

Ender's Shadow Study Guide

Ender's Shadow by Orson Scott Card

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Plot Summary

Ender's Shadow is a futuristic science fiction novel about how children save the human species from destruction by an intelligent alien insect species. It is a parallel novel to an earlier one by the same author, Ender's Game. The same events are portrayed from a different main character to bring out different viewpoints and thematic ideas.

Bean somehow survives the mean streets in Rotterdam and appears to be only two years old, although he has an extremely high level of intelligence. His real name is Julian Delphiki, which he does not learn until near the end of the story. While in Rotterdam, Bean changes the character of the street from survival-of-the-fittest to a more civilized situation in which the older children protect the younger so they can get food from a charity kitchen. The charity kitchen owner tells Sister Carlotta about the change, and she investigates Bean and another older street child named Achilles as possible candidates for Battle School. She selects Bean to attend Battle School for the IF (International Fleet).

Only children attend Battle School, which is located in a space station. Although far smaller than the other children, Bean demonstrates remarkable intelligence. He explores the space station from within its ventilation system. Meanwhile, Sister Carlotta investigates Bean's past. She discovers that he had likely been part of an illegal DNA experiment, and that a minor change to his DNA caused the high intelligence.

Bean advances in Battle School and meets Ender Wiggin, another focal point of the IF. The IF expects Ender to lead an upcoming battle against the Formics, also known as Buggers, a race of insects who live on distant worlds light-years from earth. Earth has already had two battles with the Buggers. The third one will determine whether human beings survive or if the Formics will destroy the human species. However, none of the Battle School students know when this battle will be fought or how they will become a part of it. They perform practice battles among themselves, organized into armies with animal names. Ender commands the Dragon army, in which Bean is placed, and Dragon becomes the highest ranking army in the school due to winning the most battles.

Ender is promoted to Command School, and Bean becomes the commander of the Rabbit army. Shortly thereafter, Bean is sent to Tactical School and then to Command School with Ender, along with nine other students. Command school is in a hollowed-out asteroid that had originally been a Bugger base. Here Ender leads the students in supposedly practice battles. Bean uses his superior intelligence to discover that the practices are actually real battles, fought in real-time with IF starships and fighters light-years away through a special ultra high-speed communication technology.

Bean follows Ender's strategy to a victorious end to the battle, thus saving earth from the Buggers. Sister Carlotta discovers Bean's biological parents in Crete and returns him to his family.



Part 1, Urchin: Poke, Kitchen, Payback, Memories, Chapters 1-4

Part 1, Urchin: Poke, Kitchen, Payback, Memories, Chapters 1-4 Summary

The story begins with a street scene in Rotterdam. The time is in the future and space travel is very common. The earth has united to face a common enemy, the Formics, also called the Buggers. The Formics are intelligent insects that depend on a queen to do the thinking for each hive group. They live light years away on several worlds, each with its own queen. Two battles with the Formics have been fought and won, and preparations for a third and final battle are underway.

In Chapter 1, many children live in poverty on the streets of Rotterdam. Poke is one of them and is only nine years old. She heads a crew, which is a gang of children around her age. She sees a skinny child who has climbed atop a garbage can and looks to be only two years old. She tells him that he is not worth a bean, and that becomes his name: Bean. Poke allows Bean into her crew, and Bean suggests that they intimidate an older street kid, Achilles, into protecting her crew. The plan works, although Bean has second thoughts that perhaps the crew should have killed Achilles.

Achilles helps the younger children of Poke's crew get in line at a soup kitchen in Chapter 2. The problem had been that the older kids, known as bullies, would never let the younger children in line. The situation was survival of the fittest. Achilles picks a fight with one of the other bullies, and although Achilles has a crippled leg, he wins the fight. The kitchen adults notice the fight but misinterpret it. Through quick-witted manipulation in which he blames a truck for the injuries of the fallen bully, Bean enlists the aid of the kitchen adults. Soon all of Poke's crew regularly eat at the kitchen. Achilles treats the younger children as if they were his children and becomes known as the crew's Papa. He takes bites out of the children's bread, but not from Poke's. This is an intentional slight. Achilles manipulates the children away from Poke, their former leader.

With a regular food supply, the health of Poke's crew noticeably improves, and other bullies start their own families of younger street kids. In Chapter 3 the owner of the charity kitchen, Helga Braun, contacts a recruiter with the IF (International Fleet) to report the astounding change in the children's behavior. The recruiter, Sister Carlotta of the Sisters of St. Nicholas, immediately visits Helga at her kitchen. Helga tells Sister Carlotta about Bean, who is remarkable because he looks so young yet talks so well. Sister Carlotta considers recruiting Achilles for Battle School, where children are learning to fight the Buggers. It is located in a large orbiting space station. However, she knows the IF will never accept him with his crippled leg. She does invite him and all of Poke's crew to attend her school. While Bean takes a test, Sister Carlotta discovers that he can also read, whereas none of the other street kids know how. Her discovery leads to questions about Bean's origins.



Bean follows Achilles to where he meets with Poke. Bean watches as Achilles embraces and kisses her. Confused, Bean runs away. Later he sees Poke's dead body in the river. Her throat has been slashed, and he knows that only Achilles could have murdered her. Later Sister Carlotta tests Bean more, discovering that the tiny child has extremely high intelligence and is more likely to be five years old than two. Bean tells her about the murder Achilles has probably committed. She wonders which candidate would be more acceptable to IF, Bean or Achilles. Both have serious drawbacks—Bean's small size and tiny voice, Achilles' crippled leg and murderous character. Her decision is to work with Bean and prepare him for Battle School.

In Chapter 4 Sister Carlotta feeds Bean and digs into his past. Bean has to walk around Rotterdam to determine where he lived before becoming a part of Poke's crew and he finds the answer. He was living with a janitor named Pablo de Noches in a mysterious building with other children his own age. Then something happened, and all the children except Bean were gone. Bean was not taken away because he was hiding. Sister Carlotta learns about organ farms, where defective babies are raised and their organs harvested for transplants. The organ farms are illegal, so she suspects the disappearance of the other children may have happened during a police raid.

Part 1, Urchin: Poke, Kitchen, Payback, Memories, Chapters 1-4 Analysis

Part 1 introduces three of the primary characters: Bean, Sister Carlotta and Achilles. Bean is a remarkable child, very small for his age and highly intelligent. He has taught himself to read just from street signs and other signage around Rotterdam. His short past is shrouded in mystery and he has picked up the rules of the street while bending them to his desire, which in this part of the novel is to survive. Sister Carlotta has a big heart and is very smart. She at first tries to get surgery to fix Achilles' leg and bring him into Battle School, but decides that Bean has a better chance with his intelligence. Achilles is a murderer and his introduction also exposes a master at manipulation. Achilles becomes more important toward the end of the book.

The main theme in Part 1 is survival of the fittest. Before Bean comes on the scene, fitness means being big and mean. Many of the smaller and weaker children die from starvation. Bean demonstrates that high intelligence can turn the tables, where fitness means bringing someone big and mean onto your side. The street children change from being barbarians to more civilized people, similar to the way human intelligence advanced into the ancient civilizations such as Egypt and Greece.

Only small references are made to the war with the Buggers, the Battle School and why children are being trained to fight the upcoming third battle. At this point in the story, the technical details are not yet important. The important points that are established include Bean's pathetic physical shape, Sister Carlotta's interest in Bean and the murderous character of Achilles. Bean is the protagonist, Achilles one of the antagonists and Sister Carlotta a protagonist helper.



The plot shapes into a form of heroic tale, where the hero must leave a known environment, go into an unknown environment, perform feats of courage and return home victorious. A twist on this is that Rotterdam is not a home environment for Bean. Nobody knows where he came from, who his parents are or why he is freakishly intelligent for his age. That he has masterminded the change from barbarism to civilization is known. This builds anticipation that his upcoming courageous performances will be extraordinary.



Part 2, Launchy: Ready or Not, Ender's Shadow, Exploration, Good Student, Chapters 5-8

Part 2, Launchy: Ready or Not, Ender's Shadow, Exploration, Good Student, Chapters 5-8 Summary

While on his way to the Battle School in Chapter 5, Bean witnesses an adult purposefully humiliating a new student, known as a launchy. The boy thinks that he knows better than the adult, an officer in the IF, and the officer tries to show how the boy's thinking is flawed. The officer then targets Bean in a similar manner, but fails to humiliate him. Bean refuses to play along and let his emotions interfere with his strategy, which is to not stand out within the crowd. However, he has the disadvantage in being far smaller than the other students. While talking with the officer later on, Bean learns that he is Captain Dimak.

Chapter 6 opens with a discussion between Captain Dimak and his superior officer. The superior officer warns Dimak that he should not consider Bean to be such a special case and to not allow Bean's high intelligence to intimidate. Dimak tells his superior that Bean's intelligence would make anyone feel dim.

Bean arrives on the orbiting space station. Dimak brings the launchies to their quarters, after which he leads them to the mess for breakfast. The older students taunt the launchies along the way with good-humored jabs. After breakfast, Dimak brings the launchies to an exercise room. They slide down poles to gain the lower levels of the space station and climb ladders to access the upper levels. Bean determines that the adults monitor where the students are at all times through sensors in the students' uniforms.

When the next mealtime arrives, Bean leaves the group and explores the space station. He notices that there are several other levels accessible by pole or ladder. While on some other level than the one where he is supposed to be, two older students stop him. They question him on why he is on the wrong level, but Bean does not answer. He learns that one of the older students, a female, is named Petra Arkanian.

Bean runs away and scoots up two more levels. Here he finds a game room, and he observes as other students play. One student compares him to Ender Wiggin, the top-standing gamer. Bean leaves the game room and turns his attention to the ventilating system. He takes off a screen and manages to enter the system, which promises to become his way of moving about the station undetected, but he will have to do it naked due to the sensors in the student clothing.



At the end of Chapter 6, Sister Carlotta questions Pablo about Bean's abilities while he lived with Pablo. She guesses that Bean may be the result of a DNA experiment and starts research into any projects that would coincide with Bean's history.

In Chapter 7 Dimak introduces the students to their desks, which are pad computers. Bean immediately sees the advantage to having several user names and passwords because then he can keep some of his activities secret from the teachers and officers. The desk software has a game on it that Bean refuses to play because it may tell the adults more about him than he wants them to know. He does play the games in the game room, and there he meets Bonzo Madrid, an enemy of Ender Wiggin. Bean does not yet know who Ender is, so he manipulates Bonzo to get as much information about Ender as he can. Bean later writes a diary entry about Achilles in an effort to confuse the adults.

Colonel Graff contacts Sister Carlotta by video conference regarding Bean's diary entry. He wants to know about Achilles. Sister Carlotta answers his questions reluctantly, suspecting that IF wants to bring Achilles into Battle School. She had promised Bean that he would never have to face Achilles again.

In Chapter 8 Bean uses his extra user names to access restricted areas in the station's main computer. He finds plans for the station and learns about the various levels. However, his intrusions are detected, which causes Dimak to have a talk with him. Bean tries to play dumb, but Dimak does not buy it and warns Bean not to access restricted computer areas again. Dimak also tells him that his reading list has been monitored, which consists of advanced war strategies throughout the ages. The IF has also determined that he is overly obsessed with Ender Wiggin. To Dimak's surprise, Bean has guessed correctly the IF strategy to attack the Formics where they live by sending out a fleet directly after the second victory. Dimak tries to throw Bean off by denying that any of his theories are true, but Bean does not believe him. After Dimak leaves, Bean thinks about what would happen on earth after the upcoming third battle, should the earth forces win. At the end of the chapter, Bean talks with his bunkmate Nikolai.

Part 2, Launchy: Ready or Not, Ender's Shadow, Exploration, Good Student, Chapters 5-8 Analysis

Part 2 lays out plot elements and introduces other key characters. People talk about Ender Wiggin, but the character has yet to show his face. Uncertainty builds about whether Ender is a friend or foe, but certainly Bonzo Madrid is Ender's enemy. Petra Arkanian's relationship to Bean also cannot be determined, although Bean detects that she would make him a project of hers, trying to improve his performance and perhaps raise him as a little brother, or worse, her child. Captain Dimak continues as the authority figure in Bean's life on the space station. Bean makes his first friend, Nikolai.

The ventilation system of the space station becomes a potential hiding place and secret transportation route for Bean. Since it has been shown, the ventilation system will be used for some purpose as yet unknown. The Battle School involves teams of some sort



that have animal names and symbols. Bean has met Bonzo Madrid, a Salamander, and he knows that Ender had at one time been in the Salamander army. The space station has a battle room in which these armies compete.

Further story conflicts begin to take shape in Part 2. Bean hides things from IF, and IF wants to know what he is hiding, and more importantly, why he does this. The street smarts that Bean takes with him to Battle School cause him to seek out secret hiding places and alternative routes to destinations. This also keeps him from being comfortable in his new environment, an internal conflict. A large part of his internal conflict involves his absolute distrust of everyone, with the possible exception of Nikolai, who is introduced at the very end of Part 2. From Sister Carlotta's point of view, she distrusts IF motivations at nearly every turn and shows open contempt for Colonel Graff's clumsy attempts at trapping her. These two people do not get along.

Thematically, Part 2 brings in the idea of military strategies as well as the street-smart strategy that Bean uses. Bean's attempt at guessing IF strategy against the Buggers foreshadows what the strategy might actually be. Dimak's reaction hints that Bean's assessment may be more accurate than not. Bean's assertion that he is right points to a possible character flaw, in that Bean thinks he is smarter than anyone else. However, he may in reality be the smartest person in the world. Linked directly to military strategy are nested lies, also called feints. If the enemy can be convinced to think the desired way, that renders a clear advantage.

The author uses mystery to draw the reader into the story and keep the pages turning. Small amounts of information lead to open questions that contain intriguing concepts. Is Bean the result of a DNA experiment? How does Battle School work? Why does the IF need to know why Bean does and does not do certain things? For what purpose will Bean use the ventilating system? Who is Ender Wiggin? Why are all the students so young? Additionally, casting Bean as a tiny child who appears to be two years old instills immediate compassion for him. His short life has been miserable and extremely dangerous. He has already seen murder. Will Battle School bring him to a better life, or will this story end in tragedy?



Part 3, Scholar: Garden of Sofia, Sneaky, Daddy, Roster, Chapters 9-12

Part 3, Scholar: Garden of Sofia, Sneaky, Daddy, Roster, Chapters 9-12 Summary

In Chapter 9 Sister Carlotta speaks with an exiled Russian scientist in Sofia, Bulgaria. His name is Anton, and he has information she needs about DNA experimentation that might have been done on Bean. She must approach the subject in roundabout ways because Anton has a device installed in his body that causes severe anxiety attacks if he thinks directly about the experimentation. Sister Carlotta learns that Bean's DNA has indeed been altered, but in a very small and undetectable way. This change increased Bean's intelligence tremendously.

In Chapter 10 Bean enters the ventilation system again. He realizes that the floor vents give him no good viewing angles, so he needs to get into the intake system that has vents toward the ceiling. He finds an access door that lets him into the intake system, which turns out to be much larger and easier to navigate. He comes upon Dimak's room and observes a holographic video conference between him and Colonel Graff. They talk about Bean's DNA alteration, whether he is human or not and what kind of security threat he may be. After this he sees a teacher in another room entering his username and password, which Bean immediately memorizes. He then returns to his quarters via the ventilation system.

Bean studies the other students and especially Ender Wiggin through their school records in Chapter 11. He finds out what Ender reads and what videos he studies, mostly about the Second Invasion of the Buggers. Mazer Rackham led the strike force that defeated the invasion. Bean then determines who practices with Ender and tries to learn as much as he can from them. He strives to know as much as Ender and tries to emulate his development in Battle School.

Sister Carlotta attains special security clearance from Colonel Graff in order to find out more about Bean. She locates the doctor who manipulated Bean's DNA, Dr. Volescu. He was caught in the crime of continuing research after the project had been shut down and was charged with the murder of twenty-three children. Sister Carlotta learns that Bean's growth is slow but will continue non-stop until his death, predicted to be in his twenties. By then he will have grown into a giant and will likely die from a failed heart. Volescu claims that he used his own DNA, modified it and then implanted it into eggs that had no nuclei.

In Chapter 12 Graff discovers a brilliant analysis of space war strategies written by one of the students, and he suspects strongly that it is Bean. This brings up the question of whether Ender should lead the next battle against the Buggers or Bean. Graff decides to let the students carry on before making his decision. He has a meeting with Bean and



offers Bean to select students for the roster of the Dragon battle room army, which Ender will command. Bean accepts and becomes part of the Dragon army, called a toon. He meets Ender Wiggin for the first time as the toon assembles, and Ender does not know that Bean has selected the members of the team.

Part 3, Scholar: Garden of Sofia, Sneaky, Daddy, Roster, Chapters 9-12 Analysis

Part 3 exposes more of Bean's past and what Battle School is about. Bean's DNA has been altered, and in a highly illegal way. He is the only surviving child from that experiment and Dr. Volescu murdered the other twenty-three. This brings an element of horror into the story, but no graphic scenes are presented. It is left to the reader's imagination what terrible things were done. Of more importance to the story is confirmation that Bean is more highly intelligent than any other human being, dead or alive. The begging question is whether Bean is human or not. He may represent the first of a new species, even if the DNA change is slight. The intelligence sets him apart, as does his life cycle. He grows slowly, but his growth never stops. By the time he is in his twenties, he will have grown into a giant, and as a result will die from heart failure at a much younger age than the human average. Sister Carlotta questions the morality of DNA manipulation in humans, but Colonel Graff only cares about whether humans will survive the next battle with the Buggers. If humans lose, all humans will be killed in space and on earth, thus wiping out the species. Whether Ender leads the battle or Bean does not matter as long as the best candidate wins.

A glimpse into the battle room shows that teams, called toons, compete in zero gravity while wearing flash suits and shooting light guns that freeze the suits. Usually the teachers and officers build the toon rosters, but in this situation, Bean builds the roster for Ender. Bean naturally puts himself into the roster, thus bringing the two characters together. This plot turn is of high importance for the story. Up until this time, Bean has been only aware of Ender's existence; he tries to study Ender from afar. Now he will have the opportunity to work with Ender regularly. Additionally, the students learn that their training has been accelerated, but no explanation is given.

A thematic idea on the human condition comes out. In Old Testament scripture, the Garden of Eden had two trees: the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. Had Adam and Eve not eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, they would have lived forever. However, they did eat the forbidden fruit and were cast from the Garden to experience death. The parallel drawn is to the DNA manipulation that gave Bean high intelligence but shortened his life. In order for humans to live several decades, we should not have such great intelligence, opting for being average or even stupid if the point is to live the longest life possible. Support for this idea comes from the Old Testament as well, when people lived enormously long lives. Anton proposes these ideas as a justification for his experimentation and as an explanation as to why the program was cancelled. This remains unclear because he cannot talk directly to the issue due to his implant that causes severe anxiety attacks if he does, and so the thematic idea lies in a state of uncertainty throughout the story.



The greater idea is that the human race is in a struggle for its very survival, a common science fiction theme. However, nobody is sure whether Ender or Bean should lead the next battle. The overall conflict has within itself smaller conflicts of rivalry among students and indecision among the officers, most powerfully in Colonel Graff. He cannot trust Bean due to the superior intelligence of the boy. Ender, although a known quantity, may not be able to actually win the war. He has no choice but to bring the two together and see who comes out on top in simulated battle. Graff does not consider a third possibility, that Ender and Bean will work together somehow and not fall into the usual inter-human competition within the team. A notable example of how this competition can sour is the hatred that Bonzo Madrid has developed for Ender Wiggin.



Part 4, Soldier: Dragon Army, Brothers, Courage, Companion, Chapters 13-16

Part 4, Soldier: Dragon Army, Brothers, Courage, Companion, Chapters 13-16 Summary

In Chapter 13 Ender takes his Dragon army into the battle room. Due to Bean's small size, he does not do as well as the other students. Ender first orients the army to consider the enemy's gate into the battle room as down, their gate as up and where the four cardinal directions lie in zero gravity. He then demonstrates how the flash suits work, that a full hit will freeze the suit and disallow all movement. Only parts of the suit, such as the legs, can be flashed on purpose for strategic reasons. The army practices other basics of zero-gravity strategy, for example launch-shoot-spin, with the spin making it harder for enemy soldiers to achieve a full hit. After the practice, Bean and Ender have a confrontational talk. Bean wants his own toon, and Ender says that Bean must prove that he deserves a toon.

At the beginning of Chapter 14, Sister Carlotta learns that Volescu is not Bean's father, but they do have some kind of distant genetic relationship. Graff tells her that Achilles will be admitted into Battle School after surgeries are finished to fix his crippled leg. She warns Graff that bringing Achilles into Battle School will mean either Achilles or Bean will die.

Ender organizes his Dragon army into units of four, each expected to perform autonomously. Bean sees the sense in this, but others do not and an argument breaks out. Nikolai defends Bean, and some others comment that Nikolai thinks that he is Bean's big brother.

Sister Carlotta discovers that Nikolai's parents, Julian and Elena Delphiki, live on the island of Crete, which is part of Greece. Volescu is Julian's half-brother. Sister Carlotta visits and interviews them. They tell her that they created five copies each of four fertilized eggs, twenty-four in all, and kept them in storage except for one that was implanted. The implant worked and produced Nikolai. That left twenty-three eggs in storage, the exact number of children that Volescu kept in his illegal laboratory. This means that Bean could be Nikolai's twin brother, except for the small DNA change that caused Bean's high intelligence. Sister Carlotta promises that if Bean turns out to be their second son, they will eventually meet him.

Major Anderson interviews Nikolai and asks about his relationship with Bean. Nikolai tells Anderson that he considers Bean to be his brother, although this has not become an established fact.

In Chapter 15 the Dragon army squares off with the Rabbit army in the battle room. Bean has a period of panic before the practice battle, but Nikolai helps him through it.



The Dragon army wins the battle by using unexpected tactics, and Bean gains more confidence in himself. The teachers keep pushing the schedule of practice battles tighter as time goes on, which causes Ender and Bean to conclude that the actual battle against the Buggers must be very close. Bean has an encounter with Bonzo, who threatens harm to Ender.

In Chapter 16 the schedule of practice battles compresses into two per day. Bean protests that the grueling schedule is wearing down the armies, not training them for the real battle. Dragon wins one battle in less than a minute because Ender detected a sneak attack and thought of an effective countermove. Directly afterward, instead of doing the formalities usually associated with victory, Ender dismisses the Dragon army. He confides in Bean what he knows about the practice battles and that he is rapidly not caring about them. Bean thinks the school is setting up Ender to have a confrontation with Bonzo, and that Bonzo will not face Ender alone.

Part 4, Soldier: Dragon Army, Brothers, Courage, Companion, Chapters 13-16 Analysis

Part 4 chronicles Bean's growth into a soldier. He goes through a period of intense self-doubt, but through the help of Nikolai, now known to Sister Carlotta and Colonel Graff as Bean's genetic twin, Bean pulls through. He performs well and earns Ender's trust. At the end Bean is very concerned about Ender's safety, believing that the school will put Ender into harm's way and thereby risk losing the real battle to the Buggers. That would mean the end of the human species.

The practice battle scenes are detailed out to emphasize the high value of impromptu strategies during real battles. What looks good on paper hardly ever works out as was planned. This is why Ender splits his forces into small groups of four, each with the overall strategy in mind but able to work alone or together and improvise new strategies quickly. While other competing armies in the game room mimic the old strategies that Ender used, the winning strategy is always new and unexpected. This puts Dragon into the top ratings for the battle games.

The mystery of Bean's origin solved, the next big conflict must take place between Ender and his archrival Bonzo. Bean's concern over Ender's safety does more than foreshadow the event: it demands that the fight happen and soon. Bean is convinced that Bonzo will attempt to gang up on Ender and take him down by brute force, much like the bullies in Rotterdam kept the smaller children from gaining access to the soup kitchen. This is a flashback of sorts, memories of a similar situation. The question becomes whether any strategies learned in Rotterdam might work in this situation.

On top of this upcoming fight, Bean may have another complication coming his way if Achilles is allowed into Battle School. Bean is not aware of this threat as yet, but the mention of Achilles at the beginning of Part 4 and the cryptic warning that Sister Carlotta gives to Graff indicate that the threat will soon arrive.



Bean and Ender form a special relationship in Part 4. At first they are at odds. They learn to respect one another, and by the end of Part 4 Ender confides in Bean. This is not a friendship but a different kind of alliance based on mutual respect and trust tempered by power. A comparison is made to Grant and Lincoln during the Civil War, where Bean is Grant and Ender is Lincoln. Ender will bring the earth's forces into the war, but Bean will discover the means to end the war. With both acting together, victory will be attained. These roles could be reversed as well and at this point in the story it remains uncertain. Will Bean and Ender work together cooperatively, or will rivalry tear them apart?

The inevitability of a showdown between Ender and Bonzo, along with the mystery of how this whole battle with the Buggers will turn out, draws the reader forward. Another motivation for reading more of the story is Bean's genetic relation to Nikolai. Will they ever discover that they are genetic brothers? Will Nikolai continue to help Bean become the best soldier possible? Will either of them survive the upcoming real battle? These questions left in the reader's mind require resolution and push toward the story's climax.



Part 5, Leader: Deadline, Friend, Rebel, Trial and Error, Chapters 17-20

Part 5, Leader: Deadline, Friend, Rebel, Trial and Error, Chapters 17-20 Summary

Chapter 17 opens with Bean collecting the members of his toon. He successfully talks five students into it, including Nikolai. He then negotiates with Graff to use some of the school supplies in the battle room. Bean makes plans to do something with lengths of very strong cord usually used as safety lines when workers are outside the space station. He experiments with the cord in the battle rooms, using it for navigation and tying members of the Dragon army together.

Members of the Salamander army arrange themselves in an attempt to attack Ender, but Bean recognizes the danger. He hurries to the Rabbit army, which comes out in force to defend Ender. The Salamanders back off. Later Bonzo corners Ender in a bathroom. Ender, who has studied martial arts, kills Bonzo with a head butt that forces his nose into his brain.

In Chapter 18 Ender puts one of Bean's strategic ideas to work in a practice battle. He freezes a number of his soldiers, ties them together and uses them as a screen. The tactic works, but Major Anderson, who has replaced Colonel Graff after Bonzo's death, changes the battle rules to avoid a repetition. Anderson transfers Bean to the Rabbit army as its commander. Graff delivers the news to Ender that he has been promoted to Command School, which skips the intermediate schools.

When Bean takes command of the Rabbit army in Chapter 19, he learns that Achilles is now part of his army. Achilles treats Bean well enough, but Bean is highly suspicious and keeps his guard up. He also has to maintain discipline, even though Achilles is older and larger.

In Chapter 20 Bean sets a trap for Achilles in the space station ventilation system. Meanwhile Achilles schemes about how he can kill Bean, since Achilles has developed into a serial killer. Nobody knows about this yet, but Bean has suspicions.

Bean lures Achilles into the ventilation system on the pretense that the two of them can spy on the teachers. Bean challenges Achilles about being a serial killer, and Achilles finally admits that he is. He then talks about how he killed several people while he dangles from a length of the strong cord that Bean used in the battle room. Bean has fooled Achilles into thinking that dangling from the cord is necessary to navigate in the ventilation system. After Achilles confesses, Bean calls in several members of Rabbit Army, who have been recording the confession. They leave Achilles dangling and harmless until the authorities can arrest him.



Part 5, Leader: Deadline, Friend, Rebel, Trial and Error, Chapters 17-20 Analysis

The major plot movement in Part 5 involves the promotion of Ender to Command School and Bean to the commander of Rabbit Army. Both events bring the story to the brink of battle with the Buggers. Ender moves ahead faster than Bean, indicating that Ender will lead the actual battle with Bean as support. This is also reflected in Bean's support of Ender when Bonzo tries to attack him with other members of the Salamander army. A touch of irony develops because Bonzo once expressed that he would like to have Bean in his army. However, the most important event in this scene is when Ender kills Bonzo with a head butt. This is Ender's first kill, and it is not done in official battle but in self-defense. He naturally takes it hard, not intending to kill Bonzo, just knock him out. This foreshadowing points to the loss of friendly life during the actual battle with the Buggers.

In contrast, Bean handles his problem with Achilles in a non-violent way. Achilles presents a real threat to Bean's life and Bean knows it. Achilles makes the mistake of underestimating Bean's abilities to persuade and beguile. Bean's powers of persuasion are demonstrated when he addresses all the students in the mess hall and convinces them to ignore the scoring in the battle games. He also wins over the loyalties of Rabbit Army through a powerful speech. Bean has grown larger, physically, but he is still a very small student compared to the rest. This alludes to other great historical military leaders who were not very large men, most notably Alexander the Great. Alexander is remembered as a powerful speaker who could convince his troops to fight larger forces, follow him on his quest to conquer much of western India and to accept his leadership after the conquest period. Another parallel is Bean's strength with military strategy. In addition, Bean is condemned to live a short life due to the DNA manipulation that has given him high intelligence. Alexander the Great also lived a short life, dying in his early thirties. Using the name Achilles as Bean's arch enemy solidifies the allusion to ancient Greek history. Alexander the Great is known to have admired Achilles and considered him an ancestor, along with Heracles (same as the Roman Hercules). Yet the Greek Achilles had character faults, the dragging of Hector's body for example, and a weak heel, while Bean's Achilles has a bad leg and becomes a serial murderer.

The scene in which Bean tricks Achilles into confessing lends a grim humor to the story. Serious events have taken place, and a deadly battle with the Buggers is about to take place. The future of the entire human species is in the balance. The humor helps to bring the horror level down a few notches and allows the reader to take a break and a breath. This is also a preliminary climax, a victory of justice over evil, hinting that the human species will in fact be saved. Nevertheless, the reader cannot be sure of this until reading through Part 6, and thereby suspense is maintained. A primary question has yet to be answered: how can young students possibly fight and win a battle with the Buggers?



Part 6, Victor: Guesswork, Reunion, Ender's Game, Homecoming, Chapters 21-24

Part 6, Victor: Guesswork, Reunion, Ender's Game, Homecoming, Chapters 21-24 Summary

In Chapter 21 Bean puts his Rabbit army through five practice battles and loses each one. He does this on purpose to teach his army how to carry on through the battles even when the command breaks down. His reasoning is that this will likely happen once the real battle with the Buggers begins. Nicolai takes over the Rabbit army when Bean moves on to Tactical School.

Major Anderson and Captain Dimak discuss the choices that Dimak made about training Ender for the coming battle with the Buggers, which is only four months away. The team consists of ten students, with Bean among them. Anderson does not think that the members of the team are equally comfortable with having Ender or Bean as leader, and Dimak argues that equality does not matter as much as potential.

On the way to Tactical School aboard a space destroyer, Bean reads up on military tactics and the histories of the other two battles with the Buggers, along with current political analyses. He speculates on what might happen after the battle if earth comes out victorious and decides that the Russian faction will be the most difficult to handle. Once at Tactical, the team of ten students learns about commanding military vessels and their armaments but nothing about piloting them.

Chapter 22 introduces the ansible as a space communication technology that offers immediate command and response over light-years of distance. The ansible is a common imaginary device in science fiction, attributed to author Ursula K. Le Guin from her 1966 novel, *Rocannon's World*. The ansible is the key to the students' participation in the upcoming battle with the Buggers, which will take place many light-years away.

The team arrives at Command School, which is located in a hollowed-out asteroid. This was at one time a Bugger base, obvious because the hallways and rooms had to be enlarged for human use. The team practices with the command controls. Bean suspects that the practices are switched to real-time command of actual warships with real people on board without the team's knowledge. Graff talks with Bean about how he knows so much inside information and Bean answers that he just guesses at the right answers. Graff tells Bean that he has a name, Julian Delphiki, which means that Bean and Nikolai are brothers. However, Bean doubts Graff's honesty. Ender takes command of the team via headset conference call.



In Chapter 23, Bean discovers the key strategy for winning against the Buggers—kill the queen and the rest of the hive stops functioning. After the first supposedly practice battle, he also suspects that the Buggers are on several planets. Each day brings new battles, and each battle is longer than the one before. Bean understands that these practice battles are actually real, and when he takes losses, real people are dying light-years away. He keeps this knowledge to himself in order to not upset the other team members.

When Ender took command, Bean took on his role as subordinate and observes Ender's strategies and mistakes. Ender relies too much on Petra, who allows her mistakes to affect her subsequent performances. This leads to high losses in the main fleet. Fatigue begins to impact everyone's performance, and more heavy losses are incurred.

The day comes when the next so-called practice test battle is actually the make-or-break last fight against the Buggers. Ender is very tired and unpredictable. Bean is fully aware of what is at risk. When the battle opens, the entire Bugger fleet protects a single planet. Bean correctly assesses the situation and knows that the planet must be destroyed because that is where all the queens from all the other Bugger planets have taken refuge. The remaining earth forces consist of twenty starships, each with four fighters.

Ender takes the earth fleet forward, and the Buggers cut off any chance of retreat. He takes the fleet in closer to the planet with the strategy of releasing a powerful explosive weapon called Dr. Device. At the very last moment, while the last of Bean's ships enter the planet atmosphere, he orders the Dr. Device to be set off while onboard rather than trying to launch it. This action destroys the planet and disables all the Bugger forces, making earth victorious but sacrificing all the fleet. Graff informs the team that the actual battle has been fought and the threat to earth is over. They hear gunshots in the hallways of the Command School. The Russians are trying to take it over.

In Chapter 24 the Russians fail to take over the world, although it becomes known that Achilles was spying for them in Battle School. The students, including Bean and Ender, return to earth. Sister Carlotta takes Bean and Nicolai to their parents on Crete.

Part 6, Victor: Guesswork, Reunion, Ender's Game, Homecoming, Chapters 21-24 Analysis

Part 6 wraps up the story with the final battle against the Buggers and the emotional homecoming of Bean to his biological family. This completes the heroic story narrative that usually ends triumphantly. The major differences involve home shifting from one location to another and children being the heroes.

High suspense during the battle scenes builds from showing Bean's point of view rather than Ender's. Bean's high intelligence allows him to understand that the practice battles are actual battles, and that losing what appears to be simply ship avatars on a computer



screen involves the grim loss of human life. Petra breaks down after taking high losses before the final battle, which seems to be from fatigue rather than an understanding of the horrible reality. The breakdown adds to the suspense because Bean witnesses it and knows the truth.

Both Bean and Ender know how the Buggers need to be defeated in the final battle. Ender brings the remaining earth ships ever closer to the planet, allowing the Buggers to believe they are about to win. Bean commands the killing blow that destroys the planet, and as he gives the order, he quotes from the Bible, a dramatic passage on Absalom (King David's third son). Directly afterward, the planet explodes in a classic science fiction climax. Bean's ship follows his orders to detonate the Dr. Device onboard rather than trying to launch it, which had not been working for other ships.

Bean (Julian) and Nikolai's return home is more touching than triumphant, another difference from the usual heroic novel. His mother, Elena, accepts Bean as her true son, finally giving him the home that he never had before. This ending gives emotional satisfaction that all is well, although it was not well in the first place. When the novel opens, Bean is starving and the earth is under an enormous threat. When the novel closes, tears of joy are shed and the threat has been eliminated.



Characters

Bean (Julian Delphinki)

Bean is the protagonist in the story. He looks years younger than his actual age of six or seven. Bean first appears on the streets of Rotterdam, where he manipulates Poke and her crew to forcefully recruit Achilles, an older child, as a protector. This allows Poke's crew of very young children to obtain food at a charity kitchen. When Sister Carlotta hears of the amazing transformation, she takes Bean in and prepares him for Battle School. Bean discovers where he had lived before taking to the streets and then disembarks for Battle School.

While in the School, Bean demonstrates his superior intelligence, given to him through a DNA manipulation that Volescu performed illegally while Bean was still only a fertilized egg. The egg was from Bean's actual parents, along with twenty-two others. Bean escaped Volescu's illegal laboratory, leaving the other twenty-two children to be killed by Volescu.

Ender Wiggin takes Bean on as an ally in the School. Bean serves under Ender's leadership of the Dragon army, which attains the highest rating among the other armies. Bean also determines what the intentions are for the students—to fight the Buggers. He strongly suspects that the officers in the School are doing things wrongly, which shows how exceptional intelligence can develop contempt for adult authority figures. In the end Ender and Bean defeat the Buggers, and Bean returns to his biological family.

Andrew (Ender) Wiggin

Ender is older than Bean and the chosen leader for the battle to defeat the Buggers. He has natural leadership abilities and intelligence that come close to Bean's level. Although in this story Bean is the protagonist, Ender is the protagonist in an earlier story that the author wrote, entitled *Ender's Game*. This makes Ender almost an equal protagonist as Bean, although without the usual point-of-view treatment. Ender leads the final battle, but it is Bean who delivers the final fatal blow to the Buggers.

Ender's life becomes threatened when Bonzo attempts to take revenge for a past transgression. However, Ender anticipates the confrontation and trains in martial arts. When Bonzo attacks Ender in a bathroom, Ender head-butts him so hard that Bonzo dies.

The School officers push Ender to the breaking point. He no longer cares about the battle games, in effect resigning by not playing along. The School officers have no choice but to put him in Command School. Later Bean and nine other students join him and the final battle with the Buggers is fought. Ironically, none of the students know that what seems like Command School practice battles are actually real battles being fought light-years away through a special ultra-high speed communication technology. Ender



puts into play a brilliant strategy toward the end of the battle, enabling Bean to go in for the kill.

Sister Carlotta

Sister Carlotta takes Bean off the streets of Rotterdam and prepares him for Battle School. She suspects that something might have been done to Bean's DNA that caused him to have high intelligence and slow physical development. She obtains the needed clearance to investigate and finds the scientist responsible for the idea, Anton. He explains to her that it was a very small DNA change, but that a price had to be paid for the high intelligence. She learns that Bean will grow, continue to grow into a giant, and die probably in his twenties from a failed heart.

She continues to track down what happened to Bean. She discovers that a Doctor Volescu performed the experiment that Anton had only proposed in a paper. Volescu's illegal laboratory had been discovered, and he had killed the other children that had the same DNA alteration as Bean's. Bean had escaped by first hiding in a toilet tank and later making his way into the streets.

Not wanting to believe that Volescu was Bean's biological father, she digs further and discovers the real parents. They live on Crete in a nice house. Sister Carlotta promises to return Bean, whose real name is Julian Delphiki, once the battle with the Buggers is done.

Nikolai Delphiki

Nikolai becomes Bean's closest friend in Battle School. Nikolai helps Bean to adjust to the School, and in return Bean encourages Nikolai to accept a leadership position. Nikolai turns out to be Bean's biological brother.

Colonel Graff

Colonel Graff runs Battle School. He confronts Bean about how inside information comes his way, but later realizes that Bean can do remarkable analyses on information.

Formics (Buggers)

The Formics are the insect creatures that threaten the destruction of the human species. They are technologically advanced and live in hive communities on several worlds light-years from earth.



Achilles

Achilles is the older boy that Poke forces to protect her crew, including Bean. He becomes a serial killer and shows up at Battle School. Bean tricks him into confessing his murders and turns him over to the authorities.

Bonzo Madrid

Bonzo Madrid hates Ender and tries to beat him. This fails with deadly results. Ender kills Bonzo with a powerful head-butt.

Petra Arkanian

Petra Arkanian is the first advanced student in Battle School who discovers that Bean is where he is not supposed to be. She later participates in the final battle with the Buggers.

Poke

Poke is a young girl on the streets of Rotterdam. She takes Bean into her crew and is later killed by Achilles.

Anton

Anton is the scientist who first proposes the DNA change that is done to Bean.

Volescu

Volescu is the doctor who actually performs the DNA change on Bean.

Captain Dimak

Captain Dimak is the first officer of Battle School that Bean meets.



Objects/Places

Rotterdam

Rotterdam is a city in the Netherlands where Bean first appears in the story. Since the story is in the future, Rotterdam has changed tremendously and has a large population of barbaric street urchins.

Helga's Kitchen

Helga's kitchen is the charity kitchen that Poke's crew gains access to after Bean talks Poke into forcefully enlisting Achilles' help. Helga tells Sister Carlotta of the remarkable change in the children's behavior.

International Fleet

International Fleet, or IF, is the military organization that runs the Battle School and all other schools for training commanders in the upcoming final battle with the Buggers.

Battle School

Battle School is the first training institution that Bean goes to and where he meets Ender.

Ventilation System

Bean uses the ventilation system in the Battle School to move around unobserved and spy on the teachers and students. He also uses the ventilation system to trap Achilles.

Command School

Command School is located within an asteroid that had once been a Bugger base. The final battle with the Buggers is commanded from here but actually fought light-years away.

Battle Room

The battle room is a zero-gravity room where Bean and Ender fight practice battles with other students.



Flash Suit

The flash suit is what all students in the battle room wear. When light from special guns hit the flash suit, it becomes very stiff, thus freezing the student's ability to move.

Ansible

The ansible is a communication device in science fiction that allows immediate command-response over light-years of space.

Dr. Device

The Device is a powerful weapon that the earth forces have. It is used to destroy the main Bigger planet, thus winning the battle for humans and destroying the Bigger species.

Crete

Crete is an island and part of Greece. This is where Bean's biological parents live and where Bean ends up at the conclusion of the story.

Themes

The Importance of Intelligence

The main character Bean, whose actual name is Julian Delphiki, has altered DNA that gives him superior intelligence. However, the genetic change also shortens his life. The thematic idea is that to attain higher intelligence, something else must be given up, and yet this is required to save the human race. The outcome was not been anticipated when the illegal experiment was done, thereby bringing the element of chance into play. Genetics has chance as part of the theoretical workings, where random genetic changes can bring about desirable traits. These is generally thought of as survival improvements for a species and may explain why human intelligence is limited. A balance is needed. The human species needs intelligence to survive, but too much shortens the lifespan of individuals, thus restricting how many offspring can be produced.

Common thought around intelligence tends to be the more, the better. However, the kind of intelligence may be more important than the level under certain circumstances. The Buggers are very intelligent, perhaps more so than humans because it seems that their technology is further advanced. Yet all the Buggers depend on queens, one for each hive structure. Individuals within a hive structure cannot live without the queens. This implies a centralized intelligence and one that may be passed from queen to queen. No Bugger writing is mentioned in the story, which may not be required in a hive structure. Be that as it may, the Buggers learn from the actions of the humans but have no capability to understand how humans think. This becomes the undoing of the Bugger species as Ender and Bean change strategies to fit the battle situation as it unfolds.

Bean suffers over the question of whether he is human or not due to his altered DNA. Technically speaking, his savant gene has been flipped on by artificial means and not by the rules of genetics, which may keep the savant gene recessive in all but a few cases. He dismisses the idea of not being human because he has all the other usual human traits except for extremely high intelligence and his slow initial growth rate. The point is that high intelligence primarily brings up the question of being human or not. We tend to place higher value on intelligence than on physical traits in our societies, even for athletes, at least consciously. Some recent studies point to the possibility that humans still select their mates based more on physical traits than intellectual ones, but at a subconscious level. A counterargument can be made that social positions and military/political powers may be greater aphrodisiacs, while a second case can be made for straight up affection and love. In any case, this story puts intelligence as one of the traits that saves the human race from extinction and, in the case of the beating the Buggers, a very important thing to have.



Great Military Leadership

Great military leaders from history are mentioned, among them Napoleon, Augustus, Alexander and Grant. At times the military leadership of Bean and Ender is compared to these other leaders. The question of what makes great military leadership is addressed.

Ender has the necessary skill of bringing diverse people together for a common cause, as do other great leaders in history. This is not as natural a talent for Bean, but he does manage to civilize the barbaric streets of Rotterdam because changing to civilization makes more sense than survival of the fittest. Through observing how Ender builds the Dragon army, Bean learns how to build his own Rabbit army into an efficient fighting force. He takes it another step farther by purposefully losing all five of his battles to teach his army how to improvise when the command structure falls apart. The fundamental principle is that no military leader can be great without the ability to bring people together.

All of the mentioned historical military leaders have another fundamental principle in common—they could all improvise within chaotic conditions. This ability can turn the tide of battle to advantage, and one of the most famous improvisations is Alexander's flanking moves with his cavalry. Lee had his forces use trench warfare after Gettysburg, which ultimately lost the war but won several individual battles. Many other improvisations can be listed, including the final improvisation that Ender and Bean decide upon. They save the human race by detecting the assumption of the Buggers, which involves how Ender had always left a retreat for his forces. By letting the Buggers cut off retreat and apparently sending his forces to their death in the planet atmosphere, he actually gives Bean the ability to come up with the final defeat of the enemy.

A third highly important principle of military leadership is determining who are allies and who are foes within the ranks. Ender accepts Bean as an ally, which earns Bean's loyalty. Bean identifies Bonzo as Ender's enemy, although Ender expects the fatal confrontation and has prepared for it. More importantly, Bean knows from the beginning that Achilles is nobody's ally and slyly arranges for his confession as a serial killer and capture. Bean also considers the officers in the Battle School to be foes, a natural outgrowth from his experience in the Rotterdam streets. However, he uses the officers to gain information from which to analyze their motives and consequently gain an upper hand.

Technological Possibilities

The story is science fiction, and subsequently science must be a major part. The students perform their battle in zero gravity, and yet the levels on the space station have varied amounts of gravity that points to having attained artificial gravity. Centrifugal force alone could not keep the battle room zero gravity with the entry points having full gravity. The story does not explain how this is done, just that it could be a possibility if humans become more aware of how gravity works. The technology may have been copied from the Buggers without the scientific understanding.



Real-time communication faster than the speed of light, known as the ansible in science fiction, is another technological possibility that is not explained. All the humans know is that it works but probably not how, which also indicates a technology copied from the Buggers. Space flight seems to be restricted by the speed of light, which hints that physics would not allow humans to travel faster, but perhaps an ultra-fast communication technique exists. Theoretical physics in some forms support the idea, such as tachyons, although faster-than-light theories tend to have either major internal problems or external misinterpretations. Regardless, the role of science fiction is to explore technical possibilities even if the actual science does not yet support them.

The Bigger species is another fiction based on science. This species seems to be similar to giant cockroaches or spiders, standing perhaps three or four feet high and living in huge hive communities that take over entire worlds. Some large insects exist on earth, but none this big. A certain amount of intellectual stretching has to be done from a biological-technical level to imagine insects like the Buggers. For example, could an exoskeleton support such a creature? Perhaps their worlds have less gravity than earth, but then why would they be interested in our planet? Could the Buggers have developed some kind of technology to support their exoskeletons, a metal system that moves with them and perhaps increases their strength, an artificial robotic shell? Here the story leaves the answers open, possibly for other stories from the same author.

Style

Point of View

Point of view (POV) shifts frequently but always returns to Bean. Bean is the shadow of Ender Wiggin in that he follows Ender's movements through the schools to the ultimate command of the earth forces near the Bugger planets. He observes Ender's lead and analyzes what Ender does in respect to what he would do in the same situation.

POV takes on the third-person perspective while describing actions and giving dialog. This shifts off of Bean most often, but other characters give their POV as well. The most common character allowed POV is Sister Carlotta who does things outside of Bean's perspective. She often talks with Colonel Graff at the beginning of chapters, a technique that fleshes out the story and comments on what has just occurred and what is about to happen. These beginning sections are used consistently throughout the book and are presented with few directions on who is saying what. This is risky for the first chapter because the reader is not yet familiar with the characters or their voices. In later chapters it becomes obvious who is saying what to whom. As a stylistic form, this is closely related to the Greek chorus in ancient plays, in which the chorus comments on the main story line. As Bean is compared to great military leaders in history, notably Alexander the Great, the form is appropriate to the story.

The POV of the Buggers is never presented directly. The Command School in the asteroid had at one time been a Bugger base, and these intelligent insect creatures walk lower to the ground than humans as evidenced by the low passageways and rooms left behind. They also depend entirely on queens, one for each planet they have taken over.

Limited and somewhat untrustworthy, the POV from Bean depends not only on what he observes but what he thinks are probable explanations for events and conditions. He reads the intentions of the school leadership indirectly, oftentimes accurately, as reflected in his meetings with Graff. One of his conclusions, that the Buggers must be close to earth, proves false as he learns more about the actual situation. He is the first student to determine that the Buggers are actually close to their home planets and that the practice battles are actual battles occurring light-years away.

Setting

This is a science fiction novel set at some time in the future when space travel across light-years is known by at least two species, humans and Buggers. The action starts in Rotterdam, moves to Battle School in a space station and from there outward to the Command School in an asteroid. In Battle School the ventilation system becomes a setting from which Bean can observe teachers, students and school officers. He uses the ventilation system later to trap Achilles.



Other settings within Battle School that play important roles in the story are the battle room, the mess hall and the various rooms for students and school officers. The battle room is where the Dragon army under Ender gains top standings for winning the most. In the mess hall Bean gives an important speech to the other students about ignoring the standings. Graff confronts Bean in an officer area, and Ender confides in Bean from within Ender's private room. Bean's room is a large space with many bunk beds.

While the actual battle takes place close to the Buggers' planets, from Bean's perspective all the action takes place in Command School on computer consoles. He can only imagine what is happening aboard the physical ships. This disconnection from reality moves the setting from its position in space to within Bean's imagination, a plot technique that increases the drama of the climax when Bean's ship succeeds in destroying the Buggers.

Language and Meaning

A few terms are borrowed from modern street slang, such as "crew" for a type of social structure not formed from blood ties. Achilles turns the slang to the familiar term "family," which in modern usage has a negative connotation within certain contexts involving manipulation and murder. His purpose is to knock Poke off her leadership role in her crew and possibly to build a growing crew of his own with stronger ties to him. His murder of Poke suggests the negative connotation of family, as does his history of being a serial killer.

Among the students, the expression, "eh" means yes, "neh" means no, and "meh" means maybe or not caring. A "toon" can be loosely associated with platoon and has a slang usage in modern language as referring to a cartoon. Whether the students feel they are characters in a cartoon is unclear, but they do realize that their playing at battle games carries a certain amount of absurdity. Some students, such as Bonzo, take the games and emotions involved too seriously, a mistake that costs Bonzo his life.

The language used in narratives tends to be straightforward and concise. Wry statements come out more often in dialog, especially from Bean and Sister Carlotta while talking with Colonel Graff. Descriptions of violence are stark and grim without undue exploitation, while descriptions of emotional scenes avoid melodrama, for the most part. This use of language allows the reader's imagination to fill in gaps, which is considered good modern literary form.

Structure

The book is split into six parts with twenty-four chapters. It moves in a chronological order and uses partial flashbacks to fill in back-story. A full flashback takes the reader to the time and setting in the past, and the narrative keeps to that orientation throughout. A partial flashback retains the current setting and time while explaining something that happened in the past.



The plot is in the form of a heroic narrative. The hero leaves home, accomplishes something great after going through several trials, and returns home victorious. Bean is the protagonist, while the Buggers are the antagonists in the overall picture. However, other antagonists include Achilles and, indirectly, Bonzo, while Colonel Graff seems to work against Bean at every turn. Bean's most important allies are Ender and Sister Carlotta. His primary sidekick is Nikolai, who turns out to also be his biological brother.

Small climaxes lead up to a single primary climax, which is also characteristic of the heroic narrative. One problem leads to further problems, each with full or partial resolutions until the final chapter, in which all conflicts have been or become resolved, also referred to as picking up the loose ends of the story. This story ends concisely and in an emotionally satisfying manner, the happy ending. The actual battle with the Buggers is won in the preceding chapter and this makes the final chapter the anticlimax.

This story maintains a parallel plot structure, in which Sister Carlotta's quest to discover Bean's true nature and past coincides with Bean's movement through Battle School. The parallel plots start approaching each other as Bean comes closer to his victory, and Sister Carlotta discovers Bean's biological parents. The plots join in the last chapter when Sister Carlotta brings Bean to his mother and father, along with Nikolai, his brother.

A rough comparison can be made with Alexander the Great's life to this story. Alexander starts his career in Macedon, becomes king after his father's assassination and must battle with Darius before claiming his home, which becomes ultimately Alexandria in Egypt after his death in Babylon. Bean starts out in a laboratory, escapes to the streets of Rotterdam, gains a kind of kingship in the streets, must leave and do battle with the Buggers, and returns home to Crete. The forces of Darius greatly outnumber Alexander's; the Buggers greatly outnumber the earth forces. The common Buggers depend upon a queen, while the common Persian forces depend on their king Darius. The ancient Greeks are freemen on a quest of preserving their freedom; the earth forces do the same. Superior military strategies win the day for both Alexander and Bean. Bean survives but may be doomed to an early death from the DNA alteration that has been made. Alexander dies in his early thirties.



Quotes

"Bean didn't like his new name, but it was a name, and having a name meant that somebody else knew who he was and needed something to call him, and that was a good thing."

Chap. 1, Urchin, p. 20.

"But her mission in life, she knew, was to care for little children, and the way she saw it, if the Buggers won the next round of the war, all the little children on Earth would die. Surely God did not meant that to happen—but in her judgment, at least, God did not want his servants to sit around waiting for God to work miracles to save them."

Chap. 2, Kitchen, p. 33.

"But civilizing the bullies of the street had not been Achilles' idea. It had been Bean who thought of it. Incredible, for a child so young to conceive of it and bring it about."

Chap. 3, Payback, p. 50.

"What fascinated him were the other children. Boys, most of them, and all older than him. Definitely all larger. Some of them looked at him oddly, and behind him he heard one whisper, 'Is he a kid or a doll?' But snide remarks about his size and his age were nothing new to him. In fact, what surprised him was that there was only one remark, and it was whispered."

Chap. 5, Ready or Not, p. 75.

"This guy might be real tough as the only adult on a shuttle full of kids, but if he were a kid on the streets of Rotterdam, he'd 'maneuver' himself into starvation in a month. If he wasn't killed before that just for talking like he thought his piss was perfume."

Chap. 5, Ready or Not, p. 83.

"He couldn't be hurt now, not really. No matter what happened, as long as he was here at Battle School he would never be hungry. He'd always have shelter. . . . Bean had already won the battle for survival, and after that, no other competition mattered."

Chap. 6, Ender's Shadow, p. 96.

"Intelligence and education, which all these children had, apparently didn't make any important difference in human nature. Not that Bean had really thought they would."

Chap. 7, Exploration, p. 109.

"After all, the invasion of France by the major European powers after the French



Revolution led to the desperate French government discovering and promoting Napoleon, even though in the end he seized the reins of power instead of just defending the nation. The I.F. was determined that there would be no Napoleon on Earth to lead the resistance."

Chap. 8, Good Student, p. 133.

"Someone else, some follower, some insatiably curious soul, some would-be visionary longing to take human beings to the next stage of evolution or some other such mad, arrogant cause—this someone had taken the bold step of turning that key, opening that door, putting the killing, brilliant fruit into the hand of Eve. And because of that act—that serpentine, slithering crime—it was Bean who had been expelled from the garden. Bean who would now, surely, die—but die like a god, knowing good and evil."

Chap. 9, Garden of Sofia, p. 147.

"He had always made his own luck."

Chap. 10, Sneaky, p. 156.

"Community theory was fine as far as it went—it explained why communities all honored sacrificing heroes in their stories and rituals, but it still didn't explain the heroes themselves."

Chap. 11, Daddy, p. 162.

"Nikolai never said a word about it to anyone else. That was when Bean was sure that Nikolai was worth having as a friend. He could keep things to himself without even having to be asked to do it."

Chap. 12, Roster, p. 184.

"It makes no more sense than Herod's slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem. The only comfort was the trust that a merciful God caught up the spirits of the slain infants into his bosom, and that he brought comfort, eventually, to the parents' hearts."

Chap. 14, Brothers, p. 214.

"Who was the great man beside Augustus? Alexander? They had friends, they had rivals, but they never had partners."

Chap. 15, Courage, p. 221.

"Why couldn't I have kept my mouth shut? Why did I have to goad Bonzo Madrid? Wiggin is going to end up like Poke. And it will be my fault again."

Chap. 15, Courage, p. 235.

"They're putting Ender into a street situation. They're testing him to see if he can



survive.

"They don't know what they're doing, the fools. The street is not a test. The street is a lottery."

Chap. 16, Companion, p. 249.

"Graff felt sick. He knew that Bean's powers of analysis were extraordinary. So, also, were his powers of deception. Some of Bean's guesses weren't right—but was that because he didn't know the truth, or because he simply didn't want them to know how much he knew, or how much he guessed? I never wanted you here, Bean, because you're too dangerous."

Chap. 17, Deadline, p. 261.

"Achilles never ceased to be astonished at how the universe bent to his will. Whatever he wished seemed to come to him. . . . As if the universe were created to serve him, with all the people in it tuned to resonate with his desires."

Chap. 20, p. 307.

"At once Bean understood a third and most important reason for what was happening. The Buggers had learned the wrong lessons from the previous battles."

Chap. 23, Ender's Game, p. 367.

Topics for Discussion

How does the manipulation of Bean's DNA impact his life?

Why is Volescu imprisoned?

Compare and contrast Ender's leadership to Bean's.

Why does Achilles kill Poke?

Describe Bean's strategy for entrapping Achilles.

What are the primary differences between how humans live and Buggers?

Describe the parallels between Battle School and other institutions of education.

What motivates Sister Carlotta to investigate Bean's past?

How does Bean feel about Sister Carlotta before he goes to Battle School?

How does Bean differ from the other students in Battle School? How is he the same?

Describe the relationship between Colonel Graff and Sister Carlotta.

What is a parallel, or as the author proposes—a parallax—novel?