

# **Glitch Study Guide**

**Glitch by Heather Anastasiu**

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## Plot Summary

Glitch, by Heather Anastasiu, takes place in a world in which an implanted chip keeps people free of emotions, both good and bad. This robotic existence ends for 17-year-old Zoe when her hardware begins to glitch, opening a world of color, beauty, and freedom. The glitch exposes her and her fellow glitchers to the dangers of not conforming.

Teenage Zoel, who secretly calls herself Zoe, lives with her mother, father, and younger brother Markan in the Community. The Community is an underground city created after the Old World was destroyed by human anger, hate, and greed. Here, all human emotions have been overridden by an implanted chip that connects residents to the Link, from which all information is imparted by the Uppers. For Zoe, everything changes when her hardware begins to glitch, enabling her to experience beauty and feelings that are foreign, yet exhilarating, to her. She works hard to hide her situation because any hint of an anomaly would lead to a mandatory repair or even deactivation. Because she feels alone and frightened, Zoe considers turning herself in; however, the idea of freedom from the Link is too enticing.

Any thought of returning to her drone-like state evaporates when Zoe meets Adrien, a young man who lives on the Surface. He is part of the Resistance, a secret movement to overthrow the Uppers and return people to freedom. Adrien begins to teach her about emotions such as love, sorrow, anger, and guilt. Her trip to the Surface is cut short when she develops severe allergies and must return to the Community with Adrien, who is on a mission to find and rescue other glitchers. Zoe soon learns that she is not alone, as her classmate Max is also a glitcher. Max wants nothing more than to be with Zoe. However, while Max is focused solely on pleasure, Zoe wants more. She shares Adrien's determination to help others escape from the clutches of the Link and experience all that true humanity has to offer. This sets her on a path of danger and intrigue where it is impossible to know whom to trust. As Zoe learns more about love, beauty, and joy, she becomes more determined not to lose the new world she has discovered.



# Chapters 1 - 4

## Summary

Chapter 1 introduces a teenage girl named Zoel who lives in the Community, an underground city created after human emotions – anger, hate, greed, indifference – almost destroyed the Earth, now called the Old World. Like other children, Zoel and her 13-year-old brother Markan were created through genetic engineering and like everyone else, they have a chip implanted in the back of their neck that controls their emotions. Everyone in the Community is robot-like, unable to see colors or experience anything other than pain, which they still need for safety reasons. But Zoel has a secret. For a while now, she has been glitching, or experiencing a malfunction in her chip that enables her to see and experience everything a normal human would. It frightens her but she also likes it and is training herself to hide her glitches from everyone else, including the Regulators, who look out for anomalies and take anyone who is malfunctioning to be repaired, and in extreme cases, deactivated entirely. While at the Market Corridor to pick up her family's allotment of food and other supplies, Zoel begins to glitch and considers reporting herself to the Regulators, but does not do it because although her secrets, including her stack of hidden drawings and a big secret she does not reveal yet, make her nervous, she loves the color and emotions she is now able to experience.

Chapter 2 takes place the following morning as Zoel leaves for her school, the Academy. She is glitching again and as she stands on the subway platform, she sees a little girl fall toward the tracks. Using the secret she tries so hard to keep, Zoel uses her mind to pull the girl to safety but several people stare at her afterward because she involuntarily screamed. She is able to get on the train, where she sees a boy with bright blue-green eyes who stares at her. She wonders if she has been reported for anomalies and he is a Monitor sent to observe her. During lunchtime at school, a boy named Maximin studies with her and for a moment she senses that he might be glitching also but dismisses the thought. Arriving at her next class, she is shocked to see the blue-green-eyed boy sitting next to her, then the teacher announces that she is to report to Room A117 immediately.

In Chapter 3, Zoel arrives at Room A117, where a strange man inserts something into the portal in the back of her neck, paralyzing her, and she thinks he is going to deactivate her. Then the green-eyed boy, who introduces himself as Adrien, arrives and disables the man. He says he is there to help Zoel and she is surprised when he calls her Zoe, a secret name she uses for herself. He takes her through a series of dark tunnels and stairways, then a door opens and Zoe sees a blinding light, and she realizes he is trying to kill her.

In Chapter 4, Adrien explains that going outside the community to the Surface is not toxic as everyone has been told. The Community Corps made everyone believe they were the only ones who could save them from nuclear destruction and they use the



chips to control everyone. He is among the Gifted people – his ability is seeing glimpses into the future – and he knows about Zoe’s telekinesis, or ability to move things with her mind. He begs her to come with him and join the Gifted people on the Surface and although she is unsure at first, she agrees.

## Analysis

The book’s early chapters introduce the main characters, including Zoe and Adrien, and set up the basic premise. Although the author is vague about exactly what happened on earth, she sets up an early good vs. evil theme as a force called the Community Corps has gained control of this portion of civilization and has removed the ability to feel and sense things normally. Although Zoe lives in what appears to be a typical family – two parents and a sibling – in reality they are simply four people who share a dwelling as there are no feelings or emotions among them as we would see in a real family. Children are created not through sexual intercourse between two loving parents, but rather by scientists who carefully choose particular characteristics and create a child through genetic engineering. Zoe’s feelings for her brother, which are made possible only because of her glitching, become a regular theme throughout the book as she searches for a way to save him from life as an emotionless drone, and the pictures she draws of him exhibiting a smile she has never seen are a symbol of the life she hopes he can have.

The author draws parallels between the real world and the world of the Community such as the Market Corridor, the subway, the school Zoe attends and the food the family eats, but while daily life appears to be similar to life as we know it, the differences are glaring. Food is simply for sustenance rather than pleasure and education is primarily for job training as young people are assigned a career slot at an early age and thereafter given the knowledge they will need to perform that task.

From the beginning the reader gets a picture of Zoe as someone who is torn between two worlds and two ways of living. She considers reporting herself for glitching because she knows her life would be easier if she simply returned to being a robotic drone, but the glimpses she has had of a different life, one filled with color, possibility and feelings she does not yet have a name for, has already changed her. This is what makes it possible for her to take a leap of faith with a boy she has just met and explore a dangerous but intriguing world outside the Community.

## Discussion Question 1

How do Zoe's feelings about her brother change after she starts glitching?

## Discussion Question 2

Describe the Market Corridor. How does it differ from the supermarkets you are familiar with? In what ways is it similar?



## Discussion Question 3

Why is it difficult for Zoe to believe what Adrien tells her about the Surface in Chapter 4? Why does she finally agree to go with him?

## Vocabulary

retina, auditory, turmoil, defiant, subcutaneous, schematics, wisp, deactivate, schematics, expansive, methodical, muffled, anomaly, translucent, differentiate, interminable, inadvertently, barbaric, cultivate, dissent, periphery, unobtrusively, involuntarily, inordinate, oblivious, utilitarian, falter, render, extraneous, vehement, flinch, telekinesis, unruly



# Chapters 5 - 9

## Summary

In Chapter 5, Zoe and Adrien arrive at the Surface and she is stunned and frightened by the bright light, openness and tall buildings. They enter a car and as they drive, Adrien explains that his mother is not connected to the Link, which seems impossible to Zoe. His father died working for the Resistance, or Rez, and now Adrien works for them although it makes his mother nervous. They arrive at the city gate and Adrien says it will be a short trip if his mother was unable to contact the Rez.

In Chapter 6, Adrien is able to hack the guard's Link memory and he admits them to the city, where they leave the vehicle and begin walking through a system of wet, rat-infested tunnels. As they walk, Adrien explains that in the Old World, some global corporations were founded and Community Corp got particularly powerful. They began implanting V-chips into the brains of soldiers to make them completely obedient. Then, they faked D-Day and convinced people that having a chip implanted into their brains would protect them from the aftereffects of the nuclear bombs. Zoe is stunned that people gave up their freedom willingly. Suddenly they are rushed by hundreds of huge rats but Zoe pushes them away with her mind just as the water level begins rising and a current tugs at them.

In Chapter 7, they reach a ladder leading up to another tunnel but although Zoe gets onto it, Adrien starts to fall into the rushing water. Zoe holds onto his arm but is about to lose her grip when her powers kick in and he is raised onto the ladder. When they exit the tunnel, Zoe is overwhelmed by the green trees and bushes, but as they go toward Adrien's mother's house, which is outside the zone with cameras, her throat begins to close up and she passes out.

In Chapter 8, Zoe is semi-conscious and hears Adrien's mother, Sophia, saying he should not have brought her here because it is dangerous. Gradually she wakes up and learns that she had an allergic reaction to something and Adrien's mother gave her a shot of epinephrine. After Sophia leaves the room, Adrien explains that he has had visions of Zoe for some time. He explains concepts like love, souls and conscience, which are foreign to her since she has lived her life through the Link. He says he has had visions of her further into the future but he resists telling her about them until she insists. They share a moment of closeness and connection, then he kisses her lightly just as his mother comes back and says he should tell her about his idea that she is going to lead the Resistance and is the only hope to deliver the human race from slavery.

In Chapter 9, Sophia says that she has run blood tests and Zoe is severely allergic to many things on the Surface, so if she does not go back, she will die soon. There is no place with the kind of air filtration system she needs, but such a place is being built although it will not be ready for a few months. After some discussion, it is agreed that



Adrien will go back with her to ensure that she takes the immunotherapy treatments she will need before she can return to the Surface, but her memory disruption hardware will make her lose all her memories of Adrien and the Surface. She is devastated at the thought of losing everything that has become so important to her, but she agrees to the plan. She and Adrien, who are falling for each other, kiss deeply before he takes her to Dr. Chol, who adjusts hardware in her brain to mask any anomalies when she returns and in Adrien's to block the Link. Afterward, Adrien has a vision that disturbs him greatly and he begs Zoe to try to remember him even though it is impossible.

## Analysis

In these chapters, Zoe experiences many things for the first time and the results are both exhilarating and frightening. Although Adrien's family is not as typical as hers is – there is only him and his mother, and they live somewhat on the run – they have genuine human feelings between them including love, concern, anger and frustration, unlike her family's robotic, unfeeling relationship. Zoe's reaction to the Surface itself is not necessarily what one might expect because she knows only what she has been taught to believe – that the air is toxic and everything there is dangerous. For that reason, rather than feeling free and excited by what she sees, she is frightened by the open space, the tall buildings and the greenery that is completely opposite of the drab gray world of the Community.

Chapters 6 and 8 are particularly important for several reasons. In Chapter 6, Adrien provides the background for how the Community came to be, with the author making a political statement by laying much of the blame at the feet of large, greedy corporations that rose to power in the Old World. When Zoe is surprised that people willingly gave up their freedom, the answer is essentially attributed to human laziness. It became easier for people to simply stop thinking and allow themselves to become emotionless drones. They came to believe that it was worthwhile to give up positive emotions like love and pleasure in exchange for eliminating negative ones like hate and fear.

Chapter 8 finds Adrien beginning to teach Zoe about what it means to be truly human. Even though she has been glitching for some time now, she has been alone with no one to share her experiences with and her body of knowledge extends only to what the Link has given her. She has begun to experience certain emotions, but she has no words for them because they have been wiped away by the Link. She is also beginning to experience sexual feelings for the first time, but again has no frame of reference for the way she feels with Adrien.

## Discussion Question 1

Describe Zoe's reaction when she sees the Surface for the first time. Why is her reaction so dramatic?





## Discussion Question 2

Why is Sophia so set against Zoe staying on the Surface? Why does she also disapprove of Adrien's plan to go back to the Community with her?

## Discussion Question 3

In Chapter 8, Zoe and Adrien discuss the importance of duty. How do their feelings about it differ and why?

## Vocabulary

stylus, orient, compress, particle, queasy, avert, solitude, taint, drone, encapsulate, retract, enunciate, infrastructure, grimace, amygdala, vestigial, entity, acquisition, cacophony, exertion, angular, decrepit, culvert, contour, infinitesimally, caustic, conspiratorial



# Chapters 10 - 12

## Summary

Chapter 10 finds Zoe back in the Community being questioned by Chancellor Bright, the new head of the Academy. For the past three weeks, she has continued to maintain that she recalls nothing about her time on the Surface, but suddenly she begins to glitch for the first time. She has seen the green-eyed boy again but has no other memory of him and assumes he is a Monitor. At home, she worries about her brother Markan, who is maturing, and wonders if he will begin to glitch. If he does not, she worries that he will be lost forever, with no emotion or feeling. She looks inside her mattress and thinks that her drawings are in a different place than where she placed them, but thinks she must be mistaken because if someone had found them, she would have been deactivated. She has nightmares about drowning in a large body of water and Markan is begging for her help but she cannot do anything. The next day, Maximin asks her to come to his home to study together and she agrees, trying to hide her glitching from him. As they take the subway to his housing unit, she thinks that she will find a way to escape from the Community and find a place where she can glitch freely until she is inevitably discovered and deactivated. When they arrive at Maximin's house, he says he is happy she is back and kisses her.

Chapter 11 opens with Zoe backing off in shock. Then, Maximin, who wants to be called Max, reveals that he has been glitching for three months and knows that Zoe is glitching too. He also has a secret power of being able to take on the appearance of another person. He demonstrates this power for Zoe. He also has dreams, but most of his are pleasurable and they discuss the concept of pleasure, which she does not quite understand. Zoe wants to talk more because she is thrilled that she is no longer alone, but Max is more interested in touching her. He reveals that he has been using his power to listen in on conversations and has learned that the Uppers are lying to the people of the Community but he does not know details. While Zoe becomes excited about the possibility of finding other glitchers and helping everyone to be safe, Max only wants her and continues to come on to her physically. As they are talking, Zoe suddenly remembers a few things about her time on the Surface, including the fact that Adrien was there, but this angers Max and he tells her to stay away from him. A few days later, as they are eating lunch, Zoe receives a message to report to the diagnostic center and as she goes there, she feels sad that the life she has discovered will now end. She decides to run away to the city, but as she is heading to the subway, a drive is inserted into the access port at the back of her neck.

In Chapter 12, it is Adrien who has immobilized Zoe in order to upload a program that will enable her to reconnect and disconnect to the Link by giving a command. She does not know whether to trust him or not, but she feels a memory teasing at the edge of her brain. She connects to the Link and goes to the diagnostic center, where the technician turns out to be Max, who has taken on the actual technician's image. Chancellor Bright arrives and eventually is satisfied that she is showing no anomalies. The following day,



Zoe sees Adrien on the train as well as a group of Regulators-in-training. Suddenly one of the Regulators-in-training begins to glitch and behave violently. Chaos ensues and several people are injured or killed. When the train starts to tip over on its side, Zoe uses her power to stop the accident, but she is injured. She reconnects to the Link just as she passes out.

## Analysis

This section introduces Chancellor Bright and her ongoing efforts to prove that Zoe is glitching or exhibiting other anomalies. There is a considerable amount of foreshadowing in the Chancellor's questioning of Zoe, the nightmares that Zoe has about drowning, her fears for her brother Markan, and Max's knowledge about the Uppers and things that are going on in the Community.

It is significant for Zoe to find out that Max is also glitching because she now feels less alone and less vulnerable. This also begins to change her concept of what constitutes family because although she now has strong feelings for her brother, he is not capable of returning those feelings because he is under the control of the Link, so Zoe begins to broaden her idea of family to include Max because he shares experiences that she can share with no one else.

By this time, Zoe is no longer torn about what she wants her future to be. Whereas in earlier chapters, she considered turning herself in and returning to the simpler life of a drone, she no longer considers that as a possibility. Even though she does not recall her time on the Surface or her relationship with Adrien, she has experienced enough now to know that she would prefer a shorter life that includes freedom and emotion to a longer one controlled by the Link.

This section also begins to present the idea that while everyone connected to the Link is essentially the same, there are vast differences in the personalities of those who live in freedom. As early as their first open conversation about glitching, it is clear that Zoe and Max have very different reactions to their experiences. Max is interested only in the concept of pleasure while Zoe is focused on discovering other glitches and finding a way to achieve freedom. This will become a continuing theme throughout the rest of the book as Max seeks only pleasure – particularly physical pleasure – and Zoe strives to make a difference in the lives of others, particularly her brother.

It is also important to note that despite being fitted with a memory disrupter, Zoe has begun to have small recollections of Adrien and her time on the Surface. This relates to the concept that being human is more than just the absence of a computer chip that controls behavior and thought. Memory and feelings reside in areas other than those that can be manipulated or shut down by machinery.



## Discussion Question 1

Describe the different reactions Zoe and Max have to the fact that they can now share their glitching experiences with someone else. What is Zoe most interested in? What about Max? Why do you think they react differently?

## Discussion Question 2

What memories of her time on the Surface are returning to Zoe? Why do you think she is able to remember despite the memory disrupter? How might these vague memories affect her behavior in this section?

## Discussion Question 3

After Adrien uploads the program to enable Zoe to disconnect and reconnect to the Link, why is she still not sure she can trust him?

## Vocabulary

incapacitate, acrid, miscalculate, embedded, chide, harmonic, banish, disrupted, auxiliary, scenario, amenable, proximity, thrum, scrutinize, inevitable, animated, implication, tentative, ramification, octave, erratic, conspicuous, incredulous, exude, resonate, composure, sinister, immobilize, consternation, coincide, enigmatic, cadence, feral, mottled



# Chapters 13 - 16

## Summary

In Chapter 13, Zoe wakes up in the hospital and is horrified to find that her neck port is connected to a machine. She wonders if any information about herself has been revealed, especially when the doctor says he has detected anomalies, but he only replaces a battery in her heart monitor and releases her. Arriving at home, Zoe is sad that no one welcomes her or has missed or worried about her since they are incapable of feelings. Max visits but he refuses Zoe's plea that they talk with Adrien or try to find others like themselves. He says he only wants her and that perhaps they can be marital partners, which disturbs Zoe at first because she hopes to leave the Community, but the idea of not being alone is appealing and she agrees that she would like to be family with him. Afterward she feels a sense of dread when Max says he is making sure that he will be able to take care of her but refuses to explain how.

In Chapter 14, Zoe is at the Academy when Adrien approaches and says he has a way to get into her house unnoticed and will meet her in her bedroom the next night. That night, Max becomes angry when Zoe talks about Adrien and is upset that she does not seem to share his intense feelings for her. He says he has found records that describe things married partners did in the Old World. He tries to unbutton her pants, but she stops him. They argue and when he implies that she is not normal, she throws him out. However, she is certain that she is no longer a drone even though she does not feel exactly as he wants her to. The next night in her room, he apologizes. Then, Adrien drops into the room by removing a ceiling tile. He explains what happened when Zoe went to the Surface and tells them about the Resistance movement, but Max is derisive. Zoe is thrilled when Adrien says his mission is to find other glitchers at the Academy. He wants to help them escape. She insists that they include her brother Markan. He has spotted a girl named Molla, and Zoe agrees to try to talk with her. Adrien climbs back through the ceiling just as Markan enters the room because he heard voices and after he leaves, Zoe feels panic over the close call.

In Chapter 15, Zoe finds Molla at the Academy and can tell she is nervous and fidgety. She follows her into the bathroom and slips a note under the stall, saying she is not alone and will be contacted soon. That night, Adrien comes to Zoe's room and tries to help her get control of her telekinesis but they are not successful. He also begins giving her immunotherapy to help her get over her allergies. It could take months, but when it works, they will be able to escape with other glitchers. Adrien is surprised Zoe and Max are allowed to study together because officials usually are wary of letting people congregate. Before Adrien leaves, Zoe seems to have a memory of him kissing her. Later that night, she has a happy dream about him, followed by a nightmare about Markan behaving anomalously. The next day at school, Max agrees to contact Molla, then Adrien arrives and says he has had a vision that Molla is about to get caught.



In Chapter 16, Max goes to find Molla and install an upgrade to help her control when she glitches, while Adrien and Zoe sneak into the Academy's Central Systems area, where Adrien expertly breaks through the system's firewalls. Finding Molla's records, he reduces the number of citations for anomalous behavior to get her off the Regulators' radar screens, then he finds records of six more people with more than twenty citations each. This makes no sense because when a subject reaches eight reports he or she is deactivated. They find Zoe's record and it reveals that she had an older brother who was deactivated when he tried to escape to the Surface with her when she was four years old. Zoe is devastated that she got her brother killed, but at Adrien's urging, she clicks back into the Link and they leave the area safely, and she is grateful for the gray Link chatter that drowns out her feelings.

## Analysis

Again in these chapters, Zoe is confused by Max's behavior and put off by his sexual overtures because she has no frame of reference for this. His focus on physical pleasure and his frustration that Zoe does not share the same desires will come into play later when the nature of his relationship with Molla is subtly revealed. Max's idea of family – a marital relationship that includes sex – is more in line with the typical concept of marriage, but Zoe's concept of family continues to focus on similarities and shared experiences. Even though she has never experienced a normal relationship between parents and children, she has come far enough to realize that she is missing something by having such a cold relationship with her own parents and brother, who do not seem to notice when she is gone and have no worries about her well-being.

Max's attitude toward Adrien is also important to note. On one hand, he is jealous of Zoe's relationship with Adrien because he is extremely possessive of her with little regard for her own interests and feelings, but his animosity also stems from the secrets he is hiding about his connection with the Uppers. This connection is hinted at when Adrien expresses surprise that Zoe and Max are allowed to spend time together as this kind of behavior normally would not be condoned.

Zoe's new feelings about family surface again when she learns that she had an older brother and that she was responsible for his death. She had screamed as he was trying to escape with her to the Surface. Her feelings of guilt leave her devastated but also strengthen her determination to save Markan from a meaningless life in the Community. Her escape into the Link at the end of Chapter 16 goes back to the idea that it is better to have no feelings than to experience negative thoughts.

## Discussion Question 1

What is the significance of Zoe's discovery that she had an older brother? How does this knowledge affect her feelings about family?



## Discussion Question 2

Why does Zoe become so upset when Max says she is not normal because she does not share his desire for pleasure?

## Discussion Question 3

Compare and contrast the characters of Max and Adrien. What drives each of them? What attracts Zoe to both of them in different ways?

## Vocabulary

exacerbate, mantra, morbid, disproportionate, laceration, contusion, parameter, perturbed, extensive, benign, berate, exasperated, ramification, procreate, dumbfounded, incredulous, copiously, taut, emotive, sustained, furtive, manifest, skittish, radiate, vehement, hone, decipher, tolerance, congregate, alight, ratchet



# Chapters 17 - 20

## Summary

In Chapter 17, Zoe is filled with guilt over her role in her brother's death. Although Adrien tries to comfort her, she thinks perhaps it is safer to be alone so she cannot hurt anyone else. As the weeks pass, she wants to stay connected to the Link so she can feel numb. One day Max brings her a piece of chocolate cake he took from a meeting of the Uppers. He tells her about the other delicious food they enjoy. He insists that the two of them can have a wonderful life together; but, he balks when she mentions her desire to help others escape from being drones. He becomes angrier when she mentions Adrien. Again, he tries to get physically intimate but she brushes him off. Later she and Adrien have a conversation about pain and emotion. He tries to explain concepts like pleasure and love to her. She decides that she must develop her telekinesis in order to funnel her pain and guilt by helping others.

In Chapter 18, the Chancellor is questioning Zoe, who denies having experienced any anomalies or knowing of any other students having experienced them. Zoe is relieved when the Chancellor dismisses her but then she realizes with terror that she called her Zoe rather than Zoel. When Adrien comes to her room that night, he seems worried and finally admits that after his own meeting with the Chancellor, his memory was fuzzy and something feels off. He tells her he has located another glitcher at the Academy, a boy in Molla's year, and they decide to have a meeting at a safe place Max has found. Before he leaves, Adrien and Zoe kiss passionately and she realizes she feels the kind of pleasure Max has described to her but that she does not feel with him. A few days later, Zoe, Adrien, Max and Molla meet in a secret location but Max is skeptical and rude to Adrien as usual. Adrien says the new glitcher is named Juan and his gift is music. When Max pushes Adrien, Zoe is suddenly able to control her gift to keep him from falling, so she begins to feel stronger. Adrien says they might need to speed up their escape even though he had hoped to wait until they were certain Zoe's allergy treatments were in full effect and they are working on a way to bring Markan along, too. Suddenly a service worker arrives and tells Zoe she should not be here and moves to touch his arm panel.

In Chapter 19, Max changes into the form of the Chancellor but Adrien knocks the man out, saying protocol would have forced him to report the anomalies and all of them would have been discovered. Using a method Adrien saw the Rez use once, they do a manual memory wipe on the man, hoping it will make his memory fuzzy but not harm him otherwise and they are all able to escape. A few days later, Zoe is feeling guilty about her feelings for Adrien and is determined to tell Max when Adrien comes to her room and they begin kissing. Suddenly he pulls away and Zoe realizes it is actually Max, who has taken Adrien's form to trap her into revealing her feelings for him. She apologizes for hurting him, but Max is furious and says that one day he will make her want him, then he leaves after ensuring Zoe that she is dark underneath just as he is.





In Chapter 20, two weeks have passed. Zoe and Max are trying to behave normally even though they are not speaking. During lunch, two Regulators grab Juan and take him away and although Zoe wants to use her power to save him, Max prevents her from doing anything and she feels enormously guilty although Max says he will look into it. That night, Adrien comes to her room and tells her she has no reason to feel guilty. She asks him to define hate, and he tries to describe it. Then, they discuss the concept of love and both admit that they love each other. They are sharing a happy moment when Adrien has a vision, then he says they have to escape tomorrow because Molla is pregnant.

## Analysis

In these chapters Zoe continues to struggle with the concept of becoming more human even though it is what she wants. The knowledge that she had an older brother and the fact that she had a role in his death causes her to feel guilt for the first time and again she struggles not only with concepts like guilt and love, but even the words used to identify them. Adrien continues to serve as her guide through the ways of humanity, patiently discussing and explaining concepts that have been foreign to her previously.

Zoe's relationship with Max turns more ominous in these chapters as he continues to push for a relationship she is uncomfortable with, including a sexual one. Pleasure has become so important to him that it is not terribly surprising when it is revealed that Molla is pregnant, which begins to reveal Max's true nature. Although he insists that he wants a relationship with only Zoe, to the extent that he continually rejects her desire to use their powers to help others find freedom, he is unable or unwilling to control his own physical desire and curiosity. His shallow nature is also evident when he tricks her into revealing her feelings for Adrien by impersonating him in a visit to Zoe's room.

Zoe's gradually improving ability to control her power of telekinesis parallels her increased control over her changing emotions and the future she envisions for herself and those she cares about. Her discomfort over Max's veiled hints about things he knows and his ability to protect her foreshadows the later revelation about his relationship with the Uppers.

## Discussion Question 1

Each of the glitchers introduced so far has a different Gift. Adrien has visions, Max can take on different forms and Zoe can move objects with her mind. Why do you think the author gave these specific powers to each character? How do those powers fit with the characters' personalities?



## Discussion Question 2

Why does Zoe decide to work on developing her power of telekinesis? Even though her efforts to improve seem to have little effect at the time, why do you think her power becomes stronger when she is not actively trying to use it?

## Discussion Question 3

What is different about the meetings Zoe and Adrien have with the Chancellor? What do you think this might imply?

## Vocabulary

fortress, intuitively, incredulous, encapsulate, falter, charisma, mercurial, acerbic, grotesque, mystified, livid, infinitesimally, diminish, passive, compliant, methodically, insistent, levitate, erratic, imprecise, tangible, excruciating, manifest, wan, naive, menacing, salvage, tactically, rile, equilibrium, contour, decipher, ostensibly, barbaric, coercion



# Chapters 21 - 24

## Summary

In Chapter 21, Zoe is thrilled that the time has come to escape but manages to hide her emotions. On the subway platform, Max comes to her in the form of a woman and tells her that Adrien is a Monitor who has been working for the Chancellor, and he proves it by showing her a digital image in which Adrien tells the Chancellor about Juan and Zoe. Zoe has trouble believing this but Max convinces her to escape with him and he takes the form of the Chancellor. When the train doors open, Adrien is there with the real Chancellor but in the ensuing confusion, Zoe is able to use her power to hold off the Regulators. She focuses on Adrien and, learning that he has a small hard drive inserted in the back of his neck port, realizes he has been under the control of some hardware. She is able to use her power to pull it out, and just as the Chancellor screams, "Subdue her!" Adrien jabs a syringe into her neck and as she blacks out she sees his eyes gazing at her coldly.

In Chapter 22, Zoe wakes up in a strange room with Molla, who is vomiting and desperately asking for Max. Zoe is devastated to realize Max had been right about Adrien and he betrayed her. The Chancellor arrives with Adrien and reveals that she, too, is a glitcher with the gift of being able to compel anyone close enough to her to do what she wants. She has slowly been infiltrating the Uppers and now is recruiting others like Zoe to help her. As Zoe listens and observes, it is clear that the Chancellor is powerful and compelling, but suddenly she realizes that the life she is offering would only allow glitchers to live in safety but the drones would continue to have their V-chips and never have a chance for freedom and happiness. It would simply put the Chancellor in charge rather than the Uppers. When Zoe balks at this, the Chancellor brings in Max, who has been badly beaten, and she orders Adrien to hold a knife on Molla so Zoe will stay in line. The Chancellor reveals that Max has been a Monitor, but all he ever wanted was Zoe so he gave up his position to try to escape with her. Suddenly Zoe realizes that the Chancellor is controlling Adrien too, but for some reason her powers of persuasion do not work on Zoe. In a huge wave of rage, Zoe unleashes her powers and disables the Chancellor without killing her, which frees the others from her grasp on their minds and bodies. Zoe, Adrien, Max and Molla get Juan from his cell and start to escape but there are a dozen Regulators waiting for them.

In Chapter 23, Zoe unleashes all her powers, disables the Regulators, uses her mind to remove their V-chips and since they are now free, invites them to escape with her and her friends. Adrien has a vision that tells him his mother has arranged for some members of the Rez to meet them and bring a biosuit for Zoe, who might still be allergic to things on the Surface. Adrien takes Juan and Molla to the Surface but Max stays behind, where Zoe berates him for lying, spying on everyone and his willingness to betray Juan and Molla, who is pregnant with his child, to escape with her, and she says she would never have loved him the way he wanted. Adrien returns for Zoe and as she leaves with him and the Regulators, Max refuses to come along.



In Chapter 24, everyone has split into smaller groups and Zoe is riding in the back of a supply van with Adrien, his mom and several of the ex-Regulators. Zoe is worried about Max and her brother, but although the future is uncertain, for the moment she feels safe and free.

## Analysis

A number of mysteries are resolved in the book's final four chapters. Max's insistence that he has a plan for keeping Zoe and himself safe is clarified when it is revealed that he has been working as a Monitor for some time in exchange for getting what he wants, including a life with Zoe. While Zoe's increasing humanity enables her to feel guilt, Max apparently does not share this emotion as he is willing to betray everyone else in order to have sole possession of Zoe and live a life focused on pleasure. Even when he learns that Molla is pregnant with his child, his focus remains on Zoe alone and he willingly abandons both Molla and the unborn baby. Although she is still evolving, Zoe realizes that this is not love but rather selfish desire and despite Max's insistence that they will be together, she knows this will never be possible.

In a moment of crisis, Zoe gains full control of her power and uses it to break the Chancellor's hold over Adrien, who shares Zoe's vision of a world in which everyone, not just a few, can experience freedom. The book's final chapter sets the stage for a sequel in which Zoe and Adrien will continue working with the Resistance.

## Discussion Question 1

Why did Max become a Monitor? Why did he later give up the position?

## Discussion Question 2

What is the Chancellor's special power? Why does it work on other people, but not on Zoe?

## Discussion Question 3

The book's conclusion is open-ended. It sets the scene for a sequel. What do you predict will happen in the author's next installment?

## Vocabulary

staid, vise, dispassionate, entwine, wince, audible, unfurl, monotone, peripheral, warily, reintegrate, ostensibly, elude, placid, morph, benign, compel, veritable, oblivious, infiltrate, immune, chameleon, compulsion



# Characters

## Zoel/Zoe

Zoel is a 17-year-old girl who prefers to be called Zoe. She lives in the Community, an underground city in which everyone is controlled by a computer chip embedded in the back of the neck, keeping them calm and peaceful but also preventing them from experiencing emotions or beauty.

Zoe's secret is that he has begun glitching, or spontaneously disconnecting from the computer system, and she likes it. Even though it is frightening and she is in danger of being deactivated if she is caught, she loves the beauty and joy she has begun to experience and wishes she could find a way to share it with others. Zoe is kind and selfless, and even though she eventually receives an opportunity to live freely with the people closest to her, she gives it up because she cannot bear the thought of others continuing to live in the gray world of drone-like slaves.

As she meets other glitchers like herself, Zoe learns about emotions such as anger, hate, joy and most important, love. When the story ends, she gives up her opportunity to help control the Community in order to join the Resistance in an effort to help everyone break free.

## Adrien

Adrien is a young man with striking aquamarine eyes who lives with his mother on the Surface and works as part of the Resistance. Like many of the characters, he possesses a Gift -- the ability to see brief glimpses into the future. Through these visions, he learns about Zoe and comes to the Community to try to save her. They fall in love, but their path is not a smooth one as Adrien comes under the control of the Chancellor and betrays Zoe and her friends until she uses her own power to help him break free.

## Maximin

Maximin, or Max, is a teenage boy and a fellow student at the Academy. Like Zoe, he is a glitcher but rather than working to free others like themselves, Max is interested only in having a life with Zoe and in enjoying the pleasures denied to those who live with a V-chip.

## Chancellor Bright

Chancellor Bright is the head of the Academy, the school attended by the children of the Community.

## **Markan**

Markan is Zoe's 13-year-old brother whom she hopes to save from living life as a drone.

## **Molla**

Molla is a girl who attends the Academy with Zoe and is a fellow glitcher.

## **Juan**

Juan is a teenage boy who attends the Academy and is a fellow glitcher.

## **Regulators**

The Regulators are members of a police force who keep peace in the Community.

## **Monitors**

The Monitors are people who secretly watch others in the Community, looking for and reporting anomalous behavior.

## **The Resistance**

The Resistance, also called the Rez, is a group of people who live on the Surface and are working to free the drones from the Community.

## **Sophia**

Sophia is Adrien's mother and a member of the Resistance.



# Symbols and Symbolism

## The Link

The Link is a computer program that plays in the brains of members of the Community through the chip implanted in their necks. It provides news and information and keeps people from experiencing emotions or feelings, and it provides constant feedback to those who control the Community and its residents.

## V-chip

Each resident of the Community has a V-chip implanted in his or her neck. The chips connect them to the Link and cause them to behave like drones.

## Input Port

Each resident of the Community has an input port in the back of his or her neck through which V-chips and other devices are inserted.

## The Community Creed

The Community Creed is the statement that describes the beliefs of the Community. It reads, "The Community Link is peace. We are humanity sublime because we live in Community and favor above all else order, logic, and peace. Community first, Community always."

## Subcutaneous Forearm Panel

Every member of the Community has a panel implanted in his or her forearm that serves as a computer through which all kinds of information can be accessed.

## Memory Disrupter

A memory disrupter is a device that can be inserted into a person to wipe out their memories of particular times or events.

## Zoe's Nightmares

Zoe experiences nightmares that turn out to be vague memories of actual events, including the death of her older brother, symbolizing her deep need for family and her guilt over her role in his death.



## Zoe's Drawings

Zoe keeps a secret stash of drawings, which are not allowed in the Community, hidden in her mattress. They symbolize the freedom she wants so much as well as her desire to find freedom for her younger brother Markan.

## Chocolate Cake

Max gives Zoe a piece of chocolate cake he has taken from a meeting of the Uppers. This is her first taste of food that is truly delicious as opposed to the bland food eaten by the people in the Community. It symbolizes the pleasures that are available for those with freedom, but it also becomes a sign that Max is not being completely honest with Zoe.

## Biosuit

When Zoe goes to the Surface, she must wear a biosuit to protect her from the severe allergies caused by the plant life there.



# Settings

## The Community

The Community is an underground city in which Zoe and most of the other characters live. It is controlled by the Uppers, who have inserted V-chips into all residents in order to maintain complete control over them, but maintaining that this is a good thing that protects them from the destructive urges and emotions that destroyed the Old World.

Although it is gray and drab, the Community functions much like a regular city. It has schools, a Market Corridor for buying groceries and other items, housing units and a subway system for transportation.

## The Surface

The Surface is the world above ground. Although it has been devastated by wars and is regulated by the military, it has all the features that the Community lacks -- fresh air, plants and trees, tall buildings, cars and trucks for individual transportation, homes, etc. The Surface is also home to the Resistance, a group of people working to free the drones from the Community and restore a normal way of life.

# Themes and Motifs

## Freedom

The concept of freedom is one of the overriding themes of *Glitch*. With the exception of Adrien, the book's main characters live in a world in which they are devoid of negative emotions such as fear and greed. This comes at the cost of the loss of every other kind of freedom. V-chips inserted into their necks cause them to live as robotic drones, working at jobs that have been assigned to them, eating food that is solely for nourishment rather than pleasure, and devoid of emotion. They are monitored constantly, even in their own homes, and they can be deactivated if they show any sort of anomaly.

Zoe, the book's main character, first experiences the concept of freedom in her own mind when she begins to glitch. Although she is still bound by the rules of the Community and the need to conform, she gains a sense of what life might be like if she were able to make choices and she increasingly longs for physical and emotional freedom not just for herself but for others as well. She shares that desire with Adrien, who enjoys a degree of freedom in his life on the Surface although he and his mother still must hide their work with the Resistance.

While Zoe and Adrien want the ability to think freely and experience normal human emotions, Max's idea of freedom is different. His focus is solely on physical pleasures that include sex and food, while Chancellor Bright's concept of freedom is power over others.

Through the characters of Zoe, Adrien and Max, the book makes the point that with freedom comes responsibility, including the responsibility to help others and to channel desire in the right direction.

## Family

The concept of family is a main theme throughout *Glitch*. Zoe lives in a "typical" family consisting of a mother, a father and a sibling, but when she begins to glitch, she learns that her family is not normal at all. Each member fulfills the role assigned to him or her, but they are devoid of any emotion, including love. Their interactions are robotic and their loyalty is to the Community and its rules, which means that Zoe is unable to share her newly found experiences with any of them because they would have no hesitation about turning her in to the authorities. Zoe begins to feel normal emotions toward her brother only after she begins to glitch.

As she learns more about the world outside the Link, Zoe's concept of family begins to change. Although she does not understand or share Max's desire for a sexual relationship, she begins to think of him as family because of their shared experiences. Later Adrien becomes family as she realizes she has fallen in love with him and she



comes to understand family as people who care about her and keep her from being alone rather than the "units" who are assigned to her. In the end, as they escape to the surface, Zoe has formed a cohesive family unit with Adrien, her fellow glitchers Molla and Juan, and even the former Regulators whom she has freed from their V-chips and they all face the future together.

## Humanity

Much of the novel *Glitch* is concerned with what it means to be human. The people who live in the Community carry out normal functions such as working, eating, shopping, and going to school, but their humanity has been overridden by the V-chip that connects them to the Link. This keeps them from feeling negative emotions such as fear and anger, but it also blocks positive emotions.

Zoe begins to get a sense of real humanity when she starts to glitch. However, since she has never been exposed to emotions before, the concept is confusing and somewhat frightening. She does not even know the words associated with the new feelings she is experiencing until Adrien begins to explain them to her. Through him, she learns about the full gamut of human emotions, including sorrow, happiness and most important, love. These are the things that make one human. The negative feelings are balanced by the positive ones. The more Zoe learns about emotion, the more she wants to learn and experience, whereas Max seems content to confine his experiences to pleasure and desire.

The meaning of humanity is revealed through conversations between Adrien and Zoe regarding concepts such as conscience, sadness, guilt and love. Adrien sheds further light on the topic when he reveals that Juan's gift is music -- a far less practical power than the ability to move objects or change form, but nevertheless important because creativity, artistic expression and beauty are at the very heart of what it means to be human.

# Styles

## Point of View

Glitch is told in the first person by the main character, Zoe. All events are seen through her eyes and experienced through her thoughts, which makes her an unreliable narrator because the reader is subject to any misunderstandings or incorrect assumptions on her part. All other characters are seen through Zoe's perceptions and the reader knows only what she thinks, sees and observes. Although unreliable, the author's selection of first-person narration gives the reader the opportunity to experience Zoe's emotions as she experiences them herself, thus making her a more relatable character.

## Language and Meaning

The book is written in modern English with language appropriate for a young adult audience. There is a large amount of technical language that is inherent in a book with science fiction overtones, but the author describes items such as V-chips and subcutaneous arm panels in a way that makes them understandable. There is a good balance of exposition and dialogue, and the dialogue changes appropriately based on the person who is speaking. For example, Zoe's father and brother are not glitchers, so their speech patterns are stiff and formal, while Zoe is more casual when she speaks with Max, Adrien and other glitchers. The only slang terms are spoken by Adrien, who uses terms like "crackin'" that are unique to him.

## Structure

Glitch is divided into twenty-four chapters of varying lengths. The chapters are numbered but not titled and there are no subsections. The earlier chapters introduce the plot and the primary characters and take place in the Community. Chapter 5 takes the story to the Surface, then it returns to the Community until the book's final chapter, in which Zoe and Adrien return to the Surface and the scene is set for the next book in the series. It ends with the first chapter of the sequel, called Override.



## Quotes

His expression was blank. Detached. No trace of a smile or any emotion. Watching him felt like looking at an empty room -- the walls and furniture were all perfectly in place, but it had no life.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1 paragraph Page 5, Paragraph 5)

**Importance:** This passage describes Zoe's brother Markan. It paints a picture of what everyone who lives under the Link is like.

The Link News had ended and another three rising tones sounded to initiate the Community Creed. I took a deep breath and mentally repeated along with it: The Community Link is peace. We are Humanity Sublime because we live in Community and favor above all else order, logic, and peace. Community first, Community always.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1 paragraph Page 9, Paragraph 2)

**Importance:** This passages describes the kind of world that has been created by the Uppers and the values the people of the Community live by.

But still, I wanted color. I wanted to soar with happiness even if it meant dealing with the weight of fear and guilt, too. I wanted to live.

-- Zoe (Chapter 1 paragraph Page 16, Paragraph 3)

**Importance:** This passage summarizes the hope that has risen in Zoe since she began glitching and experiencing just a fraction of the emotions and experiences that are denied to people in the Community.

Only a few bombs were released on D-Day. Just enough to make it convincing. And Community Corp did it themselves. They did it intentionally. Don't you see? The Community didn't save you -- they caged and enslaved you.

-- Adrien (Chapter 4 paragraph Page 44, Paragraph 4)

**Importance:** With this passage, Adrien begins to help Zoe understand that the Uppers have lied to her and everyone else in the Community in order to achieve and hold power.

He looked over at me, his eyes intense. 'I have to crackin' believe the world can be different. That we could be safe and . . . free.' I nodded slowly. Free. The concept was foreign, but . . . yes, it felt so right. It felt like the perfect word to encapsulate exactly what I'd been longing for.

-- Adrien and Zoe (Chapter 5 paragraph Page 57, Paragraphs 2-3)

**Importance:** Here Zoe receives her first inkling of what a different kind of life might feel like even though even the word "free" is a concept she has never considered.



Beauty, happiness, they're things so big they can't capture them with their scientific words. It's like what they used to call magic.

-- Adrien (Chapter 8 paragraph Page 90, Paragraph 1)

**Importance:** In this passage, Adrien is beginning to teach Zoe about the concepts that lie at the base of true humanity, but to which she has never been exposed.

I thought if you were glitching like me, that meant we had other things in common as well." He paused, swallowing. "The . . . powers?"

-- Max (Chapter 11 paragraph Page 127, Paragraph 10)

**Importance:** In this passage, Zoe truly begins to realize that she is no longer alone because not only does Max glitch, he also has special gifts like hers.

I'd expected coming home to my family quarters would make me feel better, that I'd feel that sense of safety and belonging that I sometimes did. But home was just a lie I'd made up to make myself feel better. The realization was as chilling as the empty hospital cubicle had been.

-- Narrator/Zoe (Chapter 13 paragraph Page 161, Paragraph 2)

**Importance:** This passage gives the reader a sense of Zoe's longing for a real family and home even as she realizes that those things do not exist in the Community.

And he was wrong. I wasn't a drone anymore. I just didn't feel the things he'd wanted me to feel, and now I was sure I had lost him. I didn't know where I fit in now. Not with the drones, and not with him. I was alone again.

-- Zoe (Chapter 14 paragraph Page 171, Paragraph 8)

**Importance:** This sums up Zoe's extreme loneliness as she tries to determine where she will fit in, and she begins to get insight into the fact that Max wants more than she is able to give him.

The V-chip really only works in part because people accept it. People'll give up almost anything to think that they're safe from pain and fear. I mean, I get it. I really do. It's so much crackin' easier to accept an easy solution -- even if it means letting yourself be lied to. The hard thing is finding the strength in yourself to stand up against the tide and say shunt no, I refuse!

-- Adrien (Chapter 15 paragraph Page 189-90, Paragraph 6)

**Importance:** In this passage, Adrien sums up the reasons the Uppers are able to exert complete control over the people of the Community. They have convinced them to take the easy way out by living as drones rather than risk the pain that could be imposed by emotions, both positive and negative.

Music is extremely important," Adrien said. It's part of being human. Our ability to express beauty is exactly what this generation is gonna need to sustain ourselves, to feel hope. Creativity, artistic expression, it's the best of what humans are capable of.



-- Adrien (Chapter 18 paragraph Page 230, Paragraph 12)

**Importance:** Again Adrien expresses some of the human factors that have been lost through the Link and that will be important to enable people to recover their sense of humanity.

He leaned his forehead toward mine. 'Love shouldn't exist but it does. It's the biggest anomaly, some might say the biggest defect, of the whole human race. But it's the most beautiful anomaly.

-- Adrien (Chapter 20 paragraph Page 254, Paragraph 3)

**Importance:** Throughout the book, the Regulators have been looking for "anomalies," which are considered negative things because they make one person different from another. Here Adrien explains that not all anomalies are bad things because love, although it can be painful, is also part of being human and being different.