footage shows protesters outside the hospital accompanied by a headline declaring Day has been admitted for routine exams. Confused, June asks Anden why Day is really in the hospital. Anden tells June that Day is dying.

Analysis

Day's headache introduces the theme of sight and blindness in the novel. Sight is a prominent theme in Chapter 5, beginning with Eden's glasses fitting. Although he is mostly blind, his lack of vision does not prevent him from creating an intricate flower out of paper. Day is much more limited by his blindness, however. His headache causes him to lose his vision entirely for a number of hours, and he becomes distressed by his disability. The physical blindness of the characters is accompanied by a less literal form



of sight – Day is grateful that he does not “see” June anymore so that she cannot witness his suffering, as well as his mother and brother John. The emphasis on both literal and metaphorical sight introduces what may become an important theme regarding the characters’ ability to see their situations clearly and make choices moving forward.

June and Day use distraction to cope with extreme stress, highlighting the importance of escapism and drawing attention to the power of familial relationships. During his headache, Day finds temporary relief by reminiscing about his family with Eden. Although Lucy tries to help with a wet towel and comforting words, only Eden’s stories about John allow him to find comfort. June uses similar methods to cope with stress. She tries a number of tactics to calm herself before and after her meeting with Thomas, including running and shooting her gun. When her emotion is at its most overwhelming and she feels hatred towards Thomas, Metias’s voice in her head calms her the most. However, memories of Metias also trigger overwhelming emotion when she discovers that Day is dying. While the bonds of family are strong enough to overcome overwhelming feelings for June and Day, they also hold the potential to trigger these feelings themselves.

Lu compares and contrasts protagonists and antagonists, drawing questions about empathy and the potential development of the characters. Commander Jameson warns June that she will turn out to be the same as her, and June worries that it is true. Both characters are meticulous, well trained, and detail oriented. The Commander lacks emotion, and June tries to suppress hers as she views it as weakness. These similarities warn of the potential paths that June could take towards power and corruption, particularly if she fails to embrace emotion. Similarly, Lu compares Thomas and Day. Both characters have made great sacrifices to defend what they deem important – Thomas faces execution because he remained loyal to his duties as a soldier, and Day lost most of his family to defend his beliefs. While the characters appear to be motivated by much different causes, both act for the interests of the Republic and it is only their definition that varies. Thomas has faith in the Republic’s system and defends it for what he believes is the greater good, while Day has faith in the people of the Republic and defends them above all else. The comparison forces the reader to question their empathy for Thomas and raises questions about morality in action.

Discussion Question 1

What is the significance of the paper rose? Why does it persist through the fire in Day’s nightmare, even though everything else burns?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Day feel grateful that June cannot see him during his headache?



Discussion Question 3

Thomas believes that killing Metias was justified because it was for the greater good of the Republic. Do the ends justify the means? Were his actions justified? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

ironclad, silhouette, excruciating, optimism, hippocampus, naïve, fluorescent, sporadic, disconcerting, semblance



Chapter 7 - Day, Chapter 8 - June

Summary

Day narrates Chapter 7 as he is released from the hospital. Rumors of why he was admitted have spread through the city, and no one is convinced by the Republic's explanation of routine exams. He watches Eden play with an expensive robotics toy kit and Eden asks if he is thinking about June. He asks Day about his relationship with June, but Day only tells him that she is "a friend" (94). June's voice comes over Day's earpiece and she asks if they can talk. She arrives at his apartment and introduces herself to Eden. She asks Day if he wants to get something to eat and he teases her, calling it a date. The pair leave Eden behind and walk to a dimly lit café. They take a seat in one of the darker corners and talk.

June asks Day why he did not tell her that he was sick. He tells her that it would not have done any good and explains the details of his illness. He finally tells her that he only has a month to live. She gives him a ring she has made from paperclips – the same gift that he had given her months before. They hold hands and Day explains why he did not tell her – he believed that it would have been too hard for her, that she would not have accepted the position as Princeps-Elect. He thinks to himself that it was too hard for him as well to be reminded of June while he is dying. The conversation is interrupted by a city-wide alarm and the words "SEEK COVER" displayed over the JumboTrons, indicating an airstrike. June takes Day's hand and they run.

Chapter 8 is narrated from June's point of view as she and Day run towards Day's apartment to find Eden. June runs through the protocol for an attack in her head – to evacuate to bunkers and then to safer cities – but there has never been a major attack on a Republic city before. Anden comes over Day's earpiece and tells him he is sending a jeep for him and June. June asks him to ensure the safety of her dog. Republic jets fly overhead and are soon matched by Colonies jets. Day finds Eden and tells him that a jeep is coming for them. He asks June what will happen to the poor people in the other sectors of the city, who do not have bunkers to go to. She does not answer, and a jeep pulls around with Anden inside. Eden, Day, Lucy, and June get inside.

The jeep driver explains to Anden that bombs have already hit the city and some prisoners have escaped. As Anden explains to June and Day that they are going to an underground bunker called Subterrain One, the driver confirms that the escaped prisoners are Thomas, Commander Jameson, and someone named Lieutenant Patrick Murray. June thinks that the escape is not coincidental and that there must be traitors in the Republic who are passing information to the Colonies. Anden tells her and Day that reinforcements from other cities are on the way, but it might not be enough to hold the Colonies forces off. Day interrupts and asks Anden where the poor civilians are being evacuated to. Anden explains that logistically they can only evacuate the wealthy sectors, and Day yells back at him. He tells Anden that the poor people will revolt against him if he does not take action to protect them. Anden tells him no, and June



suggests that they bring the poor people into the wealthy sectors, at least farther away from the fighting. Anden agrees and orders the new plan.

The jeep arrives at a high-rise downtown and the five occupants get out. Anden goes off to talk with frantic soldiers while June leads Day, Eden, and Lucy into the building. They enter a large room where wealthy citizens and their poor housekeepers are being separated into two different lines. Soldiers escort June and her companions to a private room and on the way she sees a room with five prisoners that she recognizes. She demands access to the room and she and Day enter to find Tess and four other Patriots.

Analysis

Day and June's become close once again through crisis, breaking the tone of isolation in the novel. The romantic relationship between the characters rekindles as the two go for dinner, a meeting that only occurs because of Day's recent trip to the hospital. When Day finally tells June about his illness, she gives him a paperclip ring – a symbolic gesture signifying her devotion to him. Although the context of their reunion is tragic, Day feels hope and happiness for the first time in the novel. The seemingly hopeless circumstances in the novel have not changed, and in fact get worse as the Colonies begin to invade, but the tone shifts from despair to hope. June and Day's closeness breaks the isolation the characters have felt until this point and gives them new energy to act in the face of adversity.

Both Day and June continue to struggle to adjust to their calm lifestyles in the Republic, but feel comforted when their surroundings become chaotic, highlighting key aspects of their characters and backgrounds. Day still feels conflicted about his position in the Republic and even small signifiers, such as the Republic uniform he wears on his date with June, remind him of his rebellious background and the strangeness of becoming a national celebrity. June also feels uncomfortable in her position as Princeps-Elect and desires the fast-paced lifestyle she once enjoyed as a soldier. When the air raid sirens signal the Colonies invasion, however, she feels once again at ease in her role. She thinks to herself, "I may turn into a silent, uncomfortable observer in the Senate chamber, but out here on the streets, in the midst of chaos, I can think. I can act" (103). She feels as though her actions have no meaning in politics, but she can make a difference on the ground. This contrast highlights her need to act as well as her lack of faith in the political system. It also creates a parallel between her and Day, who is quite literally at home on the streets. Her ability to act in this context shows that she and Day, while from different backgrounds, are alike in their ability to act in crisis and their preference for direct action over political discussion.

Class tension continues to build in Chapter 8 as Day draws attention to the structural failures of the Republic to protect its poor citizens. Day, motivated by emotion and loyalty to his lower class roots, is the first to notice that the evacuees appear to be all wealthy citizens. Although Anden is sympathetic he refuses to make changes to protect the lower class, blaming logistics and lack of infrastructure. The difference in the



characters' approach highlights the difference in the ways class is viewed across class lines – that is, as one of the marginalized, Day is willing to make much greater sacrifices for the poor. Anden, who has always been wealthy, does not feel the same emotional devotion to the lower class and is unwilling to make significant changes to protect them. This conflict also draws attention to the depth of classism. While Anden has made specific policy changes to protect the poor, the infrastructure of the Republic was created to benefit the wealthy – a system that cannot be undone with policy changes alone.

Discussion Question 1

What is the symbolic importance of the paperclip ring? What might it signify besides a simple gift from June to Day?

Discussion Question 2

What is the importance of June's use of the word "streets" at the beginning of Chapter 8?

Discussion Question 3

Although Anden is trying to change the Republic to be more equitable, the infrastructure of the evacuation bunkers leaves the poor unprotected. Is this discrimination? Why or why not? What comparable structural deficiencies exist in the real world?

Vocabulary

engrossed, ominous, thwarted, ultimatum, evacuees



Chapter 9 - Day, Chapter 10 - June

Summary

In Chapter 9, Day narrates as he and June see Tess being held as a prisoner. He sees Pascao, a Patriot "Runner" that he worked with during the assassination attempt on Anden, held next to her. One of the guards explains that they were caught disabling military equipment to aid the Colonies attack and that the Elector ordered their detainment. Pascao rebuts that they were trying to aid the Republic soldiers, while Tess remains silent and looks at Day warily. He approaches Tess and Pascao tells him that they came to Denver because another Patriot, Frankie, also imprisoned in the room, heard Day over the radio trying to make contact. June is suspicious of their sudden support, but Pascao further explains that the Patriots have mostly disbanded after fleeing to Canada and being forced to leave. Anden interrupts from the door and asks the guards what is going on, revealing that he did not, in fact, order their arrests. He orders their shackles removed and that they be evacuated with the rest of the citizens.

Day and June follow Anden out of the room to a group of soldiers, several of whom point their guns at a few who kneel. Anden explains that the kneeling soldiers were the ones who organized the escape of Thomas and Commander Jameson, and orders them interrogated and then executed. As soldiers drag the traitors away, Anden tells June and Day that the Colonies have possibly joined forces with Africa and are readying themselves for another attack. He tells them that he is trying to get help from the United Nations and Antarctica, but that loss is imminent. Day asks him to release the Patriots to help fight aboveground, and offers to lead them. Anden argues initially, but concedes to Day's offer.

Day leads Eden to an evacuation train and tells him he will see him soon. Eden, upset, accuses Day of hiding something from him. Day tells him that the Republic wants him for experimentation and assures him that he will keep him safe. The brothers discuss the impact of the plague, how it will spread to the Republic and kill innocent citizens, and how the rest of their family was murdered by Republic soldiers. Eden tells Day that he is going to help the Republic, and Day pleads with him to refuse. The people begin boarding the evacuation train and Eden and Day say goodbye. Day finds the Patriots and tells them that the Elector has released them to fight.

Chapter 10 begins with June narrating from the Elector's plane on the way to Ross City, Antarctica. She asks Anden about the history between the Republic and Antarctica, a global superpower. He tells her that Antarctica has been providing the Republic aid for decades, and they have threatened to cut their aid if a treaty with Colonies cannot be reached. The two flirt while the ship descends through the clouds. June marvels at the sprawling city below, full of color-changing high-rises and enormous bridges. The plane lands and she, Serge, Mariana, and Anden exit into a biohazard tent where they are assessed for the plague. Three people in unfamiliar clothing greet them, including a woman named Lady Medina who sarcastically offers them a better plane to fly home.



They walk towards a building across a large bridge and Anden talks comfortably with the Antarctic politicians.

The group arrives in a large lobby and Lady Medina passes out glasses to the visitors. June puts them on and sees numbers hovering over everyone's heads, accompanied by a level designation. Other objects in the room have words over them like "WATER: +1," and June's own title and score sit at the corner of her vision. The group begins walking again, and a man falls into line behind June and addresses her. She bows and sees her score number go up from zero to one. The man introduces himself as Guardsman Makoare, a bodyguard for Lady Medina, and explains that he has been assigned as June's guide. He explains that in Ross City, everyone plays a game in which positive actions give you points and negative actions take them away. The more points a person scores, the higher their level which means access to better jobs, higher pay, and community respect. He explains that the system decreases crime, and June wonders how they distinguish between "good" and "bad" actions.

The group arrives in a semi-circular chamber and they all sit. Lady Medina introduces their leader, President Ikari, who is level 202. They begin to discuss the situation, and Anden explains to him that they need help to avoid being overwhelmed by the Colonies. President Ikari tells him that the plague needs to be contained, and June notices the Republic Senators exchanging smug looks. Anden asks for military support, but the President denies his request. He offers scientists to help find a cure, but tells Anden that the only way to get his full support is to give up land. Anden agrees to consider it. President Ikari ends the meeting by telling Anden that the entire Republic will be quarantined from the rest of the world.

Analysis

Changes in Anden's personality show the ability of power and stress to alter character. Anden begins to show some changes in demeanor as the Colonies invade Denver. The man that June initially describes as calm, level-headed, and fair becomes increasingly harsh and easily angered as conflict mounts. As Day argues with him to release the Patriots he notices that Anden looks like his father, the infamous late dictator of the Republic responsible for the death of Day's family. As Anden's temper calms, however, he returns to his usual collected demeanor and agrees to release the Patriots. June notices a change as well, but much more subtle – his eyes appear tenser than she is used to, but he hides his stress from the rest of his face. All of the characters in the novel face extreme stress, but Anden holds the most political and authoritative power. His ability to make decisions that can affect the course of the entire Republic creates pressure for him to remain cold and in control. The absolute control that he maintains begins to affect his ability to see others' points of view and influence his personality to be more authoritative.

June's visit to Ross City gives her new perspective into Day's background. While she has always had access to the highest tier of Republic technology and luxury, June is surprised by the extent of Antarctica's technological advancements. For the first time,



she is placed into a setting in which she is an outsider from a lower class, unfamiliar with the mannerisms and tools available to her. She is shocked not only by the wealth gap, but also by the way she is treated because of it. When Lady Medina arrogantly offers to give Anden a new jet to fly home, June is offered insight into Day's life that she has never had before. Previously she could relate to Day only from an outsider's perspective, but now she experiences discrimination herself for the first time. The anger she feels allows her and the reader to understand Day's emotional reactions to class from a different, more empathetic perspective.

The point system in Ross City raises questions about the definition of good and bad. The Antarctic game keeps crime low in Ross City and encourages citizens to act properly, but June wonders what defines good and bad actions. Some of the "positive" actions appear straightforward, such as watering plants or greeting someone politely. However, other actions are more complicated. Lady Medina, for instance, maintains a high score and rank despite her rudeness towards June and Anden. June questions who decides what qualifies as positive or negative and what happens if a citizen criticizes the government. These questions remain unanswered, but force the reader to question morality in the context of the novel and the real world.

Discussion Question 1

Anden has total political power over the Republic. How do his personal experiences affect the way he makes national decisions? Is it possible to have complete control and remain uncorrupted?

Discussion Question 2

Day believes that he is selfish for wanting to protect Eden. Is his protectiveness selfish? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Can "good" and "bad" be defined objectively? Who decides what is considered moral and immoral in the real world?

Vocabulary

bravado, sabotaged, guerilla, charismatic, entourage, condescension, indebted, decipher



Chapter 11 - Day, Chapter 12 - June

Summary

Day narrates Chapter 11 from the bunker where he waits with the Patriots. Soldiers struggle to keep the evacuation orderly, threatening to leave behind people who get out of line. His head starts to hurt as he asks Pascao about the state of the city. Frankie, a Hacker, suggests that they throw electrobombs at the Colonies's jets to disable them, and Day tells her he can access some. Pascao orders Baxter, another Patriot Day has worked with, to get the other Patriots ready and cover them above ground. Day, uncomfortable with Tess's silence, asks if there is another reason the Patriots came back to Denver. Pascao tells him that the Patriots have decided to back Anden and hope to create positive change in the Republic.

As Day and the other Patriots start preparing for their attack, Tess apologizes to him for blaming June for the failed assassination on Anden. Day tells her that he loves her, but only as a friend, and Tess responds by explaining that her love for him goes far beyond romantic attraction. Day has always supported her, and was "both my protector and someone who needed protecting" (153). She worried that June would take Day away from her, but she has learned to rely on herself. Day taps her nose, a gesture that he used to make when they were young on the streets together, and she smiles "for the first time" (154).

The narrative jumps forward to Day and Pascao waiting on top of the Armor, the wall that surrounds Denver. Day thinks about the invasion and how he would have been happy a year ago before he saw the Colonies for himself and witnessed their extreme corporate culture. Pascao confirms that the other Patriots are in place and he and Day, dressed in black, walk towards the tunnel that leads past the Armor out of Denver. Day reminisces on when he was 15 years old and lit ten Republic jets on fire as an act of rebellion against the state. He and Pascao wait until the JumboTrons throughout the city begin to blare the national pledge and distract the Colonies soldiers. Day runs into the airfield and hides behind a jet. He attaches a small metal box to the inside of the fuel nozzle and moves on to do the same with the next row of jets. He cuts his hand open jumping down from one of the jets, a mistake he blames on his weakened state, and attracts the attention of a soldier. The soldier aims to shoot him, but Pascao sneaks behind him and stabs him. With the attention on Pascao, Day runs out of the airfield to safety. He contacts Frankie over his earpiece and tells her to "let 'em go" (160).

The JumboTrons on the airfield go blank and an electrobomb erupts in the middle of the field, disabling the soldiers' weapons. The bombs that Day planted go off one by one, disabling more weapons and destroying the Colonies jets. The JumboTrons turn back on and show a prerecorded video of Day who tells the soldiers that they should be more careful. For a moment Day does not remember recording the video, but the moment passes and he is relieved when the memory returns. He, Pascao, and Frankie talk about the success over their earpieces until Frankie suddenly goes offline. Day runs



towards the entrance to the Armor and sees Frankie and Tess running towards him, pursued by several Colonies soldiers. Frankie makes it through the Armor door, but Thomas steps out of the shadows before Day and Tess. Day is surprised when Thomas raises his gun against the Colonies soldiers and yells “Long live the Elector! Long live the Republic!” (163), shooting into their ranks. The soldiers return fire, and Thomas dies.

Day and Tess, now inside the Armor, meet Pascao and head towards two jeeps that will take them to an evacuation site. Frankie collapses and begins to convulse due to a bullet wound. Tess rushes to save her, but her wounds are too extensive and she dies in Tess’s arms. Day pulls her to her feet and into a waiting jeep. They hurry into the evacuation bunker and onto a train as explosions erupt around them. Day’s head begins to hurt and he goes unconscious.

Chapter 12 is narrated from June’s point of view as she sits in her hotel room in Ross City. She leaves Ollie sleeping in the room and explores the hotel with the virtual glasses off. She peers into a central room on one of the floors and sees a series of tall, cylindrical glass booths. She enters and puts on her glasses. A simulated voice tells her that she is in a “simulation room” and her score goes up ten points as the previously dull room becomes illuminated with colors and virtual imagery. June becomes excited as she realizes that she can access the internet for the first time outside of the Republic’s filters. She steps into a booth and asks to look up Day. Thousands of articles about Day appear around her, and she glances at a few before changing her search to “The United States of America.”

June sees the Patriot flag appear in front of her and reads that it is actually the flag of the former U.S.A., sourced from an eleventh-grade school curriculum. She asks to see the full entry and sees a map of North America before the flooding that separated the Colonies from the Republic. A voiceover gives her a brief history of the U.S.A. and its separation in 2054. She selects the subtopic of The Colonies, and the voiceover tells her that the Colonies were formed in 2055 when corporations seized control of the government. DesCon, along with 12 other corporations, took control and eventually merged into four ruling businesses - DesCon, Cloud, Meditech, and Evergreen. The lesson pauses and June wonders how the Colonies and the Republic could ever reunite with such different forms of rule. She exits the chamber and runs into Anden in the hallway.

Anden tells June that he, too, has been exploring the hotel. He invites her back to his room where the Antarctic politicians have sent him a bottle of wine. She follows him back to his suite and observes the night sky, simulated, with the aurora australis lights projected above through the windows. Anden tells June that Commander Jameson is leaking information about the Republic to the Colonies. June feels guilty that she did not notice something off when she visited Thomas, but Anden reassures her that the Republic is doing everything possible to find her. He tells her that he is still considering giving land to Antarctica, and the two try to think of ways to get Day to release Eden to them. June considers Anden’s point of view and the conflict he faces between losing the Republic to the Colonies or taking Eden and risking his own citizens rioting. She



considers Day's point of view too, thinking about how he was treated by the Republic and the distrust he must feel.

Anden interrupts June's thoughts and tells her that he envies Day because he can make honest choices based on his heart, while his own are always influenced by politics. He tells her he grieves for his father, the previous Elector, even though he committed horrible acts against citizens. June tries to comfort him and he kisses her. She kisses him back for a moment, and then pulls away. He apologizes and acknowledges that he can never compete with Day for her affection. June returns to her room to find Ollie waiting. She logs onto the internet from the portal in her room and searches for Anden and his father. Amongst a sea of propaganda images, June spots a video of Anden at four years old. His father holds him and shoves away propaganda, trying to calm his son. She watches another video in which the late Elector tells an interviewer that the thing he cares about most in the Republic is his son. June's narration abruptly shifts forward to her boarding a jet to return to the Capitol. She receives news that Denver has been completely taken over by the Colonies.

Analysis

The relationships between the characters in Chapters 11 and 12 show that the ties of family can extend beyond blood relationships. Many of the characters in the novel have lost their families to execution, war, or disease, and this forces them to form new familial relationships with each other. Tess tells Day that when she was left alone, he "became my entire family—you were my parents and my siblings and my caretaker, my only friend and companion" (153). The strength in their relationship comes not from being raised together, but from the deep trust and loyalty they feel towards each other. Although they are not related by blood, they have become family through their shared experience and devotion. June is also orphaned, and for her, the closest relationship she considers family is with her dog, Ollie, whom she mentions multiple times throughout Chapter 12. Even a non-human relationship can serve as family when the traditional family unit is broken apart.

Day's loss of memory foreshadows future events in the novel. When Day sees his own face on the JumboTrons, he does not recognize himself or remember the filming. The loss of memory is shocking, and foreshadows future memory issues in the future plot. His memory lapse is accompanied by a sense of unfamiliarity as well – he feels as though his image is of a terrifying, unrecognizable stranger. While his memory is failing, his self-image is also crumbling. Day's struggle to recognize himself physically symbolizes his struggle to recognize himself in other ways, such as his motivations. The fear and uncertainty foreshadows potential changes in motivation as well as a shaken sense of self he will face in later chapters.

June's experience in Antarctica creates inner conflict as she tries to prioritize reason over emotion. Throughout the novel, she tries to suppress her emotional reactions and act based on logic alone. When Anden comes to her after the meeting in Ross City, she attempts to comfort him by telling him that logic can save him when emotion fails.



However, she questions the words as she speaks them, thinking, “Without emotion, what’s the point of being human?” (178). Although she does not apply this line of thinking to herself directly, her insight highlights an important conflict in her character between her reliance on logic and her desire to accept emotion as a driving force, as Day does.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Day compare Thomas’s death with that of his mother? What purpose does the comparison serve in the text?

Discussion Question 2

Lu does not distinguish a specific time frame when Tess smiles “for the first time” (154). What is the significance of this vagueness to the text?

Discussion Question 3

Thomas dies defending Day. What does this reveal about his character and his motivations in killing Metias?

Vocabulary

dissidents, nitroglycerine, haughtiness, divvying, déjà vu, instinctively, poultice, reverberate, piques, pixelated, beleaguered



Chapter 13 - Day, Chapter 14 - June

Summary

In Chapter 13, Day awakes to see Tess standing above him. Narrating from the first person, he realizes he is in a wheelchair with bandages over his head and one hand. He asks what happened and Tess explains that the excitement of the attack caused a “bad reaction” (182). She tells him that they are back in Los Angeles and that he has a Ruby sector (a wealthy part of town) apartment waiting. Soldiers help him into a jeep and he hugs Tess before they drive him away. Day watches Los Angeles residents protest the new refugees and soldiers shout for people to remain orderly. He notices subtle differences between this scene and what he expects, however – the soldiers are giving the refugees food rations and the protesters are being allowed to protest. He realizes that the Republic government and the people are united for the first time.

The jeep takes Day to Eden’s apartment. Eden rushes out and gets in the jeep with Lucy. They pull up at the Los Angeles Central Hospital, where crowds have gathered outside chanting “save us.” He enters the hospital and nurses begin to scan his brain and give him injections. He starts to feel better as two doctors come in to talk to him. They tell him that they want to try more radical treatments, but that they still might not have enough time to save him. Day realizes that his best chance of survival lies with Antarctica, who will not help unless Eden agrees to experimentation. The doctors give Day medicine and he falls asleep.

Day awakes the next day in the hospital room. Weak, he tries to walk but stumbles. He watches footage of Denver from his room that shows Colonies ships hovering above a destroyed city and Republic jets preparing to fight. He continues to watch until a male voice comes over his earpiece and introduces himself as the Chancellor of the Colonies. The Chancellor tells Day that he is the true ruler of the Republic, due to his celebrity as a rebel. He offers Day an ultimatum – Day can ask the people of the Republic to willingly turn over to the Colonies and receive medical treatment and a promise for Eden’s safety in return. Day scoffs at the offer, and the Chancellor responds by threatening June. Day runs through his options in his head and the Chancellor gives him three days to respond before ending the call. Day hears Tess shrieking outside his room that she is not infected with the plague.

Chapter 14 is narrated from June’s point of view as she lands at Drake University in Los Angeles. She walks through campus with Anden, Mariana, and Serge and to a series of waiting jeeps where Batalla Sector, a military part of the city that houses Drake, meets Blueridge, a poor civilian sector. Lower class refugees from Denver crowd around building entrances, hoping to get shelter, and June asks where the upper class refugees are. Anden tells her they are being housed in Ruby, a wealthy sector. As the four travel in a jeep across the city, June sees protestors lining the streets with signs that say things like “Keep Them Quarantined!” Anden gets a message over his earpiece and turns on a television monitor in the back seat.



A broadcast appears on the monitor, beginning with the Colonies' seal and flag projected on the screen. An image of a sparkling city accompanies a voiceover that addresses the citizens of the Republic. The voice declares that the Colonies have declared unofficial victory over the Republic and that all its people are now free citizens of the Colonies. Over images of happy Colonies citizens, the voice continues that each new citizen will be granted a sum of Colonies currency and will choose to work for one of the four major corporations. The Republic police will be replaced DesCon patrols, and the citizens now have “freedom of choice” (198). June reminisces on the experience she had in the Colonies, full of “dilapidated slums” (198), invasive advertising, and police that refused to help a poor woman. The voice continues and tells the Republic that any citizen who stages a protest in their city will get an additional sum of money and a discount on groceries. June compares the broadcast to an advertisement and wonders if it will be enough to turn the people against the Republic.

The jeep stops at Los Angeles Central Hospital and Anden tells June that Day collapsed during the evacuation, and that there is another, undisclosed reason they have arrived there. They walk to the fourth floor and June sees Day on crutches standing outside a room with two lab techs in full quarantine suits. She asks Day what is going on and he tells her that the hospital believes Tess has the plague. June sees Tess through a window and watches her as she stumbles around the room. June remembers the words of warning that Metias had written in a journal before his death: “One day we’ll create a virus that no one will be able to stop” (202). A tech turns to June and explains that the virus is a mutation of a previous experiment, causes blindness, and has a high fatality rate. June turns to Day who tells her about Thomas’s death at the Armor before walking away from the scene. Anden asks June once again to try to convince Day to release Eden.

June’s narration skips forward a few hours as she rides in a jeep to her new apartment. She thinks back on Anden, who had pulled her aside at the hospital and told her that she would be addressing the Senate at an emergency meeting in the morning. Back in the present, she steps into the hallway of the apartment building and sees Day sitting in front of her door. She notes his sickly appearance and thinks about the energy he had before his illness. The pair stands on June’s balcony and he tells her that Eden wants to help. Reluctantly, he agrees to let the Republic take Eden. June senses that there is more Day wants to tell her and asks him about it. He tells her about the call from the Chancellor and asks her to flee the country, to which she refuses. Day embraces her and tells her that she is unique. They linger for a moment until Day pulls away and asks June if she loves him. She tells him she does and they kiss passionately. They return inside and undress each other on the bed, embracing and kissing.

Analysis

Lu creates a contrast between Day’s belief in his own power and the actual power he holds, emphasizing the value of individual action in social change. Day feels powerless over his situation and the outcome of the Republic. When he watches the screens in his hospital room broadcasting the rioting citizens he feels as though they are mistaken for



putting their trust in him. He thinks, “They don’t understand that I’m just a boy... Without the Patriots, June, or Anden, I couldn’t have done anything. I’m useless on my own” (188). Part of his reflection is correct – others have helped him in his journey tremendously – Day fails to recognize the immense power he holds over both the citizens and the government of the Republic. The Chancellor reminds him of this fact, assuring Day that he has power over the entire nation. It is only because of Day’s individual power that the Chancellor is able to use him in the Colonies’s invasion. Day’s influence shows the impact of a single individual on the world, despite the fact that he does not recognize it.

The Colonies’s rhetoric of freedom causes June and the reader to question the true meaning of liberty. As the Colonies invade Denver, they broadcast a message to the Republic’s citizens offering them “the freedom of choice” (198). June reflects on her experience in the Colonies, one marked by slums, dilapidated poor citizens, and police harassment. Her negative view of the Colonies, however, is markedly similar to the reality of the Republic. Both nations contain a large class divide that benefits the wealthy and leaves the poor to suffer. Additionally, both nations are willing to sacrifice the lives of the poor to maintain power. Although the Colonies offer “freedom” – meaning freedom to choose employment from limited options and freedom from the Trials – they cannot offer a quality of life much greater than that of the Republic. This comparison creates questions about the importance of “freedom” alone, as well as whether or not true freedom can exist in a hyper-capitalist society.

June draws a comparison between propaganda and advertising, one that encourages the reader to critically question advertisement. As the Colonies broadcast their propaganda to the Republic during their invasion, she thinks to herself that “even their propaganda sounds like an advertisement. A dangerously tempting one” (199). Her remark brings attention to the ways that advertising and propaganda are comparable. Advertisement, although generally produced by private companies rather than a governing body, works to create an image of ideal life and encourage people to view particular ideas as better than others. Propaganda functions in a similar way, only created and distributed by the government. Since the government of the Colonies is ruled by corporations, June’s thought helps to blur a line between propaganda and advertising.

Discussion Question 1

History gives us many examples of individuals who made a large impact on the world – with the help of a supporting movement. Can one individual have enough power to change their nation? What other factors are necessary for a person to succeed in large-scale social change?



Discussion Question 2

Does having options for employment mean freedom? Why or why not? What other ways do the Colonies offer freedom?

Discussion Question 3

How do advertisements affect how we live in the real world? What other decisions and viewpoints do they influence besides what we purchase?

Vocabulary

prognosis, influx, millennia, disconcertingly, nostalgic, infrastructure, grandiose, tyrannical, regime, jaundice



Chapter 15 - Day, Chapter 16 - June, Chapter 17 - Day

Summary

Chapter 15 is narrated from Day's point of view at the end of his sexual experience with June as he reminisces on the girls he has had sexual experiences with. He thinks about how June is different as he cuddles her in the bed and feels vulnerable. His narration jumps forward to him waking up in June's bed after a nightmare. He calms himself down and gets out of bed, noting how weak he feels. He gets dressed and perches on the balcony railing. He looks towards the poor part of town and notes how much nicer it is than the part of Los Angeles he grew up in. He jumps off the railing to the ground and walks to a train station where boards a train headed for downtown. He walks towards his mother's old house and picks a handful of flowers before an old woman grabs his attention. She asks him for change and he gives her a large handful of Republic notes.

Day continues on until he reaches the intersection of his old home. The house is boarded up and empty and Day notices a bloodstain on the concrete outside from when his family was shot. He breaks the boards down on the back door and enters. Everything in the house is as it was when he left, and each detail brings back memories of his family. He breaks down and begins to sob.

Chapter 16 is narrated by June as she watches Day slip out of her apartment in the middle of the night. She gets out of bed, gets dressed, and follows him to his family's home. She watches him through cracks in the boards as he cries. She thinks to herself that his pain is her fault and that she will always remind him of his family's death.

Chapter 17 is narrated from Day's point of view as he returns to June's apartment. He sees her in bed, believing that she has not moved since he left, and falls asleep on the couch. He falls asleep, and is woken some time later by June who tells him that Anden is going to get Eden from his apartment in two hours. He gets up and washes his face while he remembers his family's murders. He collects himself and walks back to the bedroom where June is waiting. She tells him that Commander Jameson is working for the Colonies and Day feels overwhelmed with hatred. She reaches for Day's hand and he flinches. He tries to apologize but June interrupts him and tells him that she followed him to his old house. She tells him that she is the one who caused him his grief and that she does not deserve his forgiveness. Day wonders if she is right.

The narration jumps forward to Day kneeling before Eden outside of their apartment. He reassures Eden before they load into separate jeeps and drive towards the hospital. Day follows lab techs to an observation chamber where he watches hospital staff check Eden's vitals. The tech next to Day tries to reassure him as Eden is given medication and led to a cylindrical chamber. Day hears Eden crying, but when he is allowed to enter the room finds his brother safe and optimistic inside. The techs tell them that they



will try to cure Tess with Eden's blood, but Day feels uncertain and tries to think of a way to buy more time from the Colonies. Eden asks Day why the Republic is losing, and Day tries to explain the situation. Eden remarks, "too bad everyone in the Republic isn't a soldier" (235), and Day gets an idea. He tells Eden that everyone in the Republic can be.

Analysis

Day's discomfort in the Ruby sector, heightened by his nightmare, creates tension between him and June. As he leaves June's apartment to visit his old home, he glances around the sector and feels a sense of unfamiliarity. The wealthy sector is in his home city, but is so different from where he was raised he feels like he is in a different city altogether. As he thinks about the difference between wealthy sectors and his home, he notices the paperclip ring that June gave him on his finger. Although he does not think about June explicitly, the ring represents his relationship with June as well as their class difference. The ring shows June's willingness to accept Day's lower class status. However, the weight of it as he sits on the balcony creates a sense of tension between Day and June – even though she is accepting, the difference in their backgrounds will always be a distancing factor in their relationship.

Day's breakdown in his family home highlights the difference between his relationship with his family and his relationship with June. While he grieves his family, Day experiences a deep feeling of love for them. He reminisces on his upbringing, particularly his mother and John, and at the moment the grief overwhelms him he thinks of June. The fact that he considers June in the context of his family shows that she is as important to him as they are, but he still struggles to accept her as a loved one. He thinks that, although he wants to love her, he cannot because of her involvement in his family's death. Day desires to love June, an outsider, as family, but it is impossible for him.

The grief that Day experiences in Chapter 15 further expands on the theme of sight in the novel. As he sobs in his old kitchen, he "can't see" (223). The physical blindness he experiences is brought on by grief, linking his physical reality with his emotional state. Although he recognizes that he cannot see his family because they are not present, he also experiences blindness as a part of his overwhelming emotion. This connection highlights the emotional importance of sight, as well as the ways in which sight can be interpreted both literally and metaphorically.

Discussion Question 1

What does the paperclip ring signify in Chapter 15? Why does Day draw attention to it in his narrative?



Discussion Question 2

June states that Day can never escape his past with her “especially” because he loves her. What does she mean by this? Is June and Day’s relationship based purely on their shared history?

Discussion Question 3

Does June deserve Day’s forgiveness? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

haphazardly, deteriorating, subdued



Chapter 18 - June, Chapter 19 - Day

Summary

Chapter 18 begins with June narrating the next day. She prepares for her meeting with the Senate but is distracted by thoughts of Day. She exits her apartment and waits for a jeep to take her to the meeting when she senses someone watching her. She looks around and sees Commander Jameson in a first-year Republic soldier uniform. June pretends not to notice her and alerts Anden over her mike as the Commander walks away. She asks Anden to covertly send soldiers to her location. She follows Commander Jameson for a few blocks and sees her speaking into a mike of her own, but she soon disappears from sight. June turns to leave, disappointed, and a bullet flies past her head. She hides behind a trash can as more bullets fire from an unknown source, blinded by their light. She begins to panic but hears Metias's voice in her head telling her to focus.

Calmed by her brother's voice, June provokes another shot and observes the bullet's trajectory. She deduces that it came from the building across from her, which has several open windows. She calls to Anden to ask for help as another bullet strikes above her head and she closes her eyes. When she opens her eyes again Commander Jameson is in front of her, aiming her gun at non-fatal targets on June's body. The two fight hand to hand and a jeep pulls into the street. June gets inside while Commander Jameson slips away. Now safe, June realizes that the attack means there are more Colonies soldiers in the city. She calls Anden and tells him that the Colonies are preparing to attack Los Angeles.

Chapter 19 begins with Day receiving a call about June. He narrates as he sits with Eden after more experimentation and waits for June to arrive safely at the hospital. He watches Tess, who is now very sick and unconscious, through a glass window. He watches the lab technicians inject her with a formula made from Eden's blood and struggles to remember where the plague came from. Pascao joins him and tells him that there are other plague outbreaks in the city. He tells Day that he will need to "execute your little stunt" (245) in the next day, but the reader is unsure what he is referring to. Day thinks about his exhaustion from his situation and reminds himself to keep pushing for a few months.

Day hears shouting down the hall and Anden, June, and a group of guards burst through the doors into the room where Day waits. Day hugs June and chastises Anden for allowing her to be in such danger. Anden orders his guards to find the soldiers that were assigned to pick up June and threatens to execute them all. Day is chilled by the coldness of Anden's order. Day asks him to speak privately and, accompanied by June and Pascao, they settle into a conference room with the security cameras turned off.

June explains the events with Commander Jameson and Anden remarks that Commander Jameson was likely trying to capture June to bargain. Anden tells them that



the Colonies have access to a bomb that will destroy Los Angeles but have not used it for fear of retaliation by Antarctica. Day speaks up and tells them that he has an idea. He suggests that they falsely surrender to the Colonies to catch them off guard. June mumbles that a false surrender is against international law, but Day rebuts that the Colonies broke the law by ending a ceasefire early. Day offers to give the people in each sector of the city a signal to rise up during the surrender. June agrees with the plan and offers to join him, along with the Patriots.

Analysis

June's experience with Commander Jameson in Chapter 18 continues to build the theme of sight and offers a solution to the blindness caused by overwhelming emotion. As she hides from Commander Jameson's bullets, June experiences blindness for the first time in the novel. She feels overwhelmed with panic and struggles to regain her composure until she hears Metias's voice in her head. She reopens her eyes and is able to see once again. Her experience creates a sense of hope for the reader – although the characters struggle to see their paths before them, they may find clarity by accessing the parts of their lives that were previously clear. Further, June's first experience of blindness and her ability to overcome it with emotional calming emphasizes the emotional-physical link in sight.

The prioritization of logic over emotion in June's mind shows the importance of clear thinking and highlights differences between her and Day. June battles with Commander Jameson as well as her own emotions. She feels weakened by her panicked state and remarks that she does not want to let her emotions get the best of her. She views emotion as a weakness not only for herself but for the Republic as a whole, which could be torn apart not by physical weapons, but "with fear and desperation" (241). As soon as she eliminates her panic and begins to think logically June is able to fight back against Commander Jameson, highlighting the value of logic to June. This creates a contrast between her and Day, who relies on his emotions to guide his decisions and relationships.

Anden's change of character signifies the influential nature of power on personality and the ability of power to corrupt an individual. When he learns of the ambush on June, Anden orders his guards to find the soldiers responsible for leaving June on the street. He remarks that he has the ability and the willingness to execute all the traitors within the Republic's ranks, and the comment causes Day to think of Anden as more similar to his corrupt father as he had imagined. Later, Day is again surprised by Anden's change in personality from a calm, collected leader to a sarcastic, angry authoritarian figure. The change in Anden's personality creates questions of power and corruption for the reader – although Anden is experiencing a high level of stress, the other characters are as well and Anden is the only one who experiences a significant change in demeanor. The reader is left to question if his power as Elector is responsible for his change towards corruption and dictatorship, or if other factors are at play.



Discussion Question 1

When June remarks that she cannot see, what is she referring to? Is her lack of sight purely physical?

Discussion Question 2

Are there changes in characters' personalities besides Anden? What are they?

Discussion Question 3

Although Day initially feels as though he cannot make a difference, he has faith in the citizens of the Republic to make change as “a million versions of me” (252). What accounts for this change in his self confidence?

Vocabulary

contemplate, traitorous, feint, ricochets, cordoned, haggard, wrath, vigilantes



Chapter 20 - June, Chapter 21 - Day

Summary

June narrates Chapter 20 as she meets with the Senate at Batalla Hall. She reflects on her hate of meetings and how she wishes she was in the streets taking action. Anden addresses the senators and tells them that the African squadrons have joined the Colonies. He gives the floor to June who tells the audience that they will surrender and negotiate a treaty with the opposition. Serge and Mariana object politely while the senators yell in outrage, insulting the Elector and Day and warning against the effect a surrender would have on Anden's image. Anden slams his hand down and threatens the senator. June looks at him and feels worried about the violence in his words. She realizes that she does not belong in the Senate. The meeting ends, and Anden asks to speak with June.

Anden and June drive to June's apartment and sit down inside. He tells her that Anarctica has agreed to send military support and provide medical care for Day in exchange for Dakota, the largest territory in the Republic. He tells her that he is going to Las Vegas to help the soldiers on the warfront, and he tells her that he will select a Princeps-Elect to stand in as acting Elector in his absence. He asks June if she is interested and if she still wants to be a Princeps, and she reflects on her disinterest in politics. She tells him that she misses being in the field and that she is a soldier, not a politician. She asks him permission to fight alongside Day. Anden notices Day's jacket on the bed and grants her request. He gets up to leave and June asks him to promise that he will stay true to himself in Las Vegas. He responds that he will do his best.

Chapter 21 is narrated from Day's point of view on the second night of the ceasefire. He sits with Eden, preparing to mark walls in the city to alert citizens to his plan. Eden, sick from the experiments, asks Day about the progress of the cure and about Tess, who is still unconscious. He falls asleep next to Day, who reflects on his own inability to sleep and the headaches that are now constant. Day sneaks out of the room and meets Pascao. Pascao tells him that there are 12 other Patriot Runners ready to carry out their plan and shows him a pair of suits with air launchers that will help him navigate the city quickly. He leaves as Day puts on the suit, which he finds gives him extra strength. Pascao returns and the two exit the hospital from the balcony.

Day runs into the Tanagashi sector of the city and spray paints "LISTEN FOR ME" across the walls of important buildings. After an hour he returns to the hospital to meet Pascao. Day asks him if it is worth it to risk his life for the Republic. He tells Day that his two sisters were executed after they failed their Trials, but he passed because a soldier decided not to record one of his mistakes. He tells Day that he still has faith in the Republic. Day returns to Eden's room and sees a group of the lab techs outside the door. They tell him that Antarctica helped them find a formula that "can almost act as a cure" (272), but the plague has mutated. Unless they can find the first patient to have the mutated plague, they will never find a cure.



Analysis

Anden's decline into authoritative rule becomes clearer, drawing further attention to the role of power in corruption. Until this point, changes in Anden's personality have been largely subtle – June and Day have noticed small features in his demeanor that have come to reflect his father, but the majority of his mannerisms have remained the same and he recovers quickly from bouts of anger. However, during his meeting with the Senate, the Elector becomes violent and authoritative to a degree that shocks all around him. He slams his fist on the table and remarks that he is the law, threatening all who oppose him. The senators who have, until now, regarded Anden as young and easy to oppose show obvious fear at his wrath. Even June, who supports Anden loyally above all others, feels threatened by his changing face. This event solidifies the link between Anden's corruption and his power as Elector as he explicitly links his actions to his authority.

The word "running" takes on a double meaning for Day, highlighting key aspects of his character and his desires. While working for the Patriots Day referred to himself as a "Runner," a designation given by the rebels to showcase his ability to travel efficiently and undetected. Even before meeting the Patriots, his actions against the Republic government were marked by his physical abilities. However, as he grows sicker, he begins to lose his physical strength and his ability to run. When he is given the opportunity to run again via a technically enhanced suit, he remarks that "my troubles melt away and once again I'm able to run away from my problems" (269). He acknowledges that he is able to run again physically, but also that he is able to escape his emotional pain. This double use of the word gives the reader insight to his identity, which is heavily based on his physical strength, as well as his motivations and desires, which revolve around escaping his current situation.

Discussion Question 1

Despite the fact that Republic soldiers have harmed his family, Pascao feels empathy for the soldier that allows him to pass his Trial. What does this reveal about Pascao's character?

Discussion Question 2

What is the significance of Day's constant nightmares in the novel? What do they reveal about his past?

Discussion Question 3

Anden chooses to go to the warfront to fight, like his father did. What might this indicate about his character? Is Anden becoming corrupted by power? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

concocted, bickering, hurriedly, featherweight, acrobatic, serenity, genome



Chapter 22 - June, Chapter 23 - Day

Summary

Chapter 22 is narrated from June's point of view as she wakes up in her apartment to the sound of an air raid siren. She turns on a screen and sees headlines that warn of Colonies ships approaching Los Angeles and that the Elector will make an emergency announcement. She looks outside and sees unfamiliar ships on the horizon just as Day calls and asks her to come to Eden's hospital room. She runs out of the apartment towards the hospital with Ollie and notices that the city's electricity has been shut off. She meets Day and Pascao, still wearing the suits, and Eden and they turn their attention to a screen that broadcasts Anden at a podium, about to address the country. Anden stands before a Republic flag and a blank white flag. He addresses a room full of soldiers and notifies them of the Republic's surrender to the Colonies.

When the broadcast ends, June asks Day about Eden and the cure. He explains that Eden's blood is not sufficient for a cure and leads her to a room full of computers. A lab tech inside shows June microscopic images of cells infected with the plague. He shows her an animated simulation of how a cure would work, along with a simulation of how the cure actually fails to bind with the plagued cells. He explains that without more information, they cannot make a medicine that will reach the infected cells. He further explains that this new plague was deliberately engineered by someone – and since the Republic has no records of it, it was likely created by the Colonies using another infection from Tribune, a Colonies city on the warfront. June thinks back eight months to when she and Day escaped to Tribune and she became severely ill. She tells the tech that the missing piece is her.

Chapter 23 begins with Day, narrating from the first-person point of view, describing the events after June explains her theory. She is taken to a new hospital room where lab techs perform the same tests on her as they did on Eden. Pascao leads Day reluctantly out of the hospital and into a train towards the city's airship bases. Day reminisces on when he was 14 and broke into the bases, setting fire to the engine rooms of several ships and stealing food for his family. He watches out the train window and sees several civilians throwing rocks at the screens that broadcast Anden's surrender speech. Pascao interrupts his thoughts and goes over the plan to destroy the landing docks when the Colonies land to occupy the city.

The train arrives at the first naval base and Day sees dark specks – what he thinks are Colonies ships – on the horizon above Los Angeles. He and Pascao are joined by four Republic Soldiers and enter the base and day is reminded of his illegal acts of sabotage with the Patriots he committed in similar bases in the past. A soldier briefs Pascao and Day on the best spots to lay bombs to disable Colonies ships and leaves to brief the other soldiers. The pair divide their duties and Day maneuvers himself onto the beams on the ceiling and into a crevice to place a bomb, dizzy from a headache. They continue



placing bombs in several other bases and settle into a room in the final base. Day, anxious that the Colonies will detect the fake surrender, calls the Colonies's Chancellor.

Day tells the Chancellor that he will comply with his request because he does not want to see the people of the Republic, in particular June, harmed. The Chancellor agrees to his terms and tells Day that he, Eden, and June will be safe after the shift of power. He reminds Day that “the Colonies are not responsible for your lifetime of suffering” (291) and for a moment Day considers turning on the Republic before June whispers something unknown to him through his earpiece. Day asks him when he should make his announcement to the people declaring support for the Colonies, and is surprised when the Chancellor tells him that he will need to make the announcement in a few hours from the deck of a Colonies air ship.

Analysis

The false surrender to the Colonies and Anden's appearance re-create a sense of hopelessness and despair in the novel. Throughout the novel, a hopeful tone has been created and then dismantled by further struggle. In Chapter 22 this pattern continues, as the initial hope created by the false surrender plan is overwhelmed by a sense of fear and despair. As Anden raises the white flag to the Colonies, June notices that his face carries a heavy weight that is stronger than ever before. She herself is overcome with a feeling of failure, and the listening soldiers stay silent in disbelief. Although the surrender itself is fake, the feeling of surrender it creates is real – not just for the Colonies, but for all in the Republic as well. This reaction again creates a tone of hopelessness to replace the hope of the previous chapters.

Day's reaction to the Chancellor of the Colonies calling him “Daniel” highlights the importance of family to Day. When Day tells the Chancellor that he will announce his support for the Colonies, he has mixed feelings. The Chancellor's words start to convince Day that perhaps surrender to the Colonies is the best option and that the Republic does not deserve to be saved. However, when he refers to Day as “Daniel,” his reaction brings him back to his original position. He remarks that only his family is allowed to refer to him as Daniel, and although the Chancellor corrects himself, Day thinks of his family and reconfirms his loyalty to the Republic. Reminders of his family have historically caused Day's loyalty to waver as he feels resentment towards the Republic for their deaths. Now, however, his family reminds him of his duty to fight for the people of the nation. This shift illustrates the importance of Day's family in influencing his motivations.

Discussion Question 1

The first thing June does when she wakes up to the sirens is calm Ollie. How does her relationship to her dog serve to build her character? What is the significance of her strong relationship with Ollie?



Discussion Question 2

Both the Colonies and the Republic have deliberately created plague viruses as weapons. In what ways are the nations similar? Different?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Day think of June to stay loyal to the Republic? How does their relationship affect his loyalty?

Vocabulary

poised, nondescript, polygonal, lyses, myriad, monotonous, indignant, coax



Chapter 24 - June, Chapter 25 - Day

Summary

June narrates Chapter 24 as she lies in a hospital bed with Eden after a round of experiments. Eden tries to comfort her through her nausea and they discuss the impending invasion by the Colonies. June tries to calm Eden's anxiety that their plan will fail, hiding her own anxiety. They both fall asleep and June is awakened by a lab tech named Mikhael who tells her that the experiments have worked and they are testing the possible cure on Tess. He leads her to Tess's room, where she is lying delirious in her bed. She receives a call from Day but the transmission is too unclear for her to hear what he is saying. She thinks this is unusual and there might be something blocking their communication. A few of Day's words come through, telling her that he will need to announce his support for the Colonies from one of their airships. The call ends and she realizes that the Colonies have taken over their airwaves.

Suddenly five Colonies soldiers burst through the door to the hospital hall. They demand passage so that they can search the hospital. Mikhael asks what they want and they respond that they are looking for Eden. June tells them that he is on a different floor and the soldiers recognize her as the Princeps-Elect. They do not believe her lie and start to move down the hall, threatening to shoot her. She convinces the leader that their Chancellor wants her alive, and they move to take her. She fights them back, knocking out the first three soldiers with ease, while Mikhael goes to lock the doors to the hallway. As June fights the fourth soldier, another hits her in the back of the head. Before he delivers a blow that will knock her unconscious, Tess appears and knocks him out. Lab techs flood the room and start tying up the soldiers just as June feels explosions shaking the ground. She looks out the window and sees bombs going off at the naval bases. She realizes that Day has made his announcement and that the fake surrender has been revealed.

Chapter 25, narrated from Day's point of view, begins with him reminiscing on a day when he was 15 years old in which he broke into a Los Angeles bank. He remembers how he placed a bomb on the safe in the middle of the night and returned the next day to set it off. Back in the present, Day feels the urge to flee the Colonies airship he walks into. Soldiers pat him down for weapons and do not notice the recorder and small explosives hidden in his boots. The ship is lined with Colonies flags and large advertisements for a variety of products. Soldiers lead Day to a room where the Chancellor waits and he is surprised by the leader's appearance – frail and weak with mechanical eyes. He motions Day over and greets him politely.

The Chancellor tells Day that Eden, June, and the Patriots will be safe but that the rest of the Republic's leadership will be executed. He asks Day if he believes that the citizens have a right to make decisions for the nation, and Day responds that he does. The Chancellor disagrees and tells Day that masses of people cannot make decisions for themselves, that leaders do what they need to do to run a country efficiently. Day



feels a moment of hesitation to go through with his plan, but reminds himself that he is fighting for the people. He steps up to the window of the ship and soldiers set him up for his broadcast.

Day addresses the people of the Republic, reminiscing on the struggles the nation has faced in the last year. He tells them that the Colonies are taking over and that he has a final message: “The Republic is weak and broken... but it is still your country. Fight for it. This is your home, not theirs” (311). He glances at the now angry Chancellor and kicks the window, triggering the explosives in his boot. The glass shatters and he jumps out of the room, then pulls himself up onto the side of the ship using the window frames. He feels a headache coming on and tries to pull himself to the roof, but the pain hits too soon and he struggles to see and remember where he is. He forces himself to open his eyes through the pain and swings down to the naval base using the chains from the deck’s railing. Day crouches on the base as Colonies soldiers move towards him. He thinks to himself that he is going to die, but the Patriot’s bombs explode in unison and distract the soldiers. Day runs as far as he can and stumbles from the pain of his headache. Pascao appears and pulls him to his feet.

Analysis

June’s reliance on a minor character in Chapter 24 illustrates the importance of mutual support and solidarity in achieving change. As June rushes into action to save Eden and her own life from the invading Colonies troops in the hospital, Mikhael works with her to secure the doors and tie up the troops. Although he is a minor character and only appears briefly in the novel, without his help the occupants of the hospital would be killed or placed under arrest. The fact that a character who seems inconsequential to the novel at first has such a major impact on the outcome of their escape highlights the importance of all citizens of the Republic working together. Even those with relatively little power compared to Day and June can make a tremendous impact, and their solidarity is the only way for the resistance to succeed. This point is further emphasized as Tess helps June stand. June remarks, “neither of us is very steady, but we don’t fall” (302) – a statement that hints that, while alone an individual will fail, but with the support of others they will succeed.

The Chancellor’s condescending focus on Day’s age works to highlight the value of youth in social change. Throughout their conversation, the Chancellor points out Day’s age multiple times. He condescends Day, telling him that he will not understand the world until he is older. He believes that he is superior to Day because of his age and experience, and he also believes that he has the upper hand – that he has successfully manipulated Day into turning the Republic over to the Colonies. However, Day holds the power in their relationship – a fact that becomes clear as he announces to the Republic to fight the invasion and escapes the room. The dualism between the Chancellor’s interpretation of power and the actual power dynamic between him and Day serves to show the reader that age cannot determine a person’s worth and impact.



Day physically overcomes blindness in Chapter 25, which allows him to overcome his metaphorical blindness for the first time. As he escapes the Colonies ship after his announcement, Day experiences another headache accompanied by blinding pain. During previous headaches, he has succumbed to the blindness and gone unconscious. This time, however, he tells himself to open his eyes and continues to run from the airship. It takes all of his strength to get to safety, but with Pascao's help Day survives his ordeal. His command over his physical blindness is significant as it signals an emotional change for Day – he is now willing to fight against both the physical blindness as well as his lack of foresight. Despite his hopeless situation, this change creates a shift in tone in the novel from hopelessness back to the will to fight.

Discussion Question 1

June remarks that “everything fades, except for the enemy” (301) as she fights in the hospital. How is this lack of sight different from the lack of vision she has experienced before? Similar?

Discussion Question 2

What role does experience play in a person's power to influence change? Is experience necessary to be an effective leader?

Discussion Question 3

Day believes that individuals have a right to decide on the laws in their nations, while the Chancellor believes they do not. Should citizens be involved in decision making in their nations? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

frequencies, guesstimated, anticlimactic, retort, goading, infernos



Chapter 26 - June, Chapter 27 - Day, Chapter 28 - June

Summary

June narrates Chapter 26 as she watches the explosions from the hospital. Pascao calls her and tells her that Day is safe. She tells Tess, who is being prepared for evacuation, and Republic soldiers block the hospital doors to prevent further invasion. June watches the screens in the hospital, which show Republic civilians and soldiers fighting against the Colonies troops and a message to break the surrender. Pascao calls her again and tells her to evacuate as a Colonies jet bombs the top of the building. Outside, she finds Pascao and helps him carry Day into the lobby of a nearby building. She tells him that the hospital is being evacuated and that Tess and Eden are safe before running back to the tower to help the evacuation.

When she reaches the hospital, she asks a nurse about Tess and Eden. She instructs them on where to take Eden and a soldier tells her to evacuate to a jeep that will take her to Anden. June refuses and stops the nurse carrying Eden before she walks into the line of fire from Colonies gunmen on the roof. A Republic soldier gives her his gun and she starts to climb the side of the building. She reaches the roof and sees gunmen on the rooves of adjacent buildings. She shoots one in a non-fatal location just as a dust bomb goes off below. She shoots a second gunman and realizes that her gun has run out of bullets. As she prepares to leave the roof she spots Commander Jameson on the roof of another building, aiming her gun at Day, who runs through the crowd below.

Chapter 27 is narrated by Day as he runs with Pascao through the street to a shelter. Pascao takes Tess as she is evacuated from the hospital and Day looks for Eden. A dust bomb erupts, blinding him for a moment and increasing the pain in his head. The dust clears and he sees a nurse running with Eden blindly towards a line of Colonies troops. He runs after her.

Chapter 28 is narrated by June from the roof of the building as she watches Day running through the street. She spots the nurse carrying Eden as she trips, dropping him on the ground. She runs towards the roof where a one of the gunmen she downed lies and sees Commander Jameson shoot at Day, missing by a few feet. She reaches the gunman and grabs his weapon, then runs towards Commander Jameson. The Commander misses Day again, but fires a third shot that hits him. He cries and drops Eden, but picks him up again and continues to run before Commander Jameson shoots him a second time. June, now behind her, aims to shoot as the Commander turns around and faces her. June shoots and misses, then ducks behind a chimney as Commander Jameson fires back.

Commander Jameson taunts June and she wonders why she cannot face her former superior. Swearing to herself and pushing Day's image out of her head, June jumps out



from her hiding spot and aims at her rival. The Commander flinches and June kicks her to the ground, then kicks her weapon away. She fights back and gets back on her feet. She and June circle each other on the roof and June tries to think of ways to defeat her. Commander Jameson lunges and hits June, and she tries to look frightened as she backs up to the edge of the roof. June thinks about her words at the penitentiary as Commander Jameson lunges again. June ducks and throws her off the roof, but the Commander grabs her arm. June screams to the soldiers below to shoot Commander Jameson, who is now dangling off the side of the roof by June's arm. They fire, and the Commander's body falls to the ground.

June thinks of Metias and wonders if she has done the right thing. She tries to wipe Commander Jameson's blood off of her hands, but cannot. Crying, she thinks about Day and runs to a fire escape. She finds him in the middle of the street with Pascao, who leaves to find medics. She bends over Day, who has two large, bleeding wounds in his chest. She reassures him that Eden is safe as he loses strength. He tells her that he loves her, and she responds in kind. She prays to a higher power, although she does not believe in one, and medics pull her away from Day's unconscious body.

Analysis

The Colonies's use of dust bombs to blind their enemy allows the characters to overcome both physical and metaphorical blindness for a final time. Throughout the novel, blindness serves as a barrier to the characters' growth and success. When the Colonies soldiers use dust to obscure their enemies's vision, they utilize blindness as a weapon to the same ends. Day and June, however, are able to overcome the dust and find Eden. Their success signals a turning point in which they are finally able to see clearly physically and metaphorically, but it comes at great cost. Once Day is able to see, he sacrifices himself for Eden. His sacrifice highlights his selfless character and shows that when he is able to see all his options, Day still chooses to protect others. This final sacrifice restores the character's vision and ends his struggle with blindness for good.

Lu uses June's difficulty in facing Commander Jameson and her ultimate demise to compare and contrast the two characters. As they face off on the roof, June wonders why she can face "everything in the world except Commander Jameson" (331). The Commander understands June on a personal level, which allows her to target her weak points and also suggests that the two are more similar than different – a theory Commander Jameson uses to taunt June. Both characters are well-trained and effective fighters, and both characters rely on logic over emotion. Commander Jameson uses logic to an extreme and, in June's view, lacks even the capacity for emotion. June fears becoming the Commander, but continues to try and suppress her own emotion. In her final encounter with Commander Jameson, June experiences a rush of emotion that allows her to defeat her former leader. Their fight shows that while June has the potential to eliminate emotion and become like Commander Jameson, she is willing to embrace forces outside of logic and use them to overcome adversity.



June experiences a breakdown as Day dies, allowing her emotion to surface above her logic. After using her emotion to defeat Commander Jameson, June is overwhelmed with grief over Day. She prays to God, although she is not religious, and screams as he is taken away from her. Although she has experienced extreme emotion in the novel before this point, this is the first time she allows it to surface in such a visible way. Her outburst signals a major change in her character – she loses control over emotion and logic fails her. Instead of trying to fight it, she allows herself to be consumed by it. This shift highlights the strength of emotion and distinguishes her depth of character.

Discussion Question 1

How are Commander Jameson and June alike? How are they different?

Discussion Question 2

June swears for the first time in the novel as she faces Commander Jameson. What might this signal about her character development?

Discussion Question 3

Metias once told June that “few people ever kill for the right reasons” (334). Did June kill Commander Jameson for the ‘right reasons’? What reasons are acceptable for killing another person?

Vocabulary

reverberating, sharpshooting, billowing, momentum, marred, ebb



Chapter 29 - Day, Chapter 30 - June, Epilogue

Summary

Day narrates Chapter 29 as June leans over him in the street. He reminisces on his past, his family, and June, and then loses his memory completely. He sees his mother appear above him, stands up, and walks towards her. He feels his heart stop beating and fill with warmth as he embraces his mother. She tells him that his father and John are well and love him. She tells him to go back to Eden as medics lift him onto a stretcher. He asks to stay with her, but she tells him that he belongs on “the other side of the looking glass” (341).

Chapter 30 is narrated by June three weeks after Day was shot. She stays by his side in the hospital while he is in a coma. Anden has returned from the warfront and citizens line the streets outside the hospital with red streaks in their hair. June reflects on the events that have passed in the previous weeks – the Antarticans came to the aid of the Republic and declared a ceasefire with the Colonies and Anden and the Chancellor met with an international court to start drafting a permanent peace treaty. Doctors operated to remove Day’s brain tumor even though he was not physically ready, due to the trauma of the gunshots.

June’s narration jumps forward a number of months until the next spring. She checks in at the hospital before Eden and Tess, who now works there as a medic assistant. June watches the news in the waiting room, which broadcasts headlines about an official peace treaty between the Republic and the Colonies, new immigration policies, and Mariana’s election as Princeps. She reflects on the night before, in which Anden had told her about Mariana’s appointment. She sees a doctor emerge from Day’s room and he approaches her. Introduced as Dr. Kann, he greets her and tells her that Day has awoken from his coma and is almost back to normal. June hugs him and asks why he said “almost.” He responds that Day has retrograde amnesia and cannot remember anything from the last few years – including June.

June enters Day’s room and sits next to him. She asks him if he remembers her, and he replies that he does not. She thinks about their relationship and the memory of Day crying in his old home. She decides that in order to prevent more harm to Day she must not be a part of his life. She tells him that she was sent by the Republic to check on him and thanks him for all he has done. He replies politely, and she leaves the room.

The narration skips two weeks forward, and June describes how Eden was offered a spot at a top Antartican engineering academy and allowed to bring Day along. She watches a news broadcast that shows him and Eden entering a jeep to take them to the landing dock, where they will depart for Ross City. Later that night, June gets dressed and walks out to the street. She walks through Lake sector and reminisces on her first



meeting with Day. She cries and wonders what Day is thinking about. In her head, she tells Day that she loves him.

The Epilogue takes place ten years after the end of the novel and is narrated by June on her 27th birthday. She remembers her previous birthdays which document her building romantic relationship with Anden over a number of years, her appointment as a commander, and the end of her relationship with the Elector. She prepares to lead two patrols for Anden to a meeting with the Colonies leadership and detours at her brother's memorial site. She speaks to Metias at the grave and tells him that they are now the same age. After talking for a while and thinking about Day, she leaves to walk through the streets. She checks the messages on her earpiece and discovers one from Tess, telling her to check the news. She looks up to the JumboTrons, sees that Eden is in Los Angeles to interview for a job, and realizes that he and Day are in her city.

June walks through Batalla Sector alone and sees a pair of young men with blond hair walking towards her. She recognizes them as Day and Eden. As they pass, Day stares at her. Overcome with emotion, June keeps walking, but Day turns and catches up to her. He asks her if they have met and she responds that they have not. He tells her that he has been looking for something that he has lost and that he feels like he knows her. He tells her that he is going to see Tess and she responds that she is going to have dinner with Tess that night. Suddenly, Day remembers June. They introduce themselves to each other.

Analysis

Day's near-death experience gives him and the reader insight into the nature of family and death. As Day begins to die, he sees his mother before him. She tells him that she, John, and Day's father never left and are always with Day. This revelation highlights the permanence of family, as even though they are gone from Day's life physically, they remain with him in memory. This experience also poses a theory on death in which it is not a permanent end, as Day has thought throughout the novel. Instead, death according to Day's mother is only a transition from physical presence to an emotional one.

June returns to logical thinking after Day's memory loss but accepts emotion alongside it, highlighting her growth as a character. After Day loses his memory, June chooses to end their relationship. She decides that this is a logical choice, but she also acknowledges the role that her and Day's emotion play into her decision. After he leaves for Ross City, she wanders the streets and wonders if she is doing it to find Day. She understands that her wandering is illogical, but she accepts the emotional response that it creates for her. Although June has returned to a logical way of thinking, she now allows emotion to play a role in her life as never before. This shift in her character solidifies the growth that she has experienced throughout the novel from viewing emotion as weakness to utilizing emotion alongside logic to inform her choices.



By introducing himself to June as “Daniel,” Day creates a new relationship with June as family. When the Chancellor of the Colonies referred to Day by the long form of his name, he became angry because he felt as though only family could use it. When he introduces himself to June on the street after ten years, however, he introduces himself as Daniel. Although he does not remember June completely, he knows that they have been close in the past. He decides in that moment that June, for the first time, is his family instead of just a friend. This step forward in their relationship, as June refers to it, signifies the depth of their bond and ends the novel with a tone of hopefulness.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Lu write religion into the novel for the first time during Day’s near-death experience? What role has faith played in the novel before this point?

Discussion Question 2

What are the parallels between Day’s vision of his mother and June’s experience visiting Metias’s grave?

Discussion Question 3

June refers to her last interaction with Day in Chapter 30 as the end of their journey together. Why might Lu choose to include an epilogue in which they reunite? What is the tone at the end of Chapter 30 compared to that of the Epilogue?

Vocabulary

grudgingly, neoprene, coherent, retrograde, wan, yearn, teeming, alias, kaleidoscope



Characters

Daniel "Day" Altan Wing

Daniel "Day" Altan Wing is the first protagonist of the novel and roughly half of the chapters are narrated from his point of view. He describes himself as a “sixteen-year-old-most-wanted-criminal-turned-national-hero” (3), referring to his past in which he worked in opposition to the Republic before shifting his support in favor of the progressive new Elector. He has white blond hair and blue eyes, which June describes as full of light. He is historically physically fit, but has a brain tumor that has weakened him and causes him painful headaches. He is given two months to live when he arrives in Denver, but is shot by Commander Jameson and nearly dies in Los Angeles during a Colonies invasion. He is revived and the tumor is removed, but he loses all memory of the previous two years, and June, after his surgery. He moves to Antarctica with his brother, Eden, at the end of the novel.

Day is from a lower class background in a slum sector of Los Angeles. He identifies heavily with his poor roots and class is a prominent factor in his political views and personal relationships. Although the Republic has provided him wealth, he struggles to feel comfortable in upper class society and to form a relationship with June, who was raised in a wealthy family. His relationship with Anden is also strained by class difference, and he argues with the Elector throughout the novel over providing better protection for the poor citizens of the Republic. His language reflects his class background as well, and his narration contains a number of slang and curse words.

Day is extremely loyal to his family. His mother, father, and brother John were killed by Republic soldiers, and he resents the Republic for it. His actions are motivated by his loyalty, and he struggles to remain in control of his emotions when he remembers them. At the same time, memories of his family are one of the only effective ways he can cope with the pain of his headaches. He remains close to his remaining brother, Eden, and sacrifices his life to protect him during the invasion of Los Angeles before being revived by medics.

Day has a romantic relationship with June. Their relationship is close and unique, but Day feels uncertain about the viability of their romance due to their differing class backgrounds and loyalties. Day relies on his emotion to guide him and only feels loyal to the Republic while it is aligned with his personal beliefs. This creates more distance with June, who relies on logic and was raised to be loyal to the Republic. Their relationship becomes closer throughout the novel, and both profess their love for each other before Day loses his memory. He sees her on the street ten years later and recognizes her, then introduces himself to her as Daniel.



June Iparis

June Iparis is the second protagonist of the novel. She is 16 years old and was raised in a military family. She was considered a military prodigy in the Republic until she helped Day escape execution and joined the rebel group the Patriots. She was reinstated as an officer by Anden and is training to become the Princeps, or leader of the Senate, for most of the novel. Like Day, she has lost most of her family to execution by soldiers of the Republic and she struggles to choose between loyalty to the Republic and loyalty to her deceased brother, Metias. She is stubborn, logical, and smart. Day describes her physically as “poised and graceful, with [a] slender, swanlike neck and her deep, dark eyes” (37).

June relies on logic to guide her decisions and views emotion as a weakness. She describes herself as “hardly a person who relies on gut instinct” (39), and throughout the novel she expresses her logical side through her keen observations of her surroundings, her calm, collected thoughts, and her ability to suppress emotion. As her character grows, however, she begins to allow emotion to guide her more and more. She wonders if there is a point to living without emotion and eventually allows emotion to surface so that she can defeat Commander Jameson. After Day loses his memory, she allows herself to act against logic and embraces emotion as part of her personality.

June has a romantic relationship with Day that is complicated by her guilt as one of the Republic soldiers who contributed to the deaths of his family members. Although she helped him escape execution and has been loyal to him since they met, she is consumed with self-hatred for her role in his past. She loves Day but does not believe that she deserves to be with him – especially when she sees him crying at his old family home. She believes that she is the reason he is suffering and when he loses his memory she chooses to leave his life permanently. They are reunited in the epilogue when Day recognizes her, ten years after the end of the novel.

Eden Bataar Wing

Eden is Day’s younger brother and his only remaining family. He is 11 years old with white blond hair and purple eyes – a side effect of plague experiments conducted by the Republic which have left him partially blind. He is intelligent and engineer-minded and is eventually invited to study engineering at a top university in Antarctica. Day describes him as “sickly and tech-minded and occasionally obnoxious” (127) with a quiet manner and rare temper. He is dedicated to Day and spends much of the novel comforting his brother through his headaches.

Eden’s relationship with Day is intense and mutually protective, and conflict arises when he is given the option to undergo further experimentation to find a cure for the plague. While a cure could prevent invasion from the Colonies, Eden may not survive the experiments. Eden chooses to potentially sacrifice himself for the sake of the Republic despite his brother’s wishes. When Day protests, Eden shows his desire for independence an ability to reason greater than expected from a child of his age.



Anden Stavropolous, Elector Primo

Anden is the young leader of the Republic. He is young but sophisticated, attractive, and charismatic. He is relatively well-liked by the citizens of the Republic for his progressive policies which favor social equity, but disliked by much of the Senate and military who view him as too lax. He and June are attracted to each other, but June rejects his advances. Initially, June describes him as “calm, cool, collected, a proud chin under stress, an even voice when angered” (17), however as the novel progresses he becomes more authoritative and explosive under stress, ultimately threatening to execute all who oppose him. After Day loses his memory, Anden and June begin a romantic relationship.

Commander Jameson

Commander Jameson is a former Republic commander who is responsible for the execution of Day's family as well as June's brother, Metias. June describes her as icy and soulless, with “an absolute lack of conscience” (23). She is sentenced to death by Anden but escapes and joins forces with the Colonies. She attempts to kill June multiple times throughout the novel, taunting her about her brother's death. She is killed during the Colonies invasion of Los Angeles after attempting to kill June on a rooftop.

Thomas Bryant

Thomas is a Republic soldier in Commander Jameson's patrol. He is tidy and fiercely loyal to the Republic. He was a childhood friend of both June and Metias until ordered to kill Metias by Commander Jameson. He is charged as a traitor against the Republic by Anden and sentenced to execution. He escapes execution and fights against the Colonies invasion in Denver, where he is shot and killed by Colonies soldiers.

Tess

Tess is an orphan from Los Angeles and close friend of Day's. She is a Patriot Medic and is detained during the Colonies attack on Denver. She is young, but appears old and mature with “wide eyes and a blunt, messy bob of a haircut” (115). She expresses platonic and romantic love for Day and remains friends with him throughout his relationship with June and after his loss of memory. She becomes infected with the engineered plague and nearly dies before the cure is found.

Pascao

Pascao is the lead runner in the Patriots with “a head of short curls and those ridiculously pale grey eyes” (117). He is bright and upbeat and has a characteristic grin. He partners with Day to sabotage Colonies invaders in Denver and Los Angeles as well



as to help spread Day's message of solidarity. While he was previously opposed to the Republic regime, he fights for them in this novel because he feels faith that the Republic can change for the better.

Chancellor of the Colonies

The Chancellor of the Colonies has no other name in the novel. Day describes him as "short and small, frail, his hair receded and gray, his voice way too big for his body" (306). However, he is manipulative, condescending, and controlling, particularly over radio transmission. He offers Day the safety of June, Eden, and the Patriots in exchange for convincing the people of the Republic to submit to the Colonies.

Lady Medina

Lady Medina is one of the leaders of Antarctica. She is graceful and articulate, but condescending.

Mariana Dupree

Mariana is one of the three Princeps-Elects, along with June and Serge. She is 37 and has worked as a Senator for a decade. She does not respect June, but is less rude and aggressive than her counterpart Serge. She is eventually appointed as Princeps.

Serge Carmichael

Serge is one of the three Princeps-Elects, along with June and Mariana. June describes him as "a jumpy thirty-two-year-old Senator and great political mind" (22), and he uses his experience to belittle those around him with less. He is often combative towards June and Anden.

Lucy

Lucy is Day and Eden's caretaker, assigned by the Republic. She is stern but caring, and shows genuine concern for both boys throughout the course of the novel.

John

John is Day and Eden's older brother. He was killed by Republic soldiers during an execution attempt on Day. He is protective of his family, loyal, and uneducated.

Metias

Metias is June's older brother. He was Thomas's commanding officer and had romantic feelings towards him. Thomas killed Metias under orders by Commander Jameson. Metias's memory often guides June through difficult scenarios.



Symbols and Symbolism

The Color Red

The color red symbolizes the influence certain characters hold over others and the fact that they are often singled out from those around them. Further, it symbolizes the love for each other and the Republic that motivates their difficult decisions. Day wears a deep red outfit in the first chapter as part of his disguise, June wears rubies at the Capitol banquet, and Anden wears a red uniform in contrast to his senators when he announces their surrender.

Paper Rose

The paper rose symbolizes Eden's engineering savvy as well as the love shared between him and Day. It is an elaborate flower that Eden makes from paper before he is killed in a fire in Day's dream. It

Blindness

Physical blindness symbolizes the inability of the characters to see their paths forward, as well as connect with the past. Blindness is a prominent theme throughout the novel. Eden is blind from plague experiments; Day goes partially blind during headaches; and June has her vision physically blocked by Commander Jameson during their fights.

Paperclip Ring

The paperclip ring symbolizes the bond Day and June share across the gap created by their difference in class. In the second novel of the Legend trilogy, *Prodigy*, Day gives June a ring made of paperclips as a token of his love, explaining that people from poor sectors do not have money for proper jewelry. In *Champion*, June returns the gift to Day.

The Armor

The fall of the Armor in *Champion* represents the shift into a new and hopeful, albeit jarring, period in the Republic's history.

The Armor is a militarized protective wall that surrounds Denver. The wall is the city's major source of defense against the Colonies' invasion and represents the isolationism of the Republic and unwillingness to open borders. It is comparable to the Berlin Wall, which separated the city of Berlin into two sections controlled by the militarized German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany during the Cold War. The Colonies successfully break through the Armor, symbolizing the weakening state of the



Republic as well as the historical fall of the Berlin Wall, which reunited displaced families and welcomed in an era of peace and cooperation in Germany.

The Plague

The plague, an engineered biological weapon, initially created by the Republic but harnessed by the Colonies to use against them, represents the failure of the Republic to control its own weapons as well as their lack of foresight. It also represents the deceit of the Colonies and their willingness to sacrifice the lives of its own and Republic citizens alike for the sake of political gain.

Red Streak in Hair

The red streak in hair symbolizes the suffering the Republic citizens have faced at the hands of a corrupt government, as well as their solidarity against their oppressors.

Before his attempted execution in the first novel, Day was beaten by Republic soldiers and blood streaked his hair. The red streak has become associated with Day and is used by Republic citizens as a sign of solidarity and protest. Day uses red streak imagery along with his “LISTEN FOR ME” graffiti to alert the citizens to watch for him, and June learns that even people outside of the Republic have adopted the fashion when she watches an interview with a girl in Nairobi who wears it.

Sea Daisies

These flowers symbolize the hidden beauty of slums and the positive things that can only arise from difficult circumstances. When Day walks to his old home in Lake Sector, he sees sea daisies growing out of the cracks in the road, “little spots of turquoise and green on an otherwise gray street” (219). Although the poor sectors of the Republic are run down and dilapidated, the daisies could not grow without the cracks.

Running

“Running” symbolizes Day’s ability to escape situations emotionally and physically. Day refers to himself as a “Runner,” a classification given to him by the Patriots that designates him as agile, fast, and able to travel undetected. As his health deteriorates, he begins to lose his ability to run as well as to perform as a Runner. When Pascao gives Day a suit that allows him to run again, he thinks that “my troubles melt away and once again I’m able to run away from my problems” (269). The term “running” holds two meanings to Day – it refers to the physical activity that has become a deep part of his identity, as well as to his ability to avoid dealing with his pain.



Blood-stained Hands

When June orders the soldiers to kill Commander Jameson from the rooftop, she steps back to realize that her hands are covered in the Commander's blood. She cannot wipe it off, and the blood symbolizes the guilt and uncertainty she will feel over her decision to take Commander Jameson's life.



Settings

San Francisco, California, Republic

San Francisco is the city where Day lives with Eden at the beginning of the novel. It is mostly submerged under the ocean, but the parts that remain above water are industrial and full of military bases. The city is slightly more progressive than others in the Republic, with locals bearing more unique and extravagant dress than other parts of the Republic.

Denver, Colorado, Republic

Denver is the capital city of the Republic. It is home to Colburn Hall and the Capitol Tower, where Day sees June for the first time since they parted ways eight months prior to the beginning of the novel. It is a military city and is surrounded by the Armor, a massive wall equipped with weapons and guards to keep invading forces out. While most of the city is military barracks and bases, the Capitol Tower is lavish and adorned with glittering banners.

Ross City, Antarctica

Ross City is the only city outside of the Republic that the characters visit in the novel. June describes it as a “sprawling metropolis” (133) full of “polished and flawless” (135) buildings that change colors and elegant bridges. It is technologically advanced and surrounded by an artificial atmosphere that controls the climate. The city runs on a point system in which every citizen can earn points for performing good deeds or lose points for acting inappropriately. Higher scores ensure better income and job placement.

Los Angeles, California, Republic

Los Angeles is June and Day’s hometown and the evacuation site after Denver is attacked. Day describes it as warm, hazy, and industrial. It is separated into slum sectors and wealthy sectors, called Gem sectors, which segregate rich citizens from the poor. While the Gem sectors are full of luxurious high-rises and amenities, the slum sectors have little access to even basic needs such as electricity.

Tribune City, Colonies

Tribune is the city in the Colonies where June contracted the plague. The characters do not physically enter Tribune in the novel, but June remembers it as “a beautiful, sparkling city... completely covered in thousands of twinkling blue lights” (197). It is controlled by four major corporations and the streets are covered in advertisements.

Themes and Motifs

Class Identity and Oppression

Class is major and deeply-rooted dividing force in the world of *Champion*, one that creates divisions between characters. From the very beginning of the novel, Day identifies with his class background. He has transitioned from a poor orphan into a wealthy soldier of the Republic, but he struggles to identify with the upper class. For instance, he feels especially out of place at the Independence Day Banquet amongst the Republic's elite: "No matter how much money the Republic throws at me, I will forever be the boy from the streets" (38). Although he is now technically wealthy, Day still is not part of the upper-class in his dress, mannerisms, or education. This sense of discomfort is highlighted by Serge's comments on his inability to use silverware properly. While some characters, like Serge, intentionally create a divide between classes, other relationships have more subtle class divisions. Day struggles to feel romantically connected with June because they do not share the same background. Although she does not look down on Day for his lower class upbringing, he feels unable to relate to her. These feelings are illustrated the night that Day spends with June – as he observes the wealthy sector of L.A. that June's balcony overlooks, the paperclip ring she gave to him feels heavy on his finger. Because class has always been a major factor in his identity, it will always create a divide between them.

The stratification between upper- and lower-class citizens persists in the infrastructure of the Republic as well as in the characters' relationships. As Denver evacuates during the Colonies invasion, Day points out that the poor citizens do not have access to bunkers and are more likely to be harmed. He and Anden argue, but it is clear that even though Anden desires to change, the entire infrastructure of the Republic is based on the oppression of the poor. The alienation and injustice that Day feels based on class prevents him from empathizing fully with the leaders of the Republic. Even in his final address to the public Day addresses the poor specifically, relating to their struggles under an oppressive regime. The class divisions between characters serve to emphasize the role of class in the real world, as well as its depth in our relationships.

The Dichotomy of Emotion and Logic

Lu uses June and Day's respective reliance on logic and emotion to question the importance of emotion and highlight the value of both in personal growth. Although both characters share many traits, perhaps the largest dividing factor between Day and June is the varying degree to which they rely on emotion to guide their actions. Day not only acts on his emotions, but values them as an effective tool for guidance. He relies on emotional memory to distract him from the pain of his headaches, and during the evacuation of Denver he believes that his loyalty to the poor outweighs the logistical difficulties of an equitable evacuation. June, however, describes herself from the beginning of the novel as "hardly a person who relies on gut instinct" (39). She



prioritizes logic in her life and tries to prevent emotion from affecting her decisions. For instance, when she faces Thomas she uses observation to distract herself from her strong emotions. Both characters envy each other, and also view their personalities as strengths. The dichotomy between the two and their individual successes allow the reader to view both emotion and logic as valuable in their own rights.

While both emotion and logic have clear strengths in the novel, June struggles to overcome adversity by relying on logic alone. Through the course of the novel, she learns to accept emotion alongside reason as a powerful force for defeating her enemies and achieving personal growth. She begins to question logic alone when she tries to comfort Anden: “When emotion fails, logic will save you” (178). However, she questions her own wisdom, thinking that “without emotion, what’s the point of being human?” (178). When she faces Commander Jameson for a final time, June realizes that the Commander is logical to a fault and that her extreme lack of emotion makes her cruel and cold. June embraces her emotions to defeat the Commander. Although she shifts back to a primarily logical way of thinking after Day’s memory loss, June accepts emotion alongside her reason. This acceptance once again highlights the value of both reason and emotion in personal growth.

The Potential of the Individual

The impact of the characters on the world around them and the way that their impacts are perceived raise questions about the value of individual action and power in creating social change. The characters in the novel represent varying levels of power within the Republic – Day and June hold influence over the public, Anden holds absolute political power, and other characters such as Tess and Pascao appear to have very little actual power over their surroundings. However, Lu uses the difference in their perceived power and their actual impacts to emphasize the impact an individual can have despite their lack of actual power. One of the most obvious differences in power is between Anden and Day. Anden holds complete power over the Senate and the laws of the Republic. He uses his authority to threaten others into listening to him and becomes increasingly wrapped up in his own power. However, his actual influence remains minimal without Day and June’s support. Alternatively, Day believes that he has little influence on the world around him, but his impact is massive – he inspires citizens and soldiers alike to rebel against the Colonies and defeat the invading force.

While Day’s influence is undeniably large, Lu also uses his narrative to point out the necessity of support and solidarity in success. As he witnesses the Republic citizens’ reaction to the Colonies invasion, Day thinks that the people who have faith in him “don’t understand that I’m just a boy... Without the Patriots, June, or Anden, I couldn’t have done anything. I’m useless on my own” (188). His reflection emphasizes that solidarity and support from others is vital in his success. June’s escape from the hospital during the invasion of Los Angeles also shows the importance of solidarity – she escapes the soldiers only due to the aid of supporting characters Mikhael and Tess. As she and Tess make their way out of the hospital, she reflects, “neither of us is very



steady, but we don't fall" (302). While alone they would fail, together they escape successfully.

Finally, Lu uses the influence of Day, Anden, and June to emphasize that an individual's power does not rely on age. The senators and Commander Jameson often use Anden's age as a way to belittle him, claiming that he is nothing but a 'boy king' and cannot control the fate of the Republic due to his inexperience. When hard decisions must be made, however, Anden makes them with confidence and demands the support of his peers. Similarly, June feels ill-equipped as a Princeps-Elect due to her lack of experience in the Senate. Although she abandons her role in the end, she still shows enormous power over the fate of the Republic using her physical strength and wit – qualities that are not diminished due to her age. Day also receives criticism for his age, especially from the Chancellor of the Colonies who condescends him and invalidates his opinions based on the fact that he has not yet 'grown up.' Despite the Chancellor's opinion, Day becomes perhaps the most powerful character in the novel, inspiring the citizens of the Republic to "become a million versions" (252) of him and defeat the Colonies. The massive influence of young characters illustrates that youth does not prevent influence and that even those who may be perceived as powerless have the power to create large scale social change.

The Strength of Familial Bonds

The characters in the novel use family to cope with pain and guide their actions. Lu uses their relationships to highlight the importance of familial bonds as well as raise questions about the nature of "family" itself. Both Day and June show the importance of their families in their narration. June uses thoughts of her deceased brother to help her cope with extreme stress, and Day uses memories of his own family to cope with his pain. Day's closest relationship in the novel is with Eden, who he vows to protect above all else and who supports him through his illness more than any other character. For both Day and June, family, even those who are no longer physically there, serve to protect and guide them through their situations. For instance, Metias's voice guides June through her encounters with Commander Jameson and allows her to survive her ambush. Their bonds transcend even death, motivate nearly every action, and define the major relationships in the novel. The prevalence of familial bonds in the narrative emphasizes the importance of family in guidance and support.

While family is notably important to the characters, Lu uses relationship dynamics between them to question the very definition of family. June, Day, Tess, and most other characters in the novel have lost their blood families to war, disease, execution, and famine. This has forced them to form new families that are not restricted by the traditional definition. For instance, Tess tells Day that "when the entire world turned its back on my and left me to die, you took me in... you became my entire family—you were my parents and my siblings and my caretaker" (153). Her dedication to Day and his dedication to her has defined a new familial bond, even though they are not technically related. The most significant example of redefining family may be the relationship between Day and June. Although less explicit than the relationship between



him and Tess, Day accepts June as his family at the end of the novel. He introduces himself to her as “Daniel,” a name that he reserves for family alone. He creates new family bonds without sacrificing those with people he has lost, redefining the meaning of family completely.

Blindness and Sight

Lu creates a sustained metaphor of sight in which the characters’ physical blindness reflects hopelessness and despair. Day, June, and Eden all experience forms of physical blindness brought on by illness or extreme emotion. Eden is partially blind due to experimentation by the Republic. Day experiences blindness during his headaches, and June experiences blindness when she panics facing Commander Jameson. There is a large emphasis on these forms of blindness, and June and Day’s narration is riddled with references to it as well as more subtle forms of vision loss. For instance, Day remarks on how grateful he is that June can’t “see” him during his episodes and wishes that Eden did not have to. The physical lack of sight the characters experience emphasizes the importance of sight to action, and is accompanied by a metaphorical form of vision loss.

Blindness in the novel symbolizes hopelessness and a lack of guidance for the characters. While they experience physical blindness, they struggle to see the paths ahead of them and make effective choices. For instance, as June faces Commander Jameson in the alley, she panics and thinks that she cannot see. Metias’s voice soon calms her and she regains her composure, allowing her to escape the situation. The guidance of her family cuts through the lack of foresight and enables her to act. Day struggles more to overcome blindness, however. As he escapes the Chancellor’s airship, he experiences another blinding headache. While he usually gives in to the pain, this time he tells himself, “open your eyes... you have to open them” (313). He physically opens his eyes and escapes imminent danger, and he also experiences an emotional awakening. After he is shot, he sees his mother for the first time and realizes that even though he cannot physically see his family, they are still with him. By opening his eyes metaphorically, Day is able to overcome hopelessness and find a reason to live. This form of ‘sight’ extends to the other characters as well, and vision (or hope) is restored for all.



Styles

Point of View

The novel is narrated in the first person by both Day and June in alternating chapters. The narration stays in the present tense, but often involves recounting of past events or dreams. The narration takes place using dialogue and inner monologue. Neither narrator is omniscient, and one character's perspective on events often reveals new or contrary facts to the other's same interpretation.

Language and Meaning

Language use in the novel varies according to the character narrating, and highlights class differences between characters. Characters from lower class backgrounds use a number of slang and curse words in their speech, such as "goddy," "trot," and "damn." Day's narration in particular uses these signifiers of lower class background, and Pascao and Tess use similar language in their dialogue. The lower class characters also use in-group language to refer to each other, such as "cousin," which denotes solidarity between poor characters and excludes upper class individuals from their style of speaking. Upper class characters, on the other hand, use more refined and articulate language free from slang. June, for instance, narrates using detailed descriptions of her surroundings and calm, logical thought. Her chapters often include headers that describe the location, time, and even temperature of her surroundings. As June grows closer to Day and begins to use emotion to guide her actions, however, her language becomes more similar to the lower class characters. For instance, as she faces Commander Jameson on the roof of the Bank Tower, she thinks, "I don't have time for this bullshit" (331). Lu uses this shift in language to indicate a bridging of class divide as well as June's growth.

Lu uses Day's name to distinguish his relationships and highlight the bond he shares with family. Throughout the novel, Eden is the only character who refers to Day by his proper name, Daniel. This unique characteristic of their relationship emphasizes the closeness of family between the two – even Tess and June, whom Day loves, do not use his full name. When the Chancellor calls him Daniel, Day thinks, "I am not Daniel to anyone outside of my family. I am Day" (291), solidifying the link between his name and the nature of his relationships. In the epilogue, however, Day re-introduces himself to June as Daniel. Lu uses his name to indicate a new and stronger relationship between the characters.

Structure

The novel is made up of chapters that alternate between Day's and June's point of view. The chapters vary in length and are not designated by chapter titles or section headings. Some of June's chapters contain headings that designate shifts in location.

Most chapters proceed into each other chronologically, but some narrate identical events or periods of time from alternative perspectives.



Quotes

I feel so out of place among these aristocrats, with their bank accounts and posh manners. No matter how much money the Republic throws at me, I will forever be the boy from the streets. And I'd forgotten that a boy from the streets is no match for the future Princeps.

-- Day (Chapter 3)

Importance: This quote, in which Day attends the Banquet at the Capitol, highlights the impact of class on the way Day interacts with the world around him.

I will die with honor for sacrificing everything I have – everything – for my country. And yet, Day is the legend, while I am to be executed... it makes no sense' 'You're wrong,' I say sadly. 'It makes perfect sense.' 'Why?' 'Because Day chose to walk in the light.'"

-- Thomas, June (Chapter 6)

Importance: In this quote June points out the difference between Day and Thomas. While they are both loyal to the Republic in some sense, Thomas's loyalty is to the laws, while Day's is to the people.

Eden stares at me with sightless eyes, a disability the Republic handed to him. And now he's offering himself up, a sacrificial lamb to the slaughter, and I can't understand why. No. I do understand. He is me – he's doing what I would have done.

-- Day (Chapter 9)

Importance: This quote highlights the bond of brotherhood Day feels with Eden. He understands Eden's seemingly contradictory decision because he would make the same choice, and he recognizes the similarities they share as brothers.

You are a politician. You have to make decisions that break your heart, that hurt and deceive, that no one else will understand. It's your duty.' Even as I say this, though, I feel the doubt in the back of my mind, the seeds that Day planted. Without emotion, what's the point of being human?

-- June, to Anden (Chapter 12)

Importance: In this quote, June comforts Anden for the difficult choices he must make as Elector. She expresses the difficult position of political leaders during war, as well as her discomfort with the way politics affect decision making.

The people and the Republic... are working together. I frown at the unfamiliar thought. There's no question that the Republic has done some horrible things to us all, that they might still be doing those things. But... maybe, I've also been seeing the things I want to see. Maybe now that the old Elector is gone, the Republic soldiers have starts to shed their masks too.

-- Day (Chapter 13)



Importance: In this quote, Day realizes that the Republic is united despite the previous differences between the military and the civilians. Although he is surprised, he considers that he has been resisting cooperation as well.

You're the scariest, most clever, bravest person I know, and sometimes I can't catch my breath because I'm trying so hard to keep up. There will never be another like you... Billions of people will come and go in this world... but there will never be another like you.

-- Day, to June (Chapter 14)

Importance: This quote captures the intensity of June and Day's relationship. Day views June as unique, and he respects and fears her for it.

The tears come in a rush. I don't bother to stop them, because I know it's impossible. I sob uncontrollably – I can't stop, I can't catch my breath, I can't see. I can't see my family because they're not here.

-- Day (Chapter 15)

Importance: In this quote Day is overwhelmed with emotion in his family's home in Lake. It incorporates the theme of sight, and Day is overcome with grief because he cannot see his dead family members.

After over a year of trauma, after months and months of political bargaining, after days of war and death, I am starting to suspect everything and everyone. This is how the Colonies could tear us apart... not with their allies or weapons, but with their propaganda. With fear and desperation.

-- June (Chapter 18)

Importance: In this quote June reflects on the ways that the Republic is failing to remain united. She realizes that the physical aspect of war is less worrying than the psychological – that the constant fear and exhaustion caused by years of war and suspicion will tear down their forces.

The people believe in you. They believe in us. And they will fight back for us if we call on them – they'll be the ones ripping down Colonies flags, protesting in front of Colonies offices, turning their own homes into traps for invading Colonies soldiers... They'll become a million versions of me.

-- Day (Chapter 19)

Importance: This quote is a turning point for Day. While he concocts his plan to overcome the Colonies invasion, he accepts that he as an individual has impact on the future of the Republic by using his influence to get the citizens to fight back as he has.

'As my father's son, I am the Elector of the Republic. I am the law. Everything I decide directly affects who lives or dies.' I study Anden's face with a growing sense of worry. His gentle, soft-voiced self is slowly disappearing behind the veil of darkness and violence inherited from his father.



-- Anden, June (Chapter 20)

Importance: This quote marks the change in Anden as he becomes more corrupted by his power as Elector. Although he is a gentle person, he becomes more strict and violent as he exercises more extreme power.

I've always hated the Republic for what they did to the people I loved, to all of us. But sometimes I wonder whatever happened to that soldier, and what his life was like, and who he cared about, and whether or not he's even still alive. Who knows? Maybe he's already gone.

-- Pascao (Chapter 21)

Importance: In this quote Pascao reflects on why he chose to fight for the Republic. He thinks about the soldier that allowed him to pass his trial and realizes that the people who uphold the Republic's laws are individuals with complex lives. His perspective illustrates a growing sense of empathy among the Patriots.

I can feel his presence here in every stone he has touched, every person he has lifted up, every street and alley and city that he has changed in the few years of his life, because he is the Republic, he is our light, and I love you, I love you, until the day we meet again I will hold you in my heart and protect you there, grieving what we never had, cherishing what we did have. I wish you were here.

-- June (Chapter 30)

Importance: This quote highlights the lasting impact Day has had on not only June, but the entire Republic. Even though Day is no longer physically in the Republic or in June's life, he remains present in memories.