

# Enclave Study Guide

## Enclave by Ann Aguirre

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# Plot Summary

Enclave is the first novel in the Razorland Series by Ann Aguirre. This novel tells the story of Deuce and Fade, two teens living in the College Enclave in what were once the underground subway tunnels beneath New York City. Deuce has always wanted to be a huntress for the enclave and is overjoyed when she achieves her desire. However, events unravel to make Deuce question the leadership of the elders in the enclave and the blind adherence to the rules of most of her fellow citizens. When her friend, Stone, is accused of a crime Deuce knows he did not commit, she takes responsibility for him and is cast out of the enclave. Deuce leaves with Fade, her hunting partner and co-confessor, to discover that the world topside is nothing like the elders always claimed it would be. Enclave is a fascinating look at a post-apocalyptic world with teenagers as the heroes and villains.

Deuce celebrates her naming ceremony with her good friends, Stone and Thimble. They open a can that they found months ago and saved for this happy moment. Inside they find a card with writing on it. To protect themselves from punishment, they quickly turn the card into the Wordkeeper, as per the rules of the enclave.

A short time later, Deuce is introduced to her new hunting partner, Fade. Fade is an outsider, a young man who was found in the tunnels some years ago. Fade survived in the tunnels alone for a long period of time, a fact that causes both fascination and distrust among the members of the enclave. Deuce is not happy to be partnered with him, but it seems he is not overjoyed to be partnered with her, either.

Deuce and Fade's first few times in the tunnels alone together go well despite their distrust of one another. Then, one afternoon while hunting they come across a blind child trapped inside one of the many metal structures in the tunnels. Without speaking, Fade and Deuce decide to save the boy. They fight off Freaks, the zombie-like creatures that populate the tunnels, before saving the boy. They decide to take the boy back to the enclave even though they know they will be punished for returning without completing the day's duties.

Deuce and Fade turn the boy over to the leaders. The boy tells them that his enclave, Nassau, has been overrun by Freaks. The leader of the hunters, Silk, decides as punishment to send Deuce and Fade to Nassau to check out the boy's story. It is a long trip and it is doubtful that Deuce and Fade will survive. To add to the tension, Fade blames Deuce for not protecting the young blind boy from the elders whom they both assume killed the boy.

The trip to Nassau is long and tough. They run into many Freaks, including a group who appear to be more intelligent than the ones they have encountered in the past. When Deuce and Fade arrive at Nassau, they discover that the enclave has been overrun with Freaks and everyone is dead. They begin the return journey to their own enclave with heavy hearts. As they travel, they run into a strange enclave that lives in the wall of the



tunnels and have adapted to the darkness of the tunnels. Upon return to her enclave, Deuce arranges a trade agreement between the two groups.

A short time after returning to the enclave, Deuce returns from a hunting trip to discover her friend, Stone, being accused of stealing a book from the Wordkeeper. Deuce confesses to the crime to protect Stone and Fade backs her up. This causes both Deuce and Fade to be exiled from the enclave. They leave immediately and are forced to find a way to survive topside. Once topside, they become a target of a gang that lives in the buildings there. They manage to outsmart the gang, but then find themselves overrun by Freaks who have also found their way topside.

Deuce and Fade decide to leave the city. They take with them two survivors of the gang who realize teaming up with Deuce and Fade is the only way to survive the Freaks. They spend the winter in a cabin in the woods. In the spring, they continue north, but soon run into a group of Freaks who have taken over an entire town. Despite serious injury, they manage to survive until they are rescued by a man who takes them to a walled city filled with survivors of all ages.



# Part 1, Down Below: Chapters 1-6

## Part 1, Down Below: Chapters 1-6 Summary

Enclave is the first novel in the Razorland Series.

Chapter 1. Deuce. Deuce is a teen living in the College Enclave in tunnels below ground. There has been a devastating holocaust that has forced people to live underground. Here people rarely live beyond forty, with most dying much younger. For this reason, small children are not given names until they reach an age at which they can be of service to the enclave. Deuce has just reached that age and during her naming ceremony is marked a huntress and given the name Deuce based on a playing card she bled on during the ceremony. Afterward, Deuce goes to celebrate with her two childhood friends, Thimble, a builder, and Stone, a breeder. During their celebration, the trio opens an artifact they have kept for months for this specific purpose and find inside writing on a card. They decide to turn it over to the Wordkeeper immediately to prevent any punishment.

Chapter 2. Trial. Deuce and her friends turn in the card to the Wordkeeper and explain how they came to have it. They sign an affidavit claiming they knew nothing of the artifact's contents prior to opening it. A short time later, Deuce is introduced to her new hunting partner, Fade. Fade is an outsider who was found in the tunnels some years ago. This causes Fade to be something of an outsider in the enclave, someone who is not completely trusted. Fade seems unhappy with Deuce as his partner, but when they spar and she proves herself capable, he appears to gain some appreciation for her. When they go out into the tunnels together the first time, Deuce is very excited, but smart enough to pay close attention. They run into Freaks, zombie-like creatures, almost immediately. Deuce is pleased with her ability to deal with them and Fade's efficient fighting skills.

Chapter 3. Wordkeeper. A few days later, Deuce and her friends are called by the Wordkeeper. He tells them that he has decided they did nothing wrong. In fact, he rewards them by reading the card to them. It appears to be a wedding invitation, but Deuce and her friends do not understand because weddings are no longer a part of their culture. Deuce then leaves her friends to get to work. During the morning briefing, Silk tells the hunters that there seem to be more Freaks in the area so they should be cautious. Silk then assigns Deuce and Fade to patrolling the back areas, an assignment that is meant to be a punishment for Deuce being late to the briefing. Fade is not pleased, but he stoically leads Deuce to their assigned area. Almost immediately they hear a strange sound that Fade recognizes as a distress call. Fade leads the way to a giant box that the hunters often use as an emergency shelter in the tunnels. Inside is a young blind boy. Deuce and Fade coax him out of the box and decide to take him back to the enclave even though they know they could be punished for not finishing their assigned task.



Chapter 4. Deuce and Fade are immediately overwhelmed by Freaks. They win the fight, but are disturbed by the organized way in which they were hit. Deuce and Fade take the boy back to the enclave where they are harassed for returning early. However, the young boy insists on speaking with the elders, informing them that his enclave, Nassau, is under attack by Freaks. It is clear the elders take this news with a great deal of skepticism. They then take the young boy away. There is nothing Deuce can do. Then Silk informs Fade and Deuce that they will go to Nassau to check out the boy's story. Fade takes Deuce to his quarters then and tells her they are going to kill the boy. Fade seems disappointed when Deuce appears supportive of the elders' decision. Deuce then spends some time with her friends.

Chapter 5. Journey. Deuce and Fade set out on their long journey to Nassau Enclave. They run all morning, stopping only for a meal at noontime. Aware of the danger of the freaks, they keep moving. Eventually they begin to search for a safe place to sleep and find an old bathroom. Deuce is surprised to see herself in the mirrors as she has never really seen herself before. As they settle down, Deuce volunteers to take the first watch. As Fade sleeps, Deuce finds herself studying him in his sleep.

Chapter 6. Hidden. Deuce wakes Fade when she hears noises in the dark. They fight the Freaks in the darkness and then begin to move on again. In time they find another safe place. Deuce sleeps and dreams of the blind kid she and Fade saved only to turn over to be killed by the enclave. They run for eight hours before again stopping, this time in one of the metal boxes. Fade treats a wound Deuce sustained during the fight the night before. He has some ointment that works quickly to heal the wound. They talk and Deuce tries to learn more about Fade, but he is reluctant to answer her questions. He does tell her about a builder he has befriended, Banner, who made the ointment for him. This elicits a little jealousy on Deuce's part. He also tells Deuce he came from topside, but Deuce does not believe him because she has been told topside is uninhabitable. They finally go to sleep and Deuce wakes to the sounds of Freaks attempting to get in.

## **Part 1, Down Below: Chapters 1-6 Analysis**

The first few chapters introduce the main characters and the conflict that will drive the plot. The world in which the book is set is a world after a massive holocaust of some kind. The reader does not learn at this point what has caused the devastation, but whatever happened caused humanity to seek shelter underground, as this enclave has done, in the tunnels below an unnamed city. The reader knows that these tunnels were once a subway system because of the metal boxes used as emergency shelters. These boxes are clearly abandoned subway trains. This world is unhealthy for humans and for this reason the elders usually die of old age at the age of forty or younger. Few live past thirty. The elders control the enclave with a long list of rules, including governing the way in which the enclave reproduces and who is allowed to own important artifacts from the time before the holocaust.



The main character, and the first person narrator, is Deuce. Deuce is a young girl of unknown age, though the reader gets the sense that she is somewhere between thirteen and fifteen, has just reached the age of maturity in her enclave and has been given a name. Deuce has also been given the right to work in her chosen field, as a huntress protecting and gathering food for the enclave. This is an important job to Deuce, not only because of the responsibility it gives her but because her mother was a breeder and many had assumed she would be one too. For this reason, Deuce has something to prove.

Fade did not grow up in the enclave. Instead, he survived in the tunnels alone for a number of years and came to live in the enclave when he was discovered by a hunting party. Fade is aloof and frightening to many of the members of the enclave, but he is strong and a fighter, making him an ideal hunter. Deuce is put off by his behavior, but finds him fascinating. Their partnership struggles at first, but they find themselves constantly thrown into difficult situations and this causes them to draw together to survive. The reader suspects this friendship will quickly blossom into something more powerful.

Fade clearly distrusts the leadership of the enclave. This is made clear when the elders take the blind boy he and Deuce saved to be executed. Deuce disagrees with this act as well, but she cannot share her doubts with anyone out of fear of being punished by the elders. Punishment could include exile and Deuce has never known any other life. Not only this, but the tunnels are dangerous for someone on their own due to the Freaks and Deuce has been taught that the topside is an inhospitable place where she could not survive. For these reasons, Deuce finds it a matter of life or death to obey the elders.



# Part 1, Down Below: Chapters 7-12

## Part 1, Down Below: Chapters 7-12 Summary

Chapter 7. Nassau. Deuce and Fade are attacked by dozens of Freaks who try to get to them inside the metal emergency shelter. It is overwhelming odds, but Deuce and Fade manage to kill enough of them that the survivors run away. Again it appears the Freaks have become more intelligent, a fact that worries them both. When it is over, they continue their journey only to discover that Nassau was overrun and there are no survivors. They quickly turn and leave. That night, Fade finds them shelter in a strange place filled with artifacts. Deuce collects a few for the Wordkeeper.

Chapter 8. Darkness. Deuce and Fade walk for hours in the darkness, aware of vague sounds behind them. Then Deuce is suddenly grabbed and pulled into a crevice in the wall. Deuce finds herself a captive of a strange group of people who have lived in the dark for so long that their bodies have evolved. They want her as a breeder, but she convinces them to let her go with promise of trade with her enclave. Deuce returns to the tunnel to bring Fade inside with her. They are shown a huge room full of artifacts that the new group, Burrowers, have collected and are willing to trade for fish. Deuce and Fade spend the night alone in this room.

Chapter 9. Homecoming. Deuce and Fade arrive back at their enclave and quickly inform Silk and the other leaders of what they have learned. However, the elders do not believe that the Freaks have grown more intelligent and refuse to believe Nassau fell for any reason other than their own security mistakes. Deuce goes to shower after the briefing and runs into her friend, Thimble. They argue when Deuce refuses to talk about her trip to Nassau. Deuce then takes the artifacts she found to the Wordkeeper who promises her a reward. Deuce also tells him about the Burrowers and is instructed to inform Silk. After doing this, Deuce collapses into sleep in her quarters. When she awakes, she takes her weapons to the Builders area to clean. She sees Fade there talking with his friend, Banner. Deuce asks Banner to make her some of the ointment she has made for Fade to heal wounds. Deuce later has breakfast with Fade.

Chapter 10. Treasure. Deuce and Fade worry that the group of hunters who were sent to make a trade with the Burrowers took the items with which they returned by force. To find out for sure, Deuce volunteers to do a favor for Twist, the elder's right hand man. Twist sends Deuce to collect gifts for a naming ceremony from the builders. While in the builder's area, Deuce makes amends with Thimble and runs into Banner. Banner helps Deuce with the gifts and then takes her to Banner's quarters to give her the ointment she made. While there, Deuce sees that Banner has been hoarding items, openly breaking the rules of the enclave. Banner tells Deuce she is part of an underground rebellion. Banner implies that Fade is a part of this rebellion. Deuce refuses to have anything to do with it and wonders if she should turn Banner in. Fade finds Deuce and tells her that Banner is upset. They go in search of Banner. Deuce finally finds Banner in the women's showers, dead.





Chapter 11. Recompense. A few days later, Deuce learns that the trade with the Burrowers was legitimate, though it seems like a minor thing in light of Banner's death. Fade is grieving for Banner, causing him to treat Deuce differently. During one of their patrols, Deuce realizes that Fade blames her for Banner's death. However, they both realize that Banner was murdered. A short time later, there is a feast in Deuce's name for the artifacts she is responsible for the enclave receiving. During the feast, there is a competition between the hunters in which they fight one another until only one stands. Deuce does well in the first round, but falls in the second. Fade, however, goes all the way to win the competition. Afterward, Deuce takes him out of the arena when he has trouble separating himself from the violence. They have an intimate moment and kiss. Later, Deuce is honored when one of the children claims to want to be a huntress just like Deuce.

Chapter 12. Sacrifice. For several weeks things are good for Deuce. Then one day as she comes in from patrols, she finds Stone facing a mob of angry people as the elders accuse him of taking an artifact from the Woodkeeper and hoarding it. Stone is clearly innocent. Deuce realizes this is meant for her, to warn her to behave. Instead, Deuce confesses to taking the book herself. To her surprise, Fade claims that he took the book from Deuce and hid it in Stone's things because of his jealousy of their relationship. Both Deuce and Fade are immediately exiled from the enclave. Even Stone and Thimble believe Deuce to be guilty and turn their backs on her. Deuce and Fade quickly pack their few belongings and leave.

## Part 1, Down Below: Chapters 7-12 Analysis

The Freaks have changed. This is an important factor at this point in the novel because the Freaks are the only true enemy the enclaves have. Deuce and Fade discover that the Freaks have grown more intelligent, changing the rules of the game they have been playing all these years. However, the enclave refuses to believe in these changes, putting them at risk of being attacked just as Nassau was.

Troubles with the enclave go deeper than the odd rules and the failure of the elders to listen to outside advice. There is a rebellion building in the enclave. Banner, a friend of both Thimble and Fade, is a part of this. Deuce is shocked to discover this and, despite her own discontent with the rules of the enclave, she refuses to be a part of it. However, when Banner is found dead of an apparent suicide, it is clear to Deuce that she was murdered. This brings fear to Deuce. Deuce continues to live a righteous life in the enclave despite her growing doubts, but when the elders accuse Stone of a crime that could see him exiled, Deuce knows this is meant as a warning to her. To save Stone, Deuce takes the blame and leaves.

Deuce's future is left in question as she and Fade leave the enclave with no choice but to go topside. Deuce has been taught all her life that it is dangerous to go topside, but now she finds herself forced to do just that. This next section of the book will test everything Deuce thought she knew about the world she came from.



## Part 2, Topside: Pages 13-19

### Part 2, Topside: Pages 13-19 Summary

Chapter 13. Unknown. Deuce and Fade go to a platform in the tunnel that Fade says has an exit to the topside, but when they try to make their way through the gates, they are blocked by a landslide. They decide to go to the Burrowers, assuming they would know a way out. The leader of the Burrowers, Jengu, agrees but demands some sort of payment for his people. Deuce gives him a small mirror she had been given by her mother. They rest again in the storeroom and then follow Jengu down a long tunnel to a ladder that he says leads topside. When they arrive topside, Deuce is overwhelmed by the amount of space offered by the sky and must keep her gaze downward to keep from becoming fearful and sick. They immediately begin to look for a place to rest, but must avoid most buildings because they are occupied by gangs. They eventually find a building that was once a shop with living quarters upstairs. Deuce is surprised and pleased with the furniture they find in the apartment. Before they sleep, Fade tells Deuce about living topside with his father.

Chapter 14. Sunshine. The next day, Fade decides they should boil some water before moving on. They have decided to go north to where Fade's father insisted there were settlements of people. Deuce is overwhelmed by the sunlight even with the sunglasses Fade found for them to wear. Deuce remains inside the shop where she explores. Deuce finds a book, the first of its kind she has ever had, and decides to keep it. It begins to rain. Deuce stands in it, shocked that it is not painful as the elders always said it would be. They begin to walk later as rain continues to fall. They do not get far before they are surrounded by members of a gang.

Chapter 15. Resistance. Deuce and Fade fight off the gang with little trouble. However, Fade says that they will come back with more members. They continue to walk. Deuce wonders what happened to the people in the city who made them leave. Fade tells her about the library, but he does not know where it is. He says he knew a man and his daughter once who had maps of the city. He suggests they go there even though it is slightly out of their way. A short time later, they are overwhelmed by the gang. Deuce is knocked unconscious. When she wakes, she finds herself in a warehouse somewhere. Two men are talking about her and one, the apparent leader, announces he will take her as his lover. A girl is sent to clean Deuce up. The girl, Tegan, tells Deuce that they have taken Fade to prepare him for a hunt. Fade will be the prey.

Chapter 16. Clash. Deuce gets loose and Tegan agrees to help her if Deuce will allow her to go along. Deuce agrees. They search the warehouse and find Fade, but can do nothing until the gangers release him for the hunt. When they do, Deuce and Tegan run into Fade where he has doubled back to find Deuce. They hide in a nearby building and fight the gangers one at a time. Even Tegan helps. Eventually they come face to face with the leader, Stalker.



Chapter 17. Rush. Stalker understands that he is at a disadvantage and he leaves, but Tegan assures them he will be back. Deuce and her friends continue on. They spend the night in a store where they find new clothes and canned food. Deuce and Fade have a few minutes alone, allowing them to learn more about one another. When Tegan joins them, Fade reads from the book Deuce found.

Chapter 18. Pearl. Two days later, Fade, Deuce, and Tegan find the home of Pearl, the girl Fade knew once. Pearl welcomes Fade into her home, but is reluctant to allow Deuce and Tegan in. Pearl shows Fade the maps while Deuce and Tegan sleep. Deuce overhears Pearl ask Fade to stay with her. Fade tells Pearl that he wants to be with Deuce.

Chapter 19. Enlightenment. They find the library quickly thanks to Pearl's maps. They search the building first, making sure there are no hidden dangers inside. Then they begin their search through the books and other artifacts to hunt for a reason behind the sudden destruction of society. They find several articles that talk about an illness, but they do not understand the words or the impact this illness had on society. However, Tegan and Deuce's mothers both died of some frightful illness that swept through their communities. Later, Deuce finds a book of the alphabet and shows it to Tegan. Tegan decides to keep it because her mother taught her to read from a similar book.

## **Part 2, Topside: Pages 13-19 Analysis**

Being topside is an eye opener for Deuce. The elders taught the young in the enclave that they could not go topside because there was acid falling from the sky and the air was unbreathable. However, Deuce is surprised to discover that almost everything the elders told her had been wrong. There are no dangers topside except for the gangs that rule the city. This is a danger Deuce feels capable of facing.

Deuce and Fade decide to make their way north to a place Fade's father once talked about. They believe they will find a settlement where people grow their own food and live peacefully. On their way, they run into danger. The gangs cannot let them pass without harassment. The leader of the gangs wants to turn Deuce into a breeder and use Fade as prey in a hunt. However, the leader, Stalker, has underestimated Deuce and Fade. They manage to get away.

Fade and Deuce make a pit stop on the way out of the city to try to find out what caused society to move underground and/or flee the cities. They discover that some sort of illness swept the world, killing many people. This caused a great deal of fright that led to mass evacuations of the cities. However, Fade and Deuce do not understand all they read about this illness and continue to feel uninformed as to what happened to modern society.



## Part 2, Topside: Chapters 20-26

### Part 2, Topside: Chapters 20-26 Summary

Chapter 20. Library. Stalker has found Deuce, Fade, and Tegan. He comes into the library with several more members of his gang as well as Pearl. Deuce and Fade cannot just give up, so a fight ensues. As the fight begins, Deuce and Fade immediately have an advantage. However, Stalker and his friends are good fighters as well. Then they are inundated with Freaks. The two sides must band together to fight this new foe. In the end, only Deuce, Fade, Tegan, and Stalker survive. Pearl is attacked by a Freak while the other gang members are either killed in the fight or by the Freaks. Stalker requests to join their group and they agree.

Chapter 21. Respite. The group raids several shops to gather food and then stops for the night in a school building. They split into two groups to investigate the place. Deuce ends up with Stalker. They find some large cans of food that they share. As they bed down for the night, Stalker and Tegan argue about their unhappy past. Deuce warns them to forget what is in the past or they will not survive. They both agree. However, Deuce finds herself struggling to take her own advice.

Chapter 22. Trek. The group continues their journey, following closely to the river. As the weather begins to grow cooler, they agree to start traveling during the day. One afternoon they find an isolated cabin. Inside they discover a bathtub. They all take turns bathing, Deuce first. They share a large meal made up of meat the boys hunted and cans they found in the cabin. Then Fade reads some more to them before they sleep.

Chapter 23. Snow. The next morning they wake to find snow on the ground. They decide it would be best to remain in the cabin for the winter. Fade begins spending a lot of time with Tegan. Deuce begins teaching Stalker to read and he begins teaching her some of his fighting techniques. When the snows pass, they move on. They stop to hunt one afternoon. Deuce and Stalker go one way while Fade and Tegan go the other. Stalker pulls Deuce off under some trees and kisses her. Deuce is shocked and does not know how to respond.

Chapter 24. Nightmare. Two weeks after leaving the cabin, they come upon a town. They can smell the Freaks before they get close, so they decide to go around. However, they come across several Freaks on the road. They all fight, but only Tegan is injured. Tegan's injury is life threatening, a gash to the thigh. As they flee to find refuge, another group of Freaks attack. This time Deuce is injured. Aware that they must find a refuge, Deuce keeps moving and refuses to tell anyone of her injury.

Chapter 25. Despair. They manage to get off the road and Deuce has Stalker and Fade start a fire. Deuce uses her dagger to cauterize Tegan's wound. She then has Stalker do the same to hers. Deuce falls asleep and has a vivid dream of Silk. Silk tells her that the enclave is gone, that everyone is dead. Then Silk tells her that she is the last and she



must survive, therefore she should keep the fire going at all cost. When Deuce wakes, she refuses to allow Stalker or Fade to put out the fire. Stalker begins to push for them to leave Tegan and move on. Deuce refuses and Fade takes her side. Tegan grows weaker and weaker. Then, just as their situation seems desperate, a voice calls out to them.

Chapter 26. Salvation. The voice belongs to a middle aged man, a man much older than anyone they have ever seen. The man tells them that he lives in a settlement not too far away. He offers to take them there. The four of them climb into the man's wagon. Deuce's fever breaks during the trip and she begins to feel better. When they arrive at the settlement, they take Tegan to a doctor. Afterward, they are directed to a home where they might find lodging. The woman is shocked to discover that they have come from New York City since everyone believes the cities to be deserted.

## Part 2, Topside: Chapters 20-26 Analysis

Stalker's gang attacks Deuce, Fade, and Tegan. However, a larger foe appears during the fight, causing the two groups to work together to defeat them. In the end, only Stalker survives from his side while Deuce, Fade, and Tegan survive unscathed. Stalker realizes that he cannot return alone to his gang's territory and asks to join Deuce and Fade's group. Fade can see the benefit of having another fighter in the group, so he agrees. This sets up an interesting dynamic between the two boys and the two girls. Pretty soon it becomes clear that Fade thinks Deuce is interested in Stalker. This causes him to pull away and avoid Deuce as much as possible. It also causes a great deal of confusion to Deuce who has never been in a situation where a relationship of this type was even possible. Now she has two boys who love her and want to be with her.

Deuce and her group travel out of the city and soon find themselves trapped in a cabin during the winter months. Again Deuce finds herself faced with something unfamiliar. It is an awkward situation that turns into a long winter with the four struggling to deal with their own issues while also trying to survive in a world turned upside down. They manage to make it without any conflicts, but then walk right into a nest of Freaks. Tegan is injured and Deuce finds herself dreaming of her dead boss from the enclave. However, they quickly discover that they have come close enough to the settlement Fade's father dreamt of to be rescued by one of its members. The novel ends with their rescue, but it also leaves a number of unanswered questions to which( the reader can anticipate learning the answers in the next book of the series.



# Characters

## Deuce

Deuce is the main character of the novel. Deuce is a teenage girl, probably somewhere around thirteen years old, who lives in an enclave in the subway tunnels underneath New York City. She has always lived in the enclave and believes that it is not habitable to live topside. There are strict rules in the enclave that Deuce has no reason to question.

As the novel opens, Deuce reaches the age at which all members of the enclave are given a name and allowed to become a working member of the enclave. Deuce has chosen to become a huntress even though some think she should be a breeder like her mother. Deuce works hard to prove herself, but is unhappy when she is partnered with Fade, an outsider in the enclave.

Deuce and Fade find a little boy in the tunnels one day who tells a story of intelligent Freaks who have attacked his home enclave, Nassau. No one believes the boy, but Deuce and Fade are sent to check out his story. When they come back with proof of what the boy said, no one believes them. Sometime later, Deuce and Fade are exiled when they take responsibility for a crime that a friend of Deuce's is accused of.

Deuce and Fade make their way topside and Deuce finds that everything she has been told about the world topside is not true. However, they still have to face the Freaks and another danger, the gangs. Despite this, Deuce and Fade manage to make it out of the city and to a settlement where they might finally be able to live a normal life.

## Fade

Fade is a teen not much older than Deuce. Fade was born topside, but when his father died he was forced to make his way into the tunnels. Fade survived alone in the tunnels for several years before being found by the College Enclave and inducted into their numbers. Now Fade is something of an outcast because he is not from the enclave.

When Fade and Deuce are partnered as hunters, neither is happy with the other. However, they quickly find themselves in multiple dangerous situations that causes them to bond to one another. Fade quickly falls in love with Deuce, therefore when she is in danger of being exiled, he goes with her. Fade and Deuce make their way topside only to find that the Freaks have also made their way topside and continue to be a danger.

Fade and Deuce's relationship seems to be progressing until Stalker joins their group. Fade becomes jealous of the time Deuce spends with Stalker and he backs off, making Deuce feel as though he is in love with Tegan. This confuses Deuce who would rather



be with Fade than Stalker. It is a triangle that continues until Deuce is injured at the end of the novel and Fade's true feelings come out.

## Tegan

Tegan is a young girl who was born and raised topside. Tegan's mother died when she was still young, causing Tegan to be left at the mercy of the gangs. Tegan was kidnapped by Stalker's gang and used mercilessly until Deuce and Fade came along. Tegan joins Deuce and Fade as they try to make their way out of the city. When Stalker joins their group, Tegan is initially angry and frightened, but soon comes around to the idea.

Tegan and Deuce become very close friends. For this reason, when Tegan is injured in a fight with the Freaks, Deuce does all she can to ensure that Tegan has a chance at survival. In the end, Deuce and the others are saved by a man from the settlement they have been seeking. Tegan is taken to a doctor where the reader is left hoping she will survive.

## Stalker

Stalker is the leader of a gang topside. Stalker is ruthless in his job as leader, teaching the young boys under him how to survive. Stalker is much like the elders in the enclave, except that his rules and actions have a more realistic purpose than the elders. Stalker is a realist, he understands what it takes to survive in a world turned upside down.

Stalker's gang comes across Deuce and Fade as they try to make their way out of the city. Due to the fact that they are on gang territory, the young men take Fade and Deuce captive. Fade is to be used as prey in a hunt while Deuce is to become a breeder. However, Fade and Deuce manage to get away. Unable to allow himself to be disrespected in such a way, Stalker hunts them down. However, they are overrun by Freaks during their fight and Stalker finds himself without any gang members. Stalker chooses to join Deuce and Fade rather than risk returning to his own territory with the Freaks on the loose.

Stalker turns out to be a decent person. He is generous and willing to play his part in the group. Over time, Stalker falls in love with Deuce and tries to seduce her, causing her a great deal of confusion. In the end, it is clear that Deuce wants to be with Fade, but Stalker presents a conflict that keeps Deuce and Fade apart.

## Silk

Silk is an elder in the College Enclave and the leader of the hunters. Silk is the one who trained Deuce and the one in charge of assignments for the hunters. Deuce is afraid that Silk does not like her because she is constantly giving her and Fade bad assignments, but Silk proves to only be following orders. At the end of the novel, Deuce



dreams of Silk. Silk tells her that the enclave is dead and that Deuce is the last of their kind; therefore she must live to carry on their story.

## Thimble

Thimble is Deuce's childhood friend. Thimble has become a builder. Thimble is young and naive, often acting in petty ways. Thimble and Deuce have a fight at one point because Deuce cannot tell Thimble what happened during her trip to Nassau. In the end, Thimble believes the elders above Deuce, believing that Deuce stole a book from the Wordkeeper.

## Stone

Stone is Deuce's childhood friend. Stone is a large boy, who is very good looking, and for this reason he has become a breeder. Stone is not very smart, often saying things he should not. However, Stone is an innocent who loves his job caring for the small children. Stone is accused of stealing a book by the elders even though Deuce knows he is incapable of such a thing. For this reason, Deuce takes the blame even though she knows it will mean exile.

## Twist

Twist is Whitewall's right hand man. Twist runs all of the day to day business of the enclave, including presiding over the naming ceremonies. Twist is kind to Deuce on several occasions. When Deuce is exiled, Twist reveals to her that he is one of the growing rebellion and he supplies her with food even though this is against the rules of the enclave.

## Whitewall

Whitewall is the elder of the College Enclave. Whitewall is only twenty-five, but he has already begun to exhibit signs of old age. This is more than likely due to the poor diet of the enclave and the lack of sunlight. Whitewall makes all the rules and decides when punishments should be leveled on citizens. It is Whitewall who is behind the accusations against Stone and the exile of Deuce and Fade.

## Copper

Copper is Whitewall's mate. Copper is also an elder. She is in charge of the kitchens. Copper is the only person who can talk back to Whitewall. Copper was against Fade becoming a part of the enclave when he was found in the tunnels. Copper is more than likely the voice behind some of Whitewall's rules and decisions.





## Objects/Places

### Knives and Club

On the day of Deuce's naming ceremony, Thimble gives her a set of knives that are perfectly balanced to her hands that she can use while on patrol in the tunnels. Stone gives Deuce a club that has beautiful carvings on it. The club is impractical for fighting Freaks because of the carvings, but Deuce loves it anyway and uses it despite the extra cleaning the carvings require.

### Sunglasses

Fade finds two pairs of sunglasses that he and Deuce can use when outside during the day topside. Deuce finds the sun overwhelming at first, even with the glasses.

### Wedding Invitation

Deuce, Thimble, and Stone find a wedding invitation in a sealed can on the day of Deuce's naming ceremony. Deuce and her friends cannot read the invitation and have no comprehension of its meaning when the Wordkeeper reads it to them.

### Books

Deuce finds some books that appear to the reader to be maintenance manuals for the subway in what used to be an office. Deuce takes these to the Wordkeeper and receives a feast in her honor as a reward.

### ABC Book

Deuce finds an ABC book in the library. Tegan takes the book because it reminds her of the one with which her mother taught her to read. Deuce later uses it to teach Stalker to read.

### Paint Markings

There are paint markings on many of the buildings Deuce and Fade find topside. These markings indicate gangs have claimed the buildings.



## **Library**

Deuce insists on stopping at the library on their way out of the city so that she might find some answers as to why society fled the cities and moved underground. Deuce and Fade find many newspaper articles about an epidemic, but they do not understand what most of it means.

## **Settlement**

At the end of the novel, Deuce and her friends find themselves rescued by a member of the settlement Fade's father talked about, but none of them really believed existed.

## **College Enclave**

College Enclave is the name of the enclave where Deuce grew up.

## **Nassau Enclave**

Nassau Enclave is the closest enclave to College Enclave. It is this enclave where Deuce and Fade go to check out the story of the blind boy. Nassau has been overrun by Freaks.

## **Burrowers Enclave**

The Burrowers are people who have lived underground so long that they have begun to evolve to help them survive. Deuce sets up a trade between the Burrowers and College Enclave.

## **New York City**

At the end of the novel, the reader learns that Deuce has lived under New York City all her life. This is also the city where Deuce and Fade find themselves when they go topside after their exile.



# Themes

## Post-Holocaust Society

Deuce introduces herself in the first line of the novel by saying she was born after the second holocaust. This second holocaust, as the reader will later learn, is the result of an illness that rampaged through society killing everyone in its wake. The illness caused people to flee the cities in droves, leaving behind parentless children and young adults with few, if any, survival skills. This set up a situation in which children are in charge of gangs and enclaves, making up the truth as they go along.

The illness that began this holocaust appears to be quite virulent. Deuce reports that although her people have lived underground for several generations, her own mother died during an epidemic of some unknown illness, something the elders refer to as the poor hygiene illness. At the same time, Fade's father and Tegan's mother died of a mystery illness while living topside. This suggests that whatever caused the annihilation of an entire society is still around and flares up from time to time.

Living in this post-holocaust world, Deuce finds herself living in an underground enclave where the rules are so strict that they even regulate the conception and birth of children. Deuce has been told that people moved underground because of acid rain and polluted air. Deuce believes that going topside is death. However, she soon learns that the only danger topside are the gangs and the Freaks. Not only this, but Deuce comes upon a whole settlement filled with adults, revealing to her that the early deaths of most of her people had more to do with the living conditions below ground than nature.

The post-holocaust world where Deuce lives is a major theme of the novel because much of the conflict that propels the plot depends on this setting.

## Trust

Trust is something that is in short supply in Deuce's world. The elders trust no one, therefore there are laws against having children if the parents are not certified breeders, rules against hoarding possessions, and rules that regulate where a person lives and who they can spend time with. These rules are meant to be for the good of the enclave, but as the novel progresses, Deuce begins to see that most of these rules are to protect the ruling class, the elders.

As the novel progresses, Deuce finds herself drawn more and more to Fade, her hunting partner. Fade is an odd person, someone who was found in the tunnels alone as a young child. Fade is an oddity whom no one trusts. Deuce does not trust him either. However, when Fade saves her life on several occasions and finds himself exiled because he backed her up in a lie, Deuce begins to trust him. Romance begins to ignite between these two. Unfortunately, Fade becomes distant and distracted when another boy joins their group and shows interest in Deuce.



Trust is something that is hard won for most people. In this novel, trust is something that is essential between the main characters because of their constant battle with danger. Deuce openly trusts Fade after he sacrifices himself for her, but he does not trust her when Stalker joins their group and shows interest in Deuce. It is this lack of trust that causes a rift in their relationship. In the end, they both learn to trust one another, suggesting to the reader a happy future for these characters.

## Survival

Survival is an everyday struggle for the members of the College Enclave. These people believe that life topside is dangerous and that they must remain underground for their own safety. However, there are creatures in the tunnels that they call Freaks. These creatures are meat eaters and they prefer their meat to be fresh human kills, much like zombies. The Freaks are not very intelligent and the enclaves feel safe with simple barriers at their entrances and hunting parties that go out into the tunnels each day. However, the Freaks are growing smarter and one of the other enclaves is completely destroyed by them.

When Deuce and Fade are sent to Nassau Enclave to see if the blind boy's story of a Freak attack is true, they are not expected to return. The danger is indescribable. However, they do survive thanks to one another's skills at fighting Freaks. Unfortunately, they return to an enclave resistant to the truth and one that is struggling to destroy a growing rebellion, one they believe Fade and Deuce are a part of. For this reason, Deuce's friend, Stone, is set up for a crime he did not commit. Deuce and Fade take the blame for him.

Surviving topside seems to be simpler than Deuce at first thought. However, they quickly run into trouble, first with the gangs and later with the Freaks. Survival is an every minute struggle for these teens stuck on their own in a hostile world.

# Style

## Point of View

The novel is written in the first person point of view. The narrating character is Deuce, a young girl who has just become old enough to get a name and to become a part of the hunting group in her enclave. Deuce survives her initiation into the hunting profession only to find herself the target of a vengeful governing body. Deuce survives again and again under impossible circumstances.

The point of view of this novel works well with the plot because the novel is a young adult story that features a young girl as the main character. The main character tells her story in the most intimate point of view available, creating a connection between her and the reader that is unbreakable. It is also a point of view that gives the reader a few hints about Deuce that might not be available with another view point, making the reader confident in the outcome of the plot despite the dangers that Deuce faces continuously throughout the novel. This is important to the overall story and therefore it works well with the plot.

## Setting

The novel begins in an enclave that has built up in the subway tunnels under New York City. This enclave exists at some point in the distant future, a future that exists after a holocaust epidemic has devastated most of modern society. This world includes such dangers as the continuing effects of the illness that destroyed society as well as the creatures known as Freaks who are meat eaters like zombies.

The setting of the novel is essential to the plot of the novel because much of the conflict in the novel would not exist without the futuristic, post-holocaust society. Deuce finds herself fighting Freaks and believing that living topside is dangerous because of this setting. Later, Deuce finds herself in a devastated New York City that has been abandoned for at least a decade, most likely longer, with little protection from the dangers of the gangs and the Freaks. If not for this setting, Deuce might have found herself in a modern city filled with modern conveniences, a place where she might have thrived after a period of adjustment. For this reason, the setting of the novel works well with the plot.

## Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple English. The language is authentic to the main character and the intended audience since it is simple enough that it can be believed that a teenager would speak and/or write it. The language contains no slang that would be inconsistent with the setting of the novel, nor does it use any language that a reader cannot easily decipher despite its futuristic setting.



The language of this novel is appropriate to the plot because it fits well with the characters and the setting. The author has written a novel that is set in the future in a world that does not currently exist, therefore the author could have come up with a great deal of strange vocabulary. However, she does not choose to do this. Instead, she uses language with which the reader is familiar, only twisting it to have new meanings. This makes the language of the novel easily comprehensible for readers of all ages.

## Structure

The novel is divided into two parts, Down Below and Topside. It has twenty-six chapters, each of which has a single word title that reflects some event that will be featured in the chapter. Told with narration and dialogue, the novel is written in a linear time line, laying out the story as it happens and as the characters understand it.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows Deuce as she comes to doubt the leaders of her enclave and then finds herself exiled. One of the subplots deals with Deuce's relationship with Fade. Another subplot follows Deuce's relationships with her childhood friends, Thimble and Stone. Another subplot deals with the dangers of living in the enclaves, particularly the threat of the Freaks. Finally, a subplot deals with the cause of the holocaust that led to the devastation of modern society. All the plots come to a satisfying conclusion at the end of the novel.



## Quotes

"I was born during the second holocaust." Part 1, Down Below: Deuce, pg. 6

"Nobody would dismiss me as unfit to be a Huntress. Nobody." Part 1, Down Below: Trial, pg. 21

"The tunnels even looked different here, splashed with red and black paint, more remnants of the old days." Part 1, Down Below: Journey, pg. 37

"Safe was such a relative word." Part 1, Down Below: Nassau, pg. 53

"We were too smart or too lucky. I'd bet the Nassau citizens thought that too, up until everything went wrong." Part 1, Down Below: Homecoming, pg. 71

"I'd once believed the elders to be benevolent and wise. But no more." Part 1, Down Below: Sacrifice, pg. 91

"With Fade's help, I scrambled up the rest of the way and saw the world above for the first time." Part 2, Topside: Unknown, pg. 100

"If a better place existed, we'd find it." Part 2, Topside: Sunshine, pg. 113

"Kind of like the naming day ritual, I guessed, except we didn't hunt down some poor person to get our names. It came down to personal bravery instead. I didn't like much of what I'd seen from the surface so far." Part 2, Topside: Rush, pg. 128

"I liked the gentle light of what Fade called the moon." Part 2, Topside: Enlightenment, pg. 143

"He embodied the Hunter tenet about strength and survival. Sometimes I admired that about him. Not right now." Part 2, Topside: Despair, pg. 183

"I almost said, I'm not a child, I'm a Huntress—the very last, but then I looked on her kindly face and knew the truth would scar her in ways that she might not be able to bear." Part 2, Topside: Salvation, pg. 198



## Topics for Discussion

Who is Deuce? What was her name before her naming ceremony? Why does the enclave wait so long to name their citizens? What is the significance of the six cuts Deuce gets on her arms? Where does Deuce get her name? Why does she carry this item with her everywhere she goes? What gifts do her friends give Deuce on the day of her naming ceremony? How does Deuce use these gifts?

Who is Thimble? What does she do for the enclave? For what reason? Who is Stone? What does he do for the enclave? What is the significance of these jobs? Why does Deuce fear that they will eventually fall out with one another due to their different jobs? What nearly gets Deuce and her friends in trouble on the day of her naming ceremony? For what reason?

Who is Fade? Why is Fade considered odd by the citizens of the enclave? Where did he come from? Why is this unusual? What does Deuce initially think of Fade? What does Fade think of Deuce? Why is Fade tough on Deuce the first few times they go into the tunnels? How does Deuce prove herself to Fade?

Why does Deuce feel that Silk does not like her and Fade? What does Silk do to make Deuce feel as though they are being punished? Why are Deuce and Fade chosen to go to Nassau after the news the blind boy brings them? Why are they not expected to return? How do they manage to return? What news do they bring? How do the elders respond to this news? How does this make Deuce and Fade feel?

Who is Banner? What happened to Banner? For what reason? Why does Fade initially blame Deuce? Why does Deuce not think Banner killed herself? What does Deuce think really happened to Banner? How is this related to the accusations leveled against Stone? Why does Deuce step in when Stone is accused? Why does Fade also claim to be responsible for the charges against Stone? Who is really guilty? Explain.

What is topside? Why is Deuce afraid to go topside? How does Fade know about topside? What is the first thing that Deuce notices about being topside? Why does this fill her with fear? What dangers exist topside for Deuce and Fade? How do they manage to survive these dangers? Why does Fade suggest they leave the city? Where does he want to go? Why does Deuce want to stop in a library first? What does she learn there?

Why does Stalker join Deuce and Fade's group? What skills does he bring to the group? Who is Tegan? Why is she unhappy with the addition of Stalker? What did Stalker do to her? Why does Fade become jealous of Stalker? How does he react to this jealousy? How does Deuce respond to Fade's sudden distance? What does she think has caused it? How does Fade eventually show Deuce how he still feels about her?