

# **The Infinite Sea Study Guide**

## **The Infinite Sea by Rick Yancey**

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# Plot Summary

"The Infinite Sea" by Rick Yancey is a science fiction novel intended for a young adult audience. It follows a group of teenagers and children, especially protagonists Cassie and Ringer, as they adapt to and survive in a post-apocalyptic world threatened by alien entities intent on squashing humanity. Overcoming their fears, the characters face each new challenge with bravery and purpose as they define what it means to be human.

Ringer leaves her group at Walker Hotel as she sets out in search of a new hideout, but when she is followed, she shoots her pursuer who turns out to be her young friend, Teacup. Evaluating the risks as the enemy approaches, Ringer decides against abandoning or killing Teacup.

While Cassie and Sam struggle with their father's death, Teacup sneaks off to follow Ringer, and Poundcake follows to retrieve her. When Dumbo disappears as well, Cassie and Zombie search for the intruder who incapacitates Zombie, but Cassie shoots the intruder and knocks him unconscious.

In his younger years, Evan was overcome by an alien entity, and in the present, he wakes from the injuries incurred at Camp Haven to find Grace tending his wounds. Intent on keeping his promise to return to Cassie, he incapacitates Grace and escapes, but she follows him. They are attacked, allowing Evan to flee to Walker Hotel where his stealthy entrance causes Cassie to attack him.

At age eight, Poundcake is put in charge of his three-year-old brother and stops talking when the younger boy disappears. Poundcake is captured and trained as a soldier for the Others.

Despite her anger at him, Cassie nurses her beloved Evan, fearing he will die. A chopper deposits Megan at the hotel, and furious that Vosch is using young children as bombs, Cassie disables the bomb and saves the girl's life with Evan's guidance. Grace arrives at the hotel and attacks, fatally wounding Poundcake. Evan insists Cassie and her friends leave, entrusting Cassie with the bomb to attack the mothership and end it all. While they are still in the parking lot, an explosion rocks the hotel.

Poundcake is abandoned in the parking lot because he is dying, so he uses his last moments to retrieve the bomb and enter the hotel where he battles Grace before detonating the bomb.

Ringer has been captured by Vosch who uses Teacup's life as leverage. He orders Dr. Claire to inject Ringer with the 12th System, but she befriends Razor, an enemy recruit who helps her plan her escape. After killing Dr. Claire, Ringer rescues Teacup and escapes with Razor's assistance. After bailing from the chopper stolen in their escape, Ringer finds Razor who leads her to a warehouse where he claims Teacup is waiting; however, their kiss allows Ringer to see his betrayal, and inside, she finds Vosch who explains that her escape was designed to test the 12th System. Razor tends Ringer's



wounds, often urging her to run, but she refuses. When Vosch returns with Teacup, he is pleased by Ringer's progress as she realizes that he plans to use her to track Evan who possesses dangerous knowledge. Razor kills Teacup and is shot, allowing Ringer to jump to freedom.

Meanwhile, Cassie and the survivors from her group have set up camp in the woods. An intruder arrives, and Cassie is happily reunited with Evan.



# The Wheat and Book One, Part I: Chapters 1 - 4

## Summary

In *The Wheat*, the wheat grows, but there is no harvest as the farmer died of plague and his family fled to town only to perish in the Third Wave. Previously strangers, five refugees are bound together as they take shelter in the abandoned farmhouse and wonder what will happen next after the plague that has killed billions. The wheat parts, revealing a stumbling child, and one of the women prevent the others from killing the child who complains of a sore throat. As the woman peers into the child's mouth, the carbon dioxide in her breath causes the bomb to detonate, and the explosion consumes the house and the fields.

In *Book One, Part I: The Problem of Rats*, Chapter 1 begins with Ringer joining Cassie at the window as she keeps watch, knowing that she may not see her again once she leaves. Ringer mocks Cassie's stupidity in believing Evan was human as she shoulders her rifle. When Teacup begs to accompany her, Ringer insists she will only be gone a couple days and urges Teacup to avoid negative thoughts which make them soft and lead to death. As Ringer joins Zombie, he gives her a brochure of the caverns, but when she refuses his request to take Poundcake with her, he suggests aborting the mission. Ringer insists that their current situation is not sustainable, and as he reminisces about the days of normality, Ringer considers and decides against kissing him because that is a kind of promise, and promises are priceless.

In Chapter 2, Ringer peers across the dark at Walker Hotel where her group took refuge after Evan Walker turned Camp Haven into a hole. She believes Evan is dead, but the others hope he found a way to survive, giving him the benefit of the doubt that he will keep his promise. Still, Ringer distrusts his story about turning on his own kind. Zombie believes the Others want all of the humans dead, but Ringer disagrees.

Stopping to rest halfway to the caverns in Chapter 3, Ringer looks at the brochures, knowing they have no option if the caverns do not pan out. She evaluates the risk related to various routes, thinking of the efficient attacks that eliminated 98% of humanity. Hearing a soft moan of pain, she finds a dead figure by a tree, but rather than panic, she removes the pellet from his neck and places it in her mouth.

In Chapter 4, Ringer tries to ignore the feeling that she is being watched, refusing to yield to panic as her paranoia increases. Seeing a green light in the distance, she knows she can make the shot, and though it may be a survivor instead of an assassin, the risk is the only thing that matters anymore.



## Analysis

This novel is prefaced by a Shakespearean quote about the infinity of the sea and love, explaining the choice of title and creating a connection between the sea and love, which serves as an example of humanity. Before the actual narrative begins, the author uses a short chapter, entitled "The Wheat," to introduce the world in which the novel is set. From these pages, the reader can ascertain that a plague had wiped out a large portion of the world's population, and the description of the group dynamic in the farmhouse indicates a survivalist mentality which suggests that the plague did not occur naturally; it was planned. This idea is further supported by the child who arrives and is used as a bomb to demolish the farmhouse and its inhabitants.

Book 1 encompasses Parts I through VI, with the narrators and points of view varying from part to part. Part I is entitled "The Problem of Rats" in an allusion to the vermin infestation at the hotel as well as the larger dilemma related to the alien invaders' attempts to exterminate humanity. Ringer narrates this part of the novel through a first person point of view.

Chapter 1 begins with Ringer at Walker Hotel as she plans to venture out to find a new camp for her group, foreshadowing her departure. In this chapter, Ringer emphasizes the importance of refraining from going soft, an attempt to suppress her own humanity in order to continue surviving. Teacup's desire to accompany Ringer on her mission foreshadows the little girl sneaking away. Ringer is irritated when Zombie promises her that Teacup will be okay, allowing her to reflect upon the value of promises in this post-apocalyptic world, as well as foreshadowing the danger Teacup finds herself in. Zombie and Ringer's reflections upon their former normality, namely the modern world, serve as a foil to demonstrate exactly how different their world has become since the alien invasion.

In the second chapter, Ringer reflects on the recent past as she leaves Walker Hotel, and this provides some background information related to Evan to provide readers with a limited amount of information about what transpired in the first novel in this series. The reference to Evan turning on his own kind indicates that he is not human, while Cassie's belief that a virtual existence does not require a physical world provides more information on the presence of the aliens whose consciousness have taken up residence in human bodies. The indoctrination of the camps is evidenced in Ringer's acceptance that the world will be consumed, destroying civilization as it was known before the invasion.

Ringer weighs her options in Chapter 3, evaluating risk and introducing this topic which is always a consideration of the characters as the current state of the world has taught them caution. Additional background information is provided as Ringer contemplates the vastness of the alien invasion which took out 98% of the world's population. Her discovery of a body foreshadows an imminent attack.



In Chapter 4, Ringer senses someone following her, and because risk is the only thing that matters, she takes aim. Her intention to protect herself foreshadows her act of shooting someone else.

## Discussion Question 1

Describe Ringer's feelings about promises, and explain why she feels this way.

## Discussion Question 2

How does Ringer feel about Evan, and why?

## Discussion Question 3

Why is risk all that matters?

## Vocabulary

dormant, undulating, succumbed, perished, obliterated, supplication, abundant, scavenged, abort, rendezvous



# Book One, Part I: Chapters 5 - 10

## Summary

Ringer recalls Cassie telling her how she felt bad about killing a soldier in Chapter 5, but Ringer insisted that Cassie only felt bad to assuage her guilt since she had no other choice. After shooting the advancing person, Ringer is appalled to find Teacup, and despite her anger at being followed, she tends the girl's wounds. She hears someone else approaching, and knowing they cannot flee, she realizes the only logical, though unthinkable, option is to leave Teacup; however, Ringer holds her friend in her arms because they win if she decides one person does not matter.

Laying Teacup on the ground in Chapter 6, Ringer struggles to maintain composure. She hears choppers and cannot allow Teacup to be taken to Wonderland so she draws her sidearm and aims at the girl's head.

In Chapter 7, Ringer feels him watching her, but when the shadow vanishes, she wonders if they have finally broken her. She aims at Teacup because she has to finish it or join her, and the situation reminds her of the rats.

Ringer recalls being irritated by the rats in the hotel in Chapter 8 and how she tried to distract Teacup by teaching her to play chess, but Teacup flung the makeshift game aside and cursed at Ringer, claiming the older girl is nothing to her. They realize that the rats will overtake the hotel if they leave them, and the place will vanish in time as if they were never here.

As the choppers near them in Chapter 9, Ringer must decide whether to leave Teacup, kill her or kill them both. She wills herself to pull the trigger since it is already too late for Teacup and it is the option with least risk, but thinking of their plot against the rats, Ringer holsters her sidearm in rage.

In Chapter 10, Ringer carries Teacup out of the trees, and though she knows she's targeted by a half dozen sights, she gains confidence with each passing second in which she is not killed. Slings her rifle from her shoulder, she slips her finger through the trigger guard.

## Analysis

Ringer's narrative continues in Chapter 5 as she recalls telling Cassie that she only felt bad about killing people to make herself feel better since that was the only option for survival; this, along with Cassie's allusion to Vosch's interest in Ringer, demonstrates Ringer's mindset while also foreshadowing her capture. Fulfilling two instances of foreshadowing, Ringer shoots her pursuer, only to realize that Teacup has followed her. Hearing a noise that indicates and foreshadows an alien attack, Ringer is faced with a series of options, but she finds the most logical option with the least risk, leaving





Teacup, to be unthinkable because she still values each life, demonstrating her humanity.

In Chapter 6, Ringer considers evaluating her options, naming Teacup as her cross to bear. This foreshadows her decision to try to save her friend. She also alludes to Wonderland, foreshadowing the role of this facility later in the novel.

Ringer can feel someone watching her in Chapter 7, but the absence of anyone leads her to question her own sanity. She recognizes the need to kill Teacup in order to save herself, again emphasizing the importance of risk in her reality, but it also reminds her of the problem with rats, referencing the name of Part I and leading into the next chapter.

Chapter 8 provides a glimpse into the recent past, examining the arrival of Ringer's group at Walker Hotel. Ringer attempts to distract Teacup from the vermin by teaching her chess, and the conversation between them demonstrates how close the two girls have grown during their time together, foreshadowing Ringer's inability to kill Teacup. They debate how to get rid of the rats, but there does not seem to be a straightforward solution, although Ringer recognizes the futility of their situation and the fact that the hotel will eventually vanish over time; this also can be applied to the larger picture of the world of humanity. Ringer's recollection of her father teaching her that nothing is insignificant in chess foreshadows her application of this theory to her present life as a whole.

In Chapter 9, choppers signal the enemy's approach, foreshadowing their attack, and although Ringer knows that killing Teacup poses the least risk, the problem of the rats pervades her thoughts, leading her to return her sidearm to its holster. Foreshadowing is fulfilled by the attack in Chapter 10, but Ringer's continued survival and her observation that she must be one of them since she does not glow in their eyepieces foreshadows her capture and Vosch's experimentations.

## Discussion Question 1

When Ringer evaluates her options after shooting Teacup, what are they, and how does she feel about each of them?

## Discussion Question 2

Explain the problem with rats.

## Discussion Question 3

What is Ringer's least risky option for dealing with Teacup, and what does she decide?

## Vocabulary

crucifix, languid, velocity, remnant, catastrophic, quivers, dilemmas, variables, luminescent, onyx, serenity



# Book One, Part II: Chapter 11

## Summary

Part II: The Ripping begins with Chapter 11 in which Cassie recalls how her father used to toss her and her brother, Sam, in the air because they wanted to fly, but that stopped when Vosch arrived at Camp Ashpit and killed their father. Sam knows their father is dead and decides he is now a soldier, but he yells at Cassie for allowing their father to die. When Teacup claims their father was soft, Zombie breaks up the fight between the younger children and insists Teacup bunk with him until Ringer returns.

In the hallway, Zombie reminds Cassie that she and Sam are not the only ones to suffer such a tragic loss. To Cassie's question if Ringer left, Zombie assures her that Ringer will return because they do not have a backup plan. Back in the room, Cassie admits that she saw Vosch shoot their father, explaining how he sacrificed himself to protect them. Returning to her post, Cassie sees Ringer across the parking lot and recalls their argument in which Ringer said Evan made her feel special. Cassie feels stupid for trusting Evan, but instead of killing her, he saved her and cared for her, allowing her to find herself in him.

Evan taught her that the Others planned to end the purge by having the remaining humans kill the other survivors and that the aliens downloaded their consciousness into human bodies. Camps were set up to determine the best candidates for brainwashing, and all others were killed, setting up the Fifth Wave since it posed the least risk. Cassie shared this with her group, reminding them that in the thousands of years the aliens watched them, they never considered that they might become human. Pointing out that there is no help unless Evan survived, Ringer insisted they needed a plan to go south since it beats waiting for Cassie's alien prince to rescue them, yet Zombie insisted on giving Evan a chance to keep his promise. Cassie believes that the Others are undefeatable, but though they can kill all of the humans, they can never kill what lasts in them.

## Analysis

Part II is entitled "The Ripping" and refers to Cassie's belief that the aliens' goal is to rip the humanity from the remaining humans. Cassie narrates the second part of the novel using a first person point of view, and Chapter 11 begins with her reminiscing on her happy past with her brother and father which was torn from him when Vosch killed her father.

The return to the present begins with conflict between Cassie and her brother who blames her for their father's death, but Teacup's snide remark leads to a dispute between Sam and Teacup during which Zombie interjects to separate Teacup. Zombie's conversation with Cassie about how they've all experienced tragedy seems harsh but



indicates the brutal reality of their lives. Cassie's thought that he seems dead inside, combined with the fact that she refers to him by his pre-apocalypse name, Ben, indicates that she knew him before the invasion.

Cassie does not share Zombie's faith in Ringer, and their conflict is displayed in a memory of an argument between them during which Ringer alludes to Evan making Cassie feel special. From here, Cassie reflects on her relationship with Evan and all that he taught her about the aliens. Evan's betrayal of his own kind raises questions about his trustworthiness which causes Cassie to debate the rationale behind trusting him. Still, she defended him against the others when they debated their next move, and although Cassie wants to wait for Evan to keep his promise to find her, she does not prevent the others from plotting an escape. Zombie agrees to wait a little longer, foreshadowing Evan's arrival which is also foreshadowed by Cassie's frequent thoughts of her "alien prince." This reference and the earlier allusions to him betraying his own kind indicate that Evan is not human.

When Cassie suggests that Ringer is a psychopath, Zombie insists there is a lot to her, but it is buried deep; this foreshadows Vosch's interest in Ringer. Although Cassie admits that the aliens can kill them all, she insists that they cannot destroy what lasts in them, alluding to love, hope and the value of humanity.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why do Teacup and Sam argue in Chapter 11?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Describe the death of Cassie's father.

## **Discussion Question 3**

What did Cassie learn about the Others from Evan, and how does the group at Walker Hotel use this information?

## **Vocabulary**

nullity, sadistic, obscenities, defiance, decommission, profound, contempt, resentment, nuanced, isolate, exterminate



# Book One, Part II: Chapters 12 - 14

## Summary

Cassie sees a small figure dart across the parking lot in Chapter 12, and after confirming Teacup is gone, Zombie sends Poundcake to retrieve her. With one side of the hotel left blind, the remaining children gather in one room where Zombie mocks Cassie's concerns for his injuries. Talking about the plague and the people they have killed, Zombie ponders why the aliens did not kill the humans thousands of years ago, before their population grew, and Cassie recounts how Evan told her that they were divided over whether to kill them. Admitting that he worshipped Vosch at first, Zombie notes that Vosch's attempts to fill him with hate failed, and instead, he was filled with hope. Cassie believes Vosch wanted to teach Zombie the hopelessness of hope, and she suggests that they drew the extermination out because it "isn't about ripping the planet away from us. This is about ripping us." (page 57).

In Chapter 13, Dumbo is found missing so Cassie orders Sam to lock himself in the room as she and Zombie clear the rooms. She takes the elevator shaft, while Zombie takes the stairs, worrying their hiding spot has been discovered because they waited too long for Evan. Understanding that Evan is not coming, Cassie drops to her knees and whispers her hatred, but she rises and exits the elevator.

When Cassie does not see Zombie in Chapter 14, she ascends the staircase and, hearing shots, she rushes back to the room where she left her brother to find the door ripped from the hinges. Zombie is bleeding on the floor, and Sam screams as a shadow looms over him as he impotently pulls the trigger again. Firing, Cassie slams her rifle into the shadow's head, telling him he picked the wrong room.

## Analysis

Cassie witnesses Teacup's departure in Chapter 12, fulfilling foreshadowing of her decision to follow Ringer. Sending Poundcake after her, Zombie is irritated that their numbers are depleted, especially because of his own poor health which he denies, and this foreshadows the possibility of an attack on Walker Hotel. He and Cassie discuss the horrors they've seen, and the mention of brainwashing foreshadows what Ringer is enduring. The mention of rats reinforces the motif of their vermin problem, while Evan's admission that the aliens were divided over whether to kill the humans explains his betrayal of his own kind. In the conversation about Vosch, Zombie introduces the theme of hope, but Cassie mentions its opposite as well, insisting Vosch's goal is to teach them the hopelessness of hope. The title of this part is explained when Cassie suggests the aliens' goal is to rip the humans' humanity away, suggesting they are indifferent about the planet itself.



When Zombie and Cassie find Dumbo missing in Chapter 13, it appears that they are being attacked, fulfilling foreshadowing. They lock Sam in the room, foreshadowing the danger this poses to the youngest member of their group, and begin searching for the intruders. The culture of fear is evident in Cassie's fear that Vosch has found them, demonstrating the danger this man poses. Cassie regrets splitting the group up, and she finally accepts that Evan is not coming, a realization that will prove ironic in subsequent chapters. The importance of promises is again explored when she identifies his last words, to find her, as a promise, and Cassie recognizes the irony of believing that promise when she had distrusted everything else he told her up to that point. She believes he is dead and that he knew he would die from the moment they left the farmhouse, yet she also admits that she will never really let him go.

When Cassie reaches the lobby in Chapter 14, Zombie's absence alerts her to the danger present, and fearing for her brother's safety, she returns to the landing where shots sound from the room where Sam is hiding. She finds Zombie wounded, indicating the danger presented by the intruders, and her attack on the intruder foreshadows the discovery of his identity.

## Discussion Question 1

Why did it take the aliens so long to attack Earth?

## Discussion Question 2

What did Zombie learn from Vosch?

## Discussion Question 3

What happens after Dumbo is found missing, and how does it foreshadow future events?

## Vocabulary

lumbered, rogue, dispatched, barracks, demise, vermin, infinite, annihilate, escalating, neutralized



# Book One, Part III: Chapters 15 - 22

## Summary

Part III: The Last Star opens with Chapter 15 in which Evan recalls his unpleasant childhood dreams of owls as his life slips away. The recurring dream stopped at age 13 when his awakened self needed the owl's gifts, and "he understood the dreams' purpose because his purpose had been revealed. Make ready. Prepare the way." (page 69). He feels no pain, knowing he will be reborn after the last human dies with no recollection of the past 18 years; he will even lose her face and his time with her, but that is the price of saving Cassiopeia within whom the universe is contained.

In Chapter 16, Evan wakes in pain near a campfire as a familiar Nordic woman tends to his broken bones and burns. Having found him in an escape pod, Grace asks if he disarmed the guidance system, but he lies that there was a malfunction which compromised the base, knowing Grace will kill him if she suspects he has been compromised by the human virtue of love. Pondering how a human could do such, Grace repeats the name Cassiopeia which she has heard Evan say many times over the past three days, assuring him that they will catch the girl if she escaped. Grace ponders how Evan knew the girl's name, and he admits that he found Cassie's journal. Grace announces that they will be leaving camp to head to her place tonight.

On the journey to her house in Chapter 17, Grace observes that Evan seems different and suggests that he should not have been integrated because he feels too much for the humans to become one of them.

When they reach Grace's house in Chapter 18, she tends Evan's wounds which will take three weeks to heal and leaves him in a bedroom while she goes out for supplies. Knowing he needs to get to Cassie immediately, Evan wonders if he will need to neutralize Grace, and when he asks for a weapon, she complies.

After Grace leaves in Chapter 19, Evan confirms that the gun is not loaded, and forcing himself past the pain, he crawls across the floor to loosen a board from a mobile of the universe. He reiterates his promise to Cassie, even though he knows he will have to cross a sea of blood to keep it.

When Grace returns in Chapter 20, she asks if Evan has missed her since they last met at age 16, and when she kisses him and asks him to touch her, he smashes her in the jaw and wraps a wire from the mobile around her throat as he jams his knee into her back. Although the room spins and he smells both of their blood, Evan does not relinquish his grip.

In Chapter 21, Evan dresses and grabs supplies, but when he stops to rest hours later, a bullet shatters the headlight of a nearby car. He knows it must be Grace and considers the dilemma of finding himself at the mercy of a merciless killer.



Evan recalls meeting Grace at age 16 at a petting zoo in Chapter 22. She mourned the captivity of the animals, noting that the tiger could escape and the beauty lay in his decision to stay. Looking into Grace's eyes, Evan knew an entity hid inside her body, and she suggested that they should talk.

## Analysis

The title of Part III, "The Last Star," makes reference to Evan's alien identity, and Evan is the first-person narrator of this section of the novel. This part contains 15 chapters, beginning with Chapter 15 which provides background information about Evan's childhood, including his frequent dreams of owls which ceased when he was 13 years old because his awakened self needed the alien gifts represented by the owl. Once his purpose - to prepare the way - was revealed, he understood the dreams' purpose and recognized the lie inherent in his presumed humanity. Now, at age 18, he knows that he will not recall this life when he dies, but he only mourns the memory of Cassie.

When Evan wakes in Grace's camp in Chapter 16, he does not recognize her at first, but he soon identifies her as one of his kind. As she questions him about the explosion at Camp Haven, Evan lies because he knows she will terminate him if she suspects he has been compromised by human virtues, the most dangerous of these being love. This acknowledgement reinforces the aliens' attempt to extinguish humanity, a recurring theme throughout the narrative. Having heard Cassie's name many times while tending to Evan's injuries, Grace questions him about her, and he is relieved to find that they did not find and kill Cassie, though he still does not know if she survived. Evan provides minimal answers to Grace's questions about Cassie, revealing his humanity through his prayers that Cassie will live.

The concept of risk plays a role in Chapter 17 when Grace takes the highway to travel home since she has not seen a human in weeks, and the notation that there will be no more prey within five years indicates the aliens' view of humans as inferior as well as their plans to exterminate them all. Grace's comments about how Evan has changed and that he should never have been integrated reveals her recognition of his humanity.

At Grace's station in Chapter 18, Evan is irritated by her prediction that it will take him three weeks to heal, and eager to keep his promise to return to Cassie, he considers the need to terminate Grace. Grace contemplates whether they will miss the humans whose bodies they invaded, deciding that she will keep the memories because her host was a happy girl. Evan is concerned that "the longer we play at being human, the more human we become" (page 79), but Grace insists she is not playing at being human. This exchange reinforces Evan's humanity as well as Grace's lack thereof.

Not surprisingly, Evan finds his weapon missing ammunition in Chapter 19, showing that Grace does not trust him. Loyal to Cassie and his promise, he battles the pain to prepare an attack on Grace upon her return.





In Chapter 20, Grace alludes to her first meeting with Evan, foreshadowing this anecdote. She recalls her fear of loneliness and his fear of the future, and when she touches him, Evan yields because he does not want to alert her to his intention. This is soon revealed in his attack.

After disabling Grace, Evan acquires supplies in Chapter 21 and begins his journey to Cassie. In Grace's sack, he finds human hair clippings, taken as trophies from her kills, and this reinforces Grace's lack of humanity. His journey is slow due to his injuries, allowing Grace to catch up, but the fact that she does not merely kill him demonstrates her curiosity in his purpose.

Foreshadowing is fulfilled in Chapter 22 as Evan recalls his first encounter with Grace. His humanity is demonstrated through his lamentations for the little sister who was with him at the zoo but who would be dead within two years; Evan knew the future because of his alien invader, and he found it difficult to know that he was residing amongst living ghosts. The connection between the aliens is identified when Evan and Grace make eye contact and recognize the entity inside the other, and this also foreshadows their discussion about these entities.

## Discussion Question 1

What is the significance of Evan's childhood dreams?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Grace question Evan about Cassie, and what does he tell her?

## Discussion Question 3

Compare and contrast the past encounter between Evan and Grace with their present meeting. What has changed? Why?

## Vocabulary

lingered, interlopers, indifference, compromised, psyche, mortified, colossus, onslaught, heirlooms, quizzically



# Book One, Part III: Chapters 23 - 29

## Summary

Chapter 23 continues with Evan and Grace meeting at dusk as he pondered if they would miss the world once it was gone. They were the first of their kind that each of them had met, and they did not believe it to be an accident. While Evan feared the future, Grace was struck by the loneliness of her situation and feared that the entity inside her was merely the figment of a young girl's imagination.

Determined to keep his promise to Cassie in Chapter 24, Evan stands, and since Grace does not fire, he realizes that she plans to follow him instead to solve the riddle. Although he fears that keeping his promise will be a betrayal, he continues forward, forcing Grace to choose between following him and maintaining her post.

In Chapter 25, as Evan and Grace walked together at age 16, he considered how others were prisoners to time, yet they had conquered the unconquerable. Grace urged him to live in the moment since they would not see each other again until the mission ended, and Evan's loneliness vanished when she kissed him.

For several days, Grace follows Evan at a distance in Chapter 26, and when she confronts him to ask why he did not finish her, he suggests that he is tired of murder. Evan's responses to her questions about Cassie leads her to believe he is lying because it would be insane for him to be in love with a human. Hearing a noise, Evan warns Grace to take cover as two bullets hit her and one whizzes past him. She dives to the ground, and he runs.

Running despite his pain in Chapter 27, Evan hears Grace's gunfight behind him as he flees until he collapses. Hallucinating Cassie's face, he considers the vanity of her claim "I am humanity" (page 98), but forcing himself to continue lest the world be consumed by darkness, he feels the alien system inside crash, leaving him human only.

Reaching the hotel in Chapter 28, Evan watches several children disappear across the parking lot, and although he cannot be certain that Cassie is inside and knows that entering the hotel is risky, his instinct orders him to go, and he complies since instinct is all he has left.

Having relied on his superior gifts for five years, Evan forgets the feeling of being human until Chapter 29 when he struggles into the hotel, ascending the stairs regardless of his pain, and incapacitates the sentry. He ducks into the staircase when two figures emerge, and while he recognizes Ben, he cannot trust that Ben will recognize him. They grapple as Evan demands to know Cassie's location, and after choking Ben into unconsciousness, Evan sees Sam's face through a crack in the door. Although he suspects Cassie is in the elevator shaft, he must secure Sam first, but forced to neutralize the boy when he fires at him, Evan kicks the door open and wills



Sam to remember him. Then, Evan is hit from behind, and the one he has found worth dying for opens fire.

## Analysis

Chapter 23 details the first conversation between Evan and Grace, showing the spirit of kinship between them. They discuss the future as they know it will happen and share their fears. They even speak in their native language for a while. They are able to calm one another's fears, but remembering Grace's feeling of being the only person on Earth reminds Evan of reading Cassie's journal which said "Sometimes I think I might be the last human on Earth" (page 89). He mourns their cycle of finding and losing one another, foreshadowing his attempt to keep his promise to find Cassie again.

In Chapter 24, Evan reiterates his desire to find Cassie, foreshadowing his ability to keep his promise. Although Grace is following, he knows that she does not intend to kill him since she missed the shot, but it feels like a betrayal to allow her to follow him, foreshadowing her arrival at Hotel Walker. He hopes she will decide against abandoning her post as he heads toward the hotel where hope has lain since the beginning, on the brainwashed shoulders of the child soldiers of the Fifth Wave: Cassie and her friends. This statement foreshadows his belief that they are the only ones who can save the world.

Returning to the past in Chapter 25, Evan recalls his and Grace's feelings of superiority in having conquered the impossibility of time, alluding to a Bible passage about mortality which Grace feels is morbid. They part ways, knowing they will not see each other again until it is over, but Grace's pondering about how her first kill will feel serves as a foil to Evan's ponderings about his last kill, demonstrating the difference in humanity between the pair.

The thoughts of the previous chapter follow Evan into Chapter 26 when he tells Grace that he is sick of killing. When she asks about Cassie, he says she is the one who stood when others would stay down, showing his admiration for her, and his reference to her as the last human on Earth makes Grace consider that he is in love with Cassie, but she quickly dismisses the idea as insane and questions what is really going on with Evan. The attack foreshadows Evan's escape.

Despite his warrior tendencies, Evan flees the fight in Chapter 27, revealing the importance of keeping his promise to Cassie. His fear that the world will be consumed by darkness if he does not continue indicates his belief that Cassie is the only one who can save the planet. His injuries destroy the alien system, making him human, and he embraces his humanity, foreshadowing his reinforced desire to save the world.

In Chapter 28, Evan reiterates the importance of risk as he observes the hotel before making his decision. He watches Ringer, Teacup and Poundcake leave, wondering if they are fleeing one by one, but when Cassie does not emerge, he throws risk aside and enters, following his instinct despite the unknowns and his lack of weaponry.



In Chapter 29, Evan's humanity is reiterated as he struggles to adapt to the lack of alien gifts he formerly possessed. His entrance foreshadows the revelation that he will be identified as the intruder Cassie attacked earlier in the novel, and Evan details his thoughts and actions during his invasion to provide the reader with the entire story. This part ends with Cassie knocking him unconscious, even as he tries to protect her brother, and despite the violence between them, he stills feels connected to her.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why does Evan head toward the hotel, and what risks are associated with this decision?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Explain the significance of Cassie's journal entry in which she claimed "I am humanity."

## **Discussion Question 3**

What does Evan find upon arriving at the hotel?

## **Vocabulary**

materialized, validated, articulate, inevitable, confrontation, makeshift, inclination, morbid, augmented, kindling



# Book One, Part IV: Chapter 30

## Summary

In Part IV: Millions, Chapter 30, the eight-year-old boy stopped talking the summer of the plague after his father died and when his mother was sick with the plague. His three-year-old brother became his responsibility, but his mother forbade him to leave to scavenge food. Once they ran out of food, the boy left to find food, locating only a piece of pound cake which he keeps in his pocket, and he returned home to find his brother missing. Lost in her illness, his mother cursed him, and when she died, he burned her in the backyard. For months, he lived at home, searching for his brother, and when he finally wandered away, soldiers found him, naming him Poundcake because of the treat in his pocket. The sergeant likes the born shooter, especially since he is mute, but though he claimed the boy was a stone-cold killer, it was not yet true.

## Analysis

Part VI: Millions contains one chapter, Chapter 30, and is told through the perspective of a third-person narrator who recounts Poundcake's experiences prior to joining the group at Hotel Walker. It describes some of the horrors that followed the beginning of the alien invasion, specifically Poundcake's mother's illness. Poundcake's feeling of responsibility for his three-year-old brother leads to guilt when the toddler dies, causing the young boy to stop talking. His mother's illness leads to poor treatment, but he knows that it is not her fault. This anecdote into the past also reveals how he received his nickname from a snack wrapper when he was recruited into the child soldiers. His guilt over his brother foreshadows his continued search and his sacrifice.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does Poundcake's brother become his responsibility when Poundcake is only eight years old?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Poundcake stop talking?

## Discussion Question 3

How does Poundcake earn his nickname?

## Vocabulary

looting, taunts, decaying, edible, morsels, lard, spittle



# Book One, Part V: Chapters 31 - 39

## Summary

Part V: The Price opens with Chapter 31 as Cassie plans to kill Evan when he wakes, and Zombie, wanting to know where Teacup and Poundcake are, slaps Evan to wake him. When that fails, he decides to search for them, and though Cassie convinces him it is a stupid risk, she does not know what to do.

While Dumbo keeps watch in Chapter 32, Zombie asks why Cassie did not shoot Evan in the head and ponders what took him so long to find them. He insists they should leave, despite Cassie's protests against splitting up, and when he leaves her alone with Evan, Evan wakes enough to whisper "Mayfly" (page 123).

Cassie's knees weaken when Evan opens his eyes in Chapter 33, but loving him is illogical so she tells him to go to hell once he assures her that he is not dying. He insists he kept his promise, explaining it was too risky when Cassie yells at him for not announcing himself. She asks where Teacup and Poundcake are, but Evan says it is unsafe to go after them because of Grace, passing out before explaining his meaning.

In Chapter 34, Cassie repays her debt to Evan by sitting with him as he heals and willing him to live. After the boys return with Poundcake, Cassie doubts Poundcake's loyalty, eliciting Zombie's rage at doubting their team while she holds the enemy's hand. Zombie wants to leave the hotel in the morning if Ringer does not return, offering to carry Evan when Cassie refuses to leave without him. The boys question Cassie's relationship with Evan and why he would turn on his own kind.

Cassie wakes in Chapter 35 to the sound of choppers, and although the noise fades, they know they are not safe for long. Zombie refuses to risk losing Ringer by leaving now, but things quickly get strange after a young girl appears in the hallway.

Sam recognizes the girl as Megan in Chapter 36, and when she slumps forward after complaining that her throat hurts, Zombie and Cassie carry her to a bed, knowing that her appearance so soon after the choppers is proof that she was delivered. As Cassie checks Megan for a tracker, she is furious at Vosch for his actions, and thinking of what she wants to do to him, she realizes that, by crushing humanity, he has filled the world with humans devoid of humanity.

In Chapter 37, Cassie calls Zombie back to the room to inform him that she found nothing, and pondering why Megan was sent, they know the reason is bad, but it is worse because they do not know. As Zombie nears Megan with a canteen of water, Evan wakes and warns him away.

In Chapter 38, Evan explains that waking Megan like that would force her to take a deep breath which is dangerous since she has been implanted with an incendiary device triggered by carbon dioxide. When he suggests opening a window and vacating the



building, Cassie pushes Dumbo, Poundcake and Sam out the door, furious that they turned a child into a bomb. She asks if it is possible to remove the device without killing Megan, and Evan informs her that it would improve the odds of preventing detonation.

After sending their friends outside in Chapter 39, Zombie and Cassie ponder why the aliens did not attack with missiles, and she notes how personal their attack has been since the beginning. Insisting the only question is who will do it, Zombie claims he can kill Megan because his concern is for the group he already has, not a stranger. Despite her tears, Cassie allows Zombie to return to the room, privately hoping that Evan will stop him, and rather than offering comfort when he returns, she tells Zombie he is wrong; "she did belong to us. They all belong to us" (page 143). Lamenting that he is broken, Zombie tells Cassie that she is the only one with a chance to remove the device, laughing because he could not kill Megan.

## Analysis

Section V: The Price contains 18 chapters and is narrated by Cassie. It begins with Chapter 31 where Cassie's anger at Evan makes her want to kill him, yet her affection for him is revealed by her concern when Dumbo questions whether Evan will heal without antibiotics. Zombie's distrust is apparent in how he connects Evan's arrival to Teacup and Poundcake's disappearance, but Cassie dissuades him from going to search for them alone because the risk is stupid. With Zombie's injuries impacting his physical stability, Dumbo looks to Cassie for leadership, but she has no idea what to do.

When Zombie questions why Cassie shot Evan in the knee instead of the head, her feelings are again apparent, though she alludes to her first encounter with Evan as an excuse, claiming it is poetic justice. Zombie's objection to staying at the hotel foreshadows the group's departure. Left alone with Evan, Cassie yells at him, and he responds "Mayfly" (page 123).

Cassie admits her feelings for Evan in Chapter 33 when she notes that loving him does not make sense, but still she tells him to go to hell, revealing her anger for his abandonment. He insists he kept his promise, but she is furious that he did not announce himself, despite his objections about the risk. When questioned about Teacup and Poundcake, Evan mentions Grace before passing out, leaving Cassie to ponder what the single word could mean.

In Chapter 34, Cassie acknowledges a sense of ownership between Evan and herself. Although she is furious about how long it took him to find her, she is terrified at the idea of his death. When the boys return with Poundcake but not Teacup, Cassie questions Poundcake's loyalty, causing Zombie to chide her for trusting the enemy; again, this demonstrates his distrust of Evan. Cassie's loyalty is pronounced when she offers to nurse Evan in his injuries while the others leave, but showing his own loyalty to his group, Zombie insists they will all leave, offering to carry Evan if necessary. Dumbo also distrusts Evan, reminding Cassie that Evan is like Vosch and questioning his betrayal of his own kind. Cassie is unsure if Evan can even answer that question. When she asks





Dumbo if Evan will survive, Dumbo astutely observes that he would choose a strong human host if he were an alien. Cassie's distrust of Poundcake is linked to his silence, as revealed by her demand to know why he does not talk.

Cassie is roused from her sleep in Chapter 35 to choppers approaching, foreshadowing an attack. Although the group suggests leaving immediately poses the least risk, Zombie's feelings for Ringer prevent him from agreeing to chance missing her. The boys' mockery about Cassie's feelings for Evan dissipate when a young girl appears in the hallway, and the comment that things get strange very fast foreshadows subsequent events.

Sam recognizes the girl as Megan in Chapter 36, and her complaint of a sore throat parallels the child in the preface who was used as a bomb. The group shows wisdom in their suspicion that she is a weapon against them, but their search for a tracker proves futile. Cassie is furious as she examines the child, and her anger is directed at Vosch and his actions. Since he claims to know how the humans think, she suspects that he knows what she will do to him, observing that, by crushing humanity, he has left the world filled with humans without humanity. This reveals Cassie losing her humanity due to the horrors she has seen.

In Chapter 37, Zombie fears Megan's purpose even more after learning that Cassie could not locate a tracking device. When he threatens to wake her by dousing her with water, Evan wakes just in time to recommend against the action, foreshadowing his explanation.

Foreshadowing is fulfilled in Chapter 38 when Evan explains that Megan has been implanted with a bomb that will detonate upon contact with human breath, again bringing to mind the child bomb used in "The Wheat." Cassie is again outraged at the unacceptable idea. After securing the others, Zombie and Cassie return to tend to the situation, demonstrating their leadership skills. Evan suggests abandoning the building and Megan, but despite her claims to the contrary, Cassie reveals her humanity in her desire to save Megan.

In Chapter 39, Zombie again contemplates the personal nature of the attacks, and his belief that the only question is who will kill Megan since she is not his responsibility demonstrates to Cassie just how dark he has fallen. Reinforcing the theme of risk, Zombie believes that exchanging the life of one girl for six other lives is acceptable. Although Cassie prays that Evan will prevent Zombie from killing Megan, she does nothing to stop him, yet she chides him when he returns to her, insisting that Megan was one of them. Zombie shows that he has not fallen as much as he and Cassie suspected by his confession that he could not kill Megan, and his insistence that only Cassie can save her foreshadows her attempts at surgery in the next chapter.

## Discussion Question 1

How does Cassie react to Evan's appearance?



## Discussion Question 2

What is the result of Vosch crushing humanity, and how is this significant to the group at Walker Hotel?

## Discussion Question 3

How does Zombie want to deal with Megan, and how does Cassie react to his plan in Chapter 39?

## Vocabulary

warily, futilely, alpha, transport, modesty, sacrificing, genocide, destined, deprived, omen, inadvertent



# Book One, Part V: Chapters 40 - 48

## Summary

In Chapter 40, Cassie and Evan discuss how using a child as a bomb breaks the last unbreakable bond, and he agrees to help her remove the device. Zombie kisses Cassie goodbye in case she does not survive, but the return of her schoolgirl crush is short-lived as she realizes the boy she had a crush on is just as dead as the schoolgirl she once was. Evan coaches Cassie through cutting the wire in Megan's throat, though she proclaims her hatred as she rescues the girl.

In Chapter 41, Evan notes that it was a test as he places the bomb on the table, and when he warns they will return unless they fail, Zombie suggests they passed the test, but Cassie insists they failed by taking Megan in. Evan corrects them both - the test was to determine if they had a Silencer like him among them, but he has no clue why they would suspect such a thing. Cassie and Evan fear that Ringer has been captured, but Zombie refuses to believe that she would give them up, suggesting that Evan was followed. When he asks how they will die, the other boys stand and salute.

Since running or staying will result in death, Cassie suggests exploding the hotel in Chapter 42. Dumbo volunteers as a martyr, but Cassie suggests releasing carbon dioxide from a Coca-Cola canister from the diner next door. Although the aliens will not find bodies, it will buy enough time for the group to escape to the last place the aliens will look.

There is no time for debate in Chapter 43 as the group must leave before the aliens return to kill them. While the boys visit the diner, Evan draws a map to their destination, infuriating Cassie who insists that he is coming with them. Evan confesses that he was scared when he helped Cassie escape Camp Haven because he did not understand why he could not do what he was born to do, and sometimes he thought she would be better off dead because he used to think the dead were lucky since he knows the future; however, now, he sees a solution. If she allows him to fix the problem of Grace, Cassie can finish it all.

Dumbo announces they're ready in Chapter 44, but he quickly returns to view in the clutches of a beautiful villain whom Evan greets as Grace.

Grace names Cassie in Chapter 45, surprised at Evan's interest, and Evan explains that Grace is his kind as he begs her to let Cassie and Dumbo leave. Obeying Grace's orders, Cassie and Evan bide their time while waiting for their friends to return, but Grace mocks Cassie's humanity and fondles Evan. Cassie launches herself at Grace, but Grace slams her into a wall and rushes into the hallway at the sound of another door closing. Cassie rushes out to defend her brother, but as she is thrown into a wall, Grace claims that Sam is already dead.



As Cassie charges Grace in Chapter 46, Poundcake exits the stairway and takes aim, but Evan enters the hallway so Cassie dives into Poundcake. Zombie arrives and orders everyone to freeze, but Grace escapes only to charge through drywall and attack Poundcake. Zombie empties his rifle into the room Grace disappears into and prepares to leave as soon as the threat is neutralized. Despite Cassie's protests, Evan insists that her group leave, urging her to keep her promise to Sam, and she slaps him as she hears a helicopter approaching.

As Zombie pulls Cassie away in Chapter 47, she demands Evan admit he never intended to leave with them because he planned to blow the hotel up with him and Grace inside. The chopper lands, and they hear Grace attack. Evan orders the group to go to Grace's house where the mothership will extract her at the equinox, kissing Cassie and handing her the bomb she will use to end it all. Cassie promises that she will end it.

In Chapter 48, Cassie looks at Evan for the last time before following her friends outside. Rather than going to Grace's house, Zombie insists that they will go to the caverns to find Ringer and Teacup. Zombie struggles to carry Poundcake, but Dumbo tells him their friend will not make it so they leave him in the parking lot. When Sam races back toward the hotel because he dropped the baggie containing the bomb, Cassie retrieves her brother, but soon after, the world goes breathless before the explosion causes debris to rain down around them all.

## Analysis

When Cassie questions Vosch's motives in Chapter 40, Evan explains that the purpose of the child bombs is to break the last unbreakable bond - not even children can be trusted in this new world. He agrees to help her save Megan, demonstrating his humanity, and Zombie joins the others in safety after obtaining supplies. First, he kisses Cassie goodbye, and her realization that both the schoolgirl she was and the boy she had a crush on are dead, reiterating the cold brutality of their world. Zombie promises to take care of Sam if Cassie does not survive, acknowledging the risk she takes to save Megan. Cassie's anger is directed at Evan as he instructs her in removing the bomb, but she succeeds in her operation, saving the girl and scoring a point for humanity.

In Chapter 41, Evan realizes that Megan's arrival was a test for his presence since they could not have saved the girl without the knowledge that a Silencer such as himself possesses. They do not know why the aliens suspect his presence, but their certainty of the test foreshadows the aliens' return. Cassie fears that Ringer and Teacup have been captured, foreshadowing this revelation, yet Zombie refuses to believe they would betray the group, demonstrating his complete trust in their loyalty. Cassie's irritation at this trust parallels Zombie's frustration with her trust in Evan. Dumbo, Poundcake and Sam show that they are soldiers by standing and saluting when Zombie asks how they will die, signaling that they will not go down without a fight.

In Chapter 43, Cassie suggests bombing the hotel, and although Dumbo volunteers for the suicide mission, she suggests using CO2 from the diner next door's soda canisters,



foreshadowing this plan. Although the aliens will realize their ruse when they do not find bodies, the group plans to be far beyond their reach by the time the discovery is made.

With little time to enact Operation Early Checkout, the boys go to the diner in Chapter 43, fulfilling foreshadowing. The map Evan draws foreshadows his decision not to accompany them, but Cassie realizes his plan and yells at him for intending to leave her yet again. He again mentions Grace and also tells about how he could not follow orders after meeting Cassie; finding her caused him to lose himself. He insists that he is the only one who can fix the problem Grace poses, but his faith in Cassie is revealed in his belief that she can finish the war.

In Chapter 44, Grace reappears as she threatens Dumbo, fulfilling foreshadowing of Evan's fears, and the threat she poses is revealed in subsequent chapters as she fights the group.

Grace recognizes Cassie in Chapter 45, expressing disdain of Evan's human love interest. Evan's fear of her is apparent as he orders Cassie to obey Grace, and though Cassie can tell that Evan is stalling for time, she disobeys him by charging at Grace when jealousy overtakes her at Grace's familiar touching of Evan. Their battle is interrupted by the arrival of the other boys, and Cassie's rage increases when Grace announces that she killed Sam.

Their battle continues in Chapter 46, and after ensuring her brother's safety, Cassie resumes her attack; however, her loyalty to Evan causes her to ruin Poundcake's perfect shot, endangering him and allowing Grace to mortally wound the mute boy. Despite Evan's insistence that they leave, Zombie and Cassie refuse to obey until the threat is neutralized. Zombie finally yields to Evan's belief that Grace is only after him, and although Cassie does not want to abandon her beloved, he convinces her to do so for Sam's sake. Cassie slaps Evan in anger even as the sound of an approaching helicopter fulfills foreshadowing of the aliens' return.

As they flee in Chapter 47, Cassie is distraught at their cowardice as well as the realization that this was always Evan's plan. The sound of Grace attacking the helicopter reveals her misguided loyalty to Evan who she protects by this uncharacteristic action. Evan reveals his plan when he sends Cassie away with the bomb, giving her directions to Grace's home where the mothership will retrieve her, giving Cassie the opportunity to destroy the aliens' home.

As Cassie follows the guys downstairs in Chapter 48, she thinks that their escape is brilliant since Grace likely assumes they are still holed up in a room upstairs. Leaving Evan behind continues the cycle of abandonment that their relationship entails. Zombie's continued distrust of Evan is apparent as he insists on going to the caverns to find Ringer and Teacup, rather than proceeding to Grace's station to act against the mothership. Dumbo's prognosis of Poundcake's condition foreshadows his death, while Sam's admission that he lost the bomb foreshadows the hotel explosion; Zombie's pessimistic feeling foreshadows both, and the concept of an unknown city is reiterated when Cassie notes "Welcome to Dubuque" (page 175).



## **Discussion Question 1**

Why does Cassie feel that the schoolgirl she was and her crush are both dead in Chapter 40?

## **Discussion Question 2**

How does the group plan to escape the aliens?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What promise does Cassie make to Evan, and why?

## **Vocabulary**

marrow, impaled, saturated, ventriloquist, vaporized, transference, mystified, casualties, deflecting, coherent

# Book One, Part VI: Chapter 49

## Summary

In Part VI: The Trigger, Chapter 49, Poundcake never liked being around the smaller kids at camp because they reminded him of his lost brother, but he spent time with them in the vain hope of finding his brother. When Megan arrives at the hotel, he wonders if his brother was used as a bomb. Returning to the hotel after scavenging the diner, he has Grace in his sights until Cassie tackles him, allowing Grace to shoot him, and although Dumbo tends his wounds, Poundcake knows he is dying so he does not mind when his friends leave him behind in the parking lot. Crawling to the hotel, he finds the bomb and enters the lobby to see Grace. She shoots him several times, but she stops smiling when she sees the bag in his hand. Flirting, Grace offers to save Poundcake, but she charges him when he opens the bag containing the bomb. After she knocks the bag from his hand, Poundcake shoots Grace in the back, paralyzing her from the waist down, and as they both crawl toward the bomb, he knows she is stronger. Still, all he has to do is breathe so Poundcake opens the bag and breathes into it.

## Analysis

Part VI: The Trigger includes only Chapter 49 which is told from the perspective of a third-party narrator who focuses on Poundcake's point of view. Poundcake's guilt over his brother's disappearance is reinforced through the time spent with younger kids at camp, and Megan's arrival causes him to wonder if his brother was used as a bomb. Zombie's belief that something was wrong with the situation at the diner foreshadows the catastrophe that follows their return to Walker Hotel. When Poundcake entered the hallway, he was confident in his aim as he had Grace in his sights, but Cassie's interference prevented his shot and led to his own injury. He understands that he is dying and accepts being left behind, but Poundcake demonstrates honor and bravery by acquiring the bomb and crawling to the hotel where he grapples with Grace. He does not succumb to her empty promises of salvation, instead using his last breath to detonate the bomb and save his friend, thus fulfilling the foreshadowing of his death and the hotel explosion as well as eliminating the threat posed by Grace.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does Poundcake spend his spare time at camp with the younger children?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Poundcake decide to sacrifice himself?



## Discussion Question 3

Describe Poundcake's encounter with Grace in the hotel.

## Vocabulary

makeshift, evolution, hesitate, smirking, javelined





# Book Two, Part VII: Chapters 50 - 55

## Summary

Book Two opens with Part VII: The Sum of All Things, and in Chapter 50, Ringer sits alone in a white, windowless classroom, still sore from Wonderland where they uploaded all of her memories. Vosch notes that Marika is dead, and Ringer has risen from her ashes. Asking if Teacup is alive, Ringer does not trust the response because she knows Vosch will use Teacup's life as a way of offering false hope and gaining leverage. He must want something from Ringer or she would already be dead. Vosch presents a chess game, insisting that he merely wants to play despite Ringer's protest that she does not know where her friends went. As Vosch mocks her father and foresees all of her moves during the game, Ringer fantasizes about killing him, even though she knows he is immortal and will simply download himself into another person. Vosch is intrigued by Ringer because of her willingness to risk her own life for others, and he assures her that Teacup is alive for leverage. He explains that his goal is to crush the will to fight, not the capacity, and explaining that rage will not deliver humanity any more than love, hope and faith, he suggests Ringer is close to the answer. Rather than lose the game, Ringer rejects her last move and throws the board at Vosch's head, and he pushes the button supposedly linked to Teacup's transmitter.

Ringer attacks Vosch in Chapter 51, using the skills learned at Camp Haven to break his nose. Soldiers enter the room and pull Ringer away, and disappointed, Vosch reminds Ringer that rage is not the answer before telling the squad leader to prep her.

In Chapter 52, Ringer is led down the hall to a room with two White Coats and a blonde recruit, and when given the option of doing this the easy way or the hard way, she opts for the hard way, punching the recruit in the throat and stealing his gun which she presses to her temple. When the female doctor warns her that Teacup is only alive because of her, Ringer realizes Vosch would not lose his leverage over her by killing Teacup; he was bluffing, but trapped, Ringer relinquishes the weapon, mentally apologizing to Teacup for not finishing this in the woods.

Dr. Claire injects Ringer with a needle in Chapter 53, and she is plagued by Vosch's disembodied voice talking about the need to exterminate rats to avoid losing her home. He shows her the beauty of Earth 66 million years earlier, before an asteroid's impact create humanity, and although she knows it is not real, Ringer is terrified as Vosch tells her about sleeper agents implanted in human bodies.

Ringer wakes in Chapter 54 to a drug-induced hallucination of her father who forgives her for leaving him, and though she begs Vosch not to do this, the delusion informs her that this is the lesson they want her to understand. They taught people not to trust them, each other and themselves, but kissing her forehead, he tells her, "You belong to them now" (page 206).



Waking alone and safe in Chapter 55, Ringer refuses the food brought by the blonde recruit who insists she drinks the juice because she is a very important prisoner. Trying another tactic when he refuses to talk about Teacup, Ringer introduces herself, and when the recruit repeats his prohibition against talking to her, she agrees that they do not want him to know what she knows. She agrees to drink the juice if the recruit tells her his name, and she feels it is a minor victory when he introduces himself as Razor.

## Analysis

Book Two includes Parts VII and VIII, beginning with Part VII: The Sum of All Things which is narrated by Ringer using a first-person perspective. The 34 chapters in the penultimate part of the novel begins with Chapter 50 which returns to Ringer who has, in fact, been captured and subjected to having her memories downloaded at Wonderland. This chapter also introduces the first physical appearance of Commander Alexander Vosch who has only been mentioned briefly at this point as a dangerous threat. In an allusion to the myth of the phoenix, Vosch tells Ringer that she has risen from the ashes of Marika who is dead, and this also reiterates Cassie's earlier feeling about how her schoolgirl self has died. Ringer's preoccupation with Teacup's well-being demonstrates her humanity but also provides Vosch with leverage to manipulate, foreshadowing how he does just that.

Vosch uses Ringer's memories to attempt to bond with her over chess, even mocking her father as they play, but she is disgusted at the realization that she cannot win since he knows her moves before she makes them. Although Ringer fantasizes about killing Vosch, she knows that the alien entity inside him will just reincarnate inside another human, plus she and Teacup will both be vulnerable once he knows he cannot use Ringer as he desires. Vosch expresses his interest in Ringer because of her bravery which causes her to act in defiance of the logic ingrained in the brainwashed youths, and he admits that Teacup is alive for use as leverage. He also confesses to the truth of Cassie's suppositions - that the invasion is not about crushing the humans' ability to fight but their will to fight, and this shows that the war is more psychological than physical, foreshadowing how he will manipulate Ringer in the future. When Ringer is unwilling to make the last chess move and lose, Vosch uses a threat against Teacup to force her, but Ringer's actions parallel Teacup's earlier reaction to playing chess as she flings the chessboard at Vosch's head and attacks him. She believes he has lost his leverage when he pushes the button linked to Teacup, presumably killing the girl.

Although Ringer attacks Vosch in Chapter 51, she is quickly extricated from the situation by a group of soldiers. Ironically, she uses the skills learned at camp to break Vosch's nose first. Vosch's disappointment foreshadows his continued interest in Ringer, while his statement that rage is not the answer foreshadows the exploration of this conundrum. His order for Ringer to be prepped foreshadows the future experimentation.

In Chapter 52, Ringer reveals her courage and determination by choosing the hard way and continuing to fight. She manages to acquire a gun, but her humanity prevents her from killing anyone; instead, she plans to kill herself and escape Vosch's clutches. Dr.



Claire earns Ringer's ire when she mentions Teacup, causing Ringer to realize that, because rage is not the answer, Vosch would not act in rage to kill Teacup since it means losing his leverage over Ringer. Struck by the futility of playing a game in which she does not know the rules, Ringer yields her weapon, again saving Teacup. Realizing the trap she has allowed herself to fall into, Ringer regrets her decision not to kill Teacup in the woods, foreshadowing the inevitability of the younger girl's death.

Experimentation on Ringer begins in Chapter 53 as she is injected with a needle, and Vosch begins his indoctrination, comparing humanity to rats and expressing the need to exterminate them. She has an out of body experience as she witnesses the beauty of Earth 66 million years earlier, before mankind fouled it, and although she knows that what she sees is not real, she succumbs to the terror.

In Chapter 54, Vosch uses an illusion of Ringer's father in his attempt to manipulate her, claiming that she has been taught to trust no one, even herself, and also trying to convince her that she now belongs to the aliens.

Ringer feels a disconnection with reality when she wakes in Chapter 55, and this causes her to question if the blonde recruit who brings her food is even real. He disregards her questions because he has been ordered not to talk to her, but when she agrees that they do not want him to know what she knows, he confesses that he knows they have been tricked by the enemy to wipe out the survivors. He cannot answer her questions about why they need her alive when they do not need any humans, but she feels that she has won a victory when he shares that his name is Razor. Their interaction foreshadows the relationship that develops between them.

## Discussion Question 1

How does Ringer feel about Vosch?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Vosch keep Teacup alive, and how does it influence Ringer's decisions?

## Discussion Question 3

What does Vosch teach Ringer about the Others, and why is this important?

## Vocabulary

recruits, implants, leverage, resources, deliberately, revulsion, violated, endures, capacity, aristocratic

## Book Two, Part VII: Chapters 56 - 60

### Summary

When Dr. Claire returns in Chapter 56, she allows Ringer to shower, and afterwards when Vosch questions the reason for her angry outbursts, Ringer tells him she needed to prove to herself that she is alive. Ringer refuses to be manipulated to help him, but Vosch shows her an image of a child bomb, used because of mankind's instinct to protect the young. When Ringer points out that dropping a bomb would be just as effective, he insists that it has never been about the dead. As Dr. Claire and Razor enter with a cart filled with syringes, Ringer says she would rather die than help Vosch, but he insists that she is not helping him.

In Chapter 57, Vosch watches with curious indifference as Dr. Claire tightens the strap on Ringer's arm, and Ringer realizes that the answer to their arrival is indifference. Assuring her that the command hub will not harm her, Vosch tells Ringer that while the dead have their reward, the living have work to do and Ringer was delivered into his hands to be his instrument. The hub is injected to coordinate 40,000 mechanized guests that Ringer will host, and with their help, it will only take her a few days to reach the next level of human evolution.

Losing track of day and night in Chapter 58, Ringer measures time by the meals Razor brings and she cannot keep down because her body tries to reject the invasive hub. Dr. Claire examines Ringer every day and begins to understand what Vosch sees in the headstrong girl who begs for death, though she warns that Ringer will be terminated if she cannot adjust to the upgrade that hastens her healing and turns her into something other than Marika and even Ringer.

In Chapter 59, Ringer asks Razor what has been done to her to prevent her from holding food down, and he warns that they will pull the plug if she does not get it together, suggesting she was chosen because she is special. Referencing the 12th System, he quips about her only being half human but ignores her questions about the children being used as bombs. Ringer asks Razor to stay with her because he is the only honest person, but he says everyone is an enemy in disguise.

Asking why Razor wastes his time bringing her food in Chapter 60, Ringer throws her tray on the ground, but he warns that starvation will not work because they will just use a feeding tube. Since she mentions chess, Razor brings the game the next day but quickly grows frustrated at his losses so he invents Chaseball, a mixture of chess and baseball. When Ringer is overcome by exhaustion, Razor insists she did not give the game a fair chance and slams out of the room, leaving Ringer shaky and breathless though she does not know why.



## Analysis

When Ringer questions the female White Coat about the experiments being performed on her in Chapter 56, Dr. Claire is condescending and mocking in her responses. Ringer injures herself in the shower to prove that she is still alive, and when she refuses to see Teacup, Vosch mocks her narcissism in believing they keep the girl alive for her benefit. Despite her hopeless situation, Ringer demonstrates courage in her insistence that they cannot force her to help them. Vosch reveals a video of a child being used as a bomb, explaining this as a way to prey on humans whose instinct to be wary of strangers is overcome by the instinct to protect the young. When Ringer suggests bombing humans would be easier and more effective, he reiterates the psychological aspect of the war in his admission that this is not about the dead. Even when a cart filled with syringes is wheeled into the room, Ringer remains defiant, insisting she would rather die than help Vosch, but his statement that she is not helping him begs the question of his intent.

Experimentation begins in Chapter 57, and Ringer observes Vosch's indifference, wondering if this is the answer to the aliens' arrival. She expresses indifference to which he responds in kind. His only reaction to the injections is to assure Ringer of her safety. He tells her that the dead have their reward, but the living have work to do. His reference to Ringer as his instrument foreshadows his intent to use her as a weapon in some way, and this is partially explained when he tells her that she is being injected with a hub which will make her achieve the next stage of human evolution in mere days. He admits that others have gone mad from the procedure because they were not suitable hosts, but he has faith that Ringer will bridge the gap of what-was and what-will-be. When Dr. Claire expresses concern that they are losing Ringer, Vosch insists that he has saved her.

In Chapter 58, Ringer loses the passage of time as she transitions into her newly evolved state. Razor continues to bring her food, expressing humanity in his concern that she will be useless if her body rejects the invaders. Dr. Claire expresses admiration of Ringer's spirit when she begs to die, but although she now sees why Vosch admires the girl, she warns that she will be terminated if she does not adjust to the upgrade. An example of the upgrade is seen in Ringer's enhanced healing abilities. She notes that Marika was turned into Ringer and laments that Ringer has now been upgraded into something like the aliens. This lamentation demonstrates that her humanity has not yet left her, despite these changes.

Razor again reveals concern over Ringer's ability to adjust in Chapter 59, and his suggestion that she is special shows an attempt to win her over. She claims she is drawn to his honesty, but his statement that everyone is an enemy in disguise foreshadows his ultimate betrayal. The chapter concludes with a short parable in which Ringer says they have all been blind men patting an elephant since the aliens arrive in an explanation of how the aliens have manipulated them all to see only what they wanted.



In Chapter 60, Razor informs Ringer that they will feed her intravenously if she does not cooperate, showing the aliens' willingness to do what it takes to bend her to their will. He shows a desire for friendship when he brings a chessboard the next day, and he reveals his humanity in his excitement over his invented game of Chaseball. He also shows petulance in his frustration at Ringer's lack of excitement over the game. Ringer's physical reaction to his enraged departure is not explained, but it could be viewed as a lamentation of the loss of a friend or the hub's intuition of his pending betrayal.

## **Discussion Question 1**

What is the 12th System, and why is Ringer injected with it?

## **Discussion Question 2**

How does Ringer react to the experiments being performed on her?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Describe how the relationship between Ringer and Razor develops.

## **Vocabulary**

hostile, transmitter, accomplish, debris, billowing, fluctuations, detonates, affixed, undulating, stabilize



## Book Two, Part VII: Chapters 61 - 69

### Summary

Ringer is prepared to apologize to Razor in Chapter 61, but a different recruit brings her next meal and refuses to explain the change. That night, Ringer's sleep is filled with dreams of her father cursing her when she brought him vodka. As a child, people were jealous of her father's fame, and though she took care of him from age 14 because he was an alcoholic, Ringer lived the delusion others believed until he died.

Fearing that Razor is dead, Ringer holds her breath when the door opens in Chapter 62, and she is relieved when Razor enters with a tray. Rather than play Chaseball, they talk about Razor's childhood and how his father did not think he was smart enough to be a doctor or lawyer like his mother wanted. When Ringer mentions that her father was an alcoholic artist, Razor observes that Ringer's jokes are made as though she does not realize she is joking, and when she insists she is not joking, he suggests that is the reason she does not realize it.

As Ringer and Razor return to their game in Chapter 63, they develop a code of tapping on her blanket to communicate. When he taps "P-L-N," he notes that she needs a plan to win, and he is the man with a plan.

After days without seeing Vosch, Ringer receives a visit in Chapter 64, and when Dr. Claire informs him that Ringer is losing weight and suffering from a fever, he surprises Ringer by asking if she wants to live. Noting that she cannot overcome the enemy, she admits that she does not want to save the world; she wants to live merely in hopes of having an opportunity to kill Vosch. Approving of her hope, Vosch orders Dr. Claire to take Ringer off her medication. He asks the answer, telling Ringer to try again when she suggests indifference, and when her list of emotions ends with her lack of knowledge, he tells her she is doing better.

In Chapter 65, Razor worries that Ringer will die without her medicine and tells her she must declare a truce in this war, but she refuses peace. Dr. Claire comes to tend to Ringer and asks if the girl wants to live to kill Vosch. Ringer acknowledges that she will never have a chance to kill Vosch, but when she promises to kill Dr. Claire, the doctor predicts that Ringer will be dead by morning.

A month later, Ringer still lives in Chapter 66, receiving visits only from Razor with whom she continues to communicate through their invented language of taps. They joke about her diet, and that night, Ringer soils herself and calls out for help. Dr. Claire and a large recruit escort her to the shower where Ringer rips the pipe from the wall and jams it into the doctor's throat.

In Chapter 67, Ringer smashes Dr. Claire in the head with the shower rod, and when the recruit enters with his gun drawn, she knocks it from his hand and knocks him out



with the toilet tank lid. She kicks the kill device from the doctor's hand, and as Dr. Claire appeals to Marika for mercy, Ringer aims the gun, claiming her name is Ringer as she pulls the trigger.

Ringer switches tracking pellets with the recruit in Chapter 68, using the doctor's device to locate inhabitants of the compound. She mentally urges Razor to hurry up because she had one last promise to keep.

In Chapter 69, Ringer recalls a conversation with Razor about religion. His grandma's prayer circle refused to waste prayer on her dog, but when Razor broke his mother's teacup, he prayed for its healing. His mother replaced it without his knowledge, and this convinced him of God's existence.

## Analysis

Responding to her physical reaction to the conflict with Razor, Ringer is prepared to apologize in Chapter 61, but another recruit delivers her next meal, raising her concern for her friend. She worries about his removal from her detail, and the guilt disturbs her sleep that night. She recalls Razor telling her to just think about it, but she cannot believe that he did not say more than that. Ringer's delusions cause her to think about her father and her peers' jealousy of his fame; her thoughts reveal that she was not as fortunate as others believed, yet she embraced the delusions until he died.

Fearing Razor may be dead, Ringer is relieved when he delivers her meal in Chapter 62, and criticizing her for looking like a Meth addict because of her refusal to eat, he admits that he is addicted to Sour Patch Kids and offers to share his stash, creating a sense of camaraderie between the two. He also confesses that he misses baseball, acting surprised when Ringer insists that she enjoyed his invented game of Chaseball. Their conversation continues with details about their pasts, enhancing the feeling of kinship between them and foreshadowing the continued development of their friendship.

In Chapter 63, Ringer is exhausted by the game she plays with Vosch and her feigned indifference, so she is in the perfect position emotionally to trust Razor's proffered assistance when he creates a means of communicating by taps in which he informs her that he has a plan, foreshadowing his aid in her escape.

Vosch visits Ringer for the first time in several days in Chapter 64, raising the wary reader's suspicions about his absence. His question as to whether Ringer wants to live surprises her, and he expresses approval of her desire to kill him, showing that Vosch values her for her spirit. He again questions her about "the answer," but he disagrees with her belief that it is indifference, approving only when she admits that she does not know the correct response.

In Chapter 65, Ringer reacts poorly to being taken off her medication, but she also realizes that the medicines must interfere with the 12th System which would imply that she will be stronger without them. Razor acknowledges that she is fighting a war and begs her to declare a truce to save her health, yet she stubbornly refuses the proffered





peace. His glowering at Dr. Claire indicates his affection for Ringer, while Ringer's promise to kill Dr. Claire foreshadows this murder.

A month has passed by the time Chapter 66 begins, indicating greater progression in Ringer's transition. The jokes between Razor and Ringer about Ex-Lax indicate their conspiracy when she soils herself later that night, and this foreshadows the implementation of their plan. Ringer demonstrates the benefits of her enhancements when she rips the shower rod down and attacks Dr. Claire in the shower, foreshadowing the White Coat's imminent death.

Foreshadowing is fulfilled in Chapter 67 as Ringer continues to attack Dr. Claire, ultimately killing her, but Ringer demonstrates her humanity through her refusal to kill the recruit. Again, her enhancements come in handy during these encounters, indicating that Vosch may have bitten off his nose to spite his face by experimenting on this stubborn girl. Before killing Dr. Claire who appeals to Marika for mercy, Ringer explains that they killed Marika, implying a loss of her humanity, although she has already shown that she did not fully lose it, yet she also decides to keep Marika's promise, despite the risk inherent in her subsequent actions.

Ringer reveals savvy and intelligence in Chapter 68 as she prepares for her escape while awaiting Razor's signal, and the importance of promises is reiterated as she focuses on keeping her promise to protect Teacup.

Ringer's memory in Chapter 69 of a previous conversation with Razor shows their openness with one another while also exploring concepts related to religion and faith in God.

## Discussion Question 1

How is Razor's past significant?

## Discussion Question 2

What is the significance of the tapping language between Ringer and Razor?

## Discussion Question 3

How does Razor respond when Dr. Claire appeals to Marika, and what is the meaning behind this response?

## Vocabulary

Addictive, delirious, reclusive, indestructible, ambition, intricacies, lymphatic, implodes, drudgery, metaphorical



## Book Two, Part VII: Chapters 70 - 76

### Summary

The hall is deserted when Razor gives his signal in Chapter 70, and with the recruit's sidearm and knife in hand, Ringer uses Dr. Claire's device to rush to the nurse's station where she throws the knife at a nurse. Stepping into the last room on the right, she greets Teacup who thought she was dead, but Ringer informs her, "Not anymore. And neither are you" (page 257).

The building shakes as Razor hit the magazine storage in Chapter 71, and telling Teacup it is time to go, Ringer knocks her out and carries her while jumping to the ground and stealing a car to drive to the Black Hawks where Razor is supposed to kidnap a pilot whose pellet Ringer removes upon arrival. Despite Lieutenant Bob's protests that they will fail, Ringer touches him and soothes his fear, insisting they leave immediately.

As the helicopter ascends in Chapter 72, Ringer orders Lieutenant Bob to head south as she removes Teacup's pellet. When she asks Razor why he decided to trust her, he explains that he was sent to Wonderland after asking questions about the children used as bombs, and this led to an existential crisis about who the good guys are and who he is, but the kicker was Vosch's admission that they lied about organisms being attached to human brains because if that is a lie, everything is a lie. When three F-15s approach, Ringer orders the pilot to ascend to maximum altitude, and they begin counting down. Ringer straps Teacup to Razor, instructing him to locate the fire to find her and eliciting a promise that he will not let Teacup die. She thanks him for everything, and he kisses her before he and Teacup jump from the helicopter.

Finding that Lieutenant Bob has bailed in Chapter 73, Ringer knows she will not be shot down because they are waiting for her to bail. The 12th System paralyzes Ringer because it was ordered not to let her die since its life depends on hers, and it will not release her until her intent changes so she decides to bail.

With no other option, the hub releases Ringer in Chapter 73, and when she kills the engines, the chopper free falls, tossing her into the ceiling. She kicks the door open and somersaults through the air, stretching her arms out to meet Earth.

As she falls toward a frozen lake at terminal velocity in Chapter 75, Ringer must trust the hub to make impact with her feet first, and surrendering to the 12th System, she feels nothing as she lands. She feels numb, despite her injuries, as she escapes the water, but she is alive and aware.

In Chapter 76, Ringer ignores the 12th System's urging to rest and heal as she locates the crash site. Razor is stunned to find her alive after jumping without a parachute. Because Teacup's leg was broken upon landing, Razor leads Ringer to where he left



her friend, and though she insists on returning to her other friends in Ohio next, he notes that they are probably dead. As they joke about Razor being her boyfriend, Ringer kisses him, and his eyes fill with fear as the boundaries between them crumble.

## Analysis

When Razor's signal finally comes in Chapter 70, Ringer proceeds with their plan, arming herself before rescuing Teacup; this act reinforces her insistence on keeping promises because of how valuable they have become in this post-apocalyptic world. Teacup's surprise at seeing Ringer suggests further manipulation from Vosch, causing Ringer to assure her that neither of them are dead anymore since they are escaping the enemy's clutches.

The escape plan proceeds successfully as Ringer and Teacup join Razor in Chapter 71, and the fact that Ringer entrusts the trickiest part of the operation to Razor demonstrates her complete trust in her newfound friend. Ringer reveals the extent of her enhancements when she uses the 12th System to manipulate Lieutenant Bob, but the fact that this escape goes off without a hitch raises the question of its truth.

The unlikelihood of the escape continues in Chapter 72 as the escape vehicle is not attacked or destroyed. This implies the importance of Ringer's continued existence, but it also suggests the possibility of a scheme in light of earlier actions and conversations. Ringer's response to Razor's kiss conflicts with her refusal to kiss Zombie in the first chapter because kisses are a kind of promise, and it also raises the question of what she is promising Razor. She again exhibits faith in him by entrusting him with Teacup's safekeeping.

Ringer recognizes her value to Vosch in Chapter 73 when the helicopter is not shot down, and while she knows that he wants her to live, she does not understand his reasons and hopes never to find out, showing her distrust and fear of the Commander. The 12th System's reaction to her thoughts indicate that she contemplates suicide, but it also immobilizes her, refusing to release her until she changes her mind, showing it has been programmed for self-preservation. Seeking an answer for her dilemma, Ringer thinks of nothing.

Losing all other options, the hub releases Ringer in Chapter 74, allowing her to kill the engines and jump from the chopper, trusting in her enhancements to protect her. Ringer feels peaceful and fearless as she falls, confident in the fact that she has redeemed her promises, and she opens her arms to embrace the approaching Earth; her thoughts that it is her charge indicates her desire to save the world, despite her earlier protests to the contrary.

Ringer trusts the hub in Chapter 75 as she falls to the ground at terminal velocity, and surrendering to the 12th System allows her to feel that they are one, as both human and other. This allows her to understand the riddle of Evan, foreshadowing his betrayal of his kind. Her faith is not in vain as she lands alive and aware, though injured.



In Chapter 76, Ringer shows determination and bravery as she ignores her injuries in order to keep her promise to find Razor and Teacup. The absence of the girl when Ringer is reunited with Razor foreshadows his betrayal when combined with her observation that it is odd they are not waiting on her at the crash site, and though she doubts their survival at first, she is driven to keep her promise. When Ringer kisses Razor again, the boundaries between them crumble, foreshadowing what she finds buried in his subconscious.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Describe Ringer and Razor's escape plan.

## **Discussion Question 2**

Why does Razor help Ringer?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What role does the 12th System play in Ringer's escape?

## **Vocabulary**

anemic, paranoia, execute, ordnance, obscured, tarmac, existential, indiscernible, entailed, incinerated, psychological



# Book Two, Part VII: Chapter 77 - Book Two, Part VIII: Chapter 84

## Summary

When Razor leads Ringer to the warehouse where he left Teacup in Chapter 77, she asks for the rifle and smashes him in the head; she knows that Teacup is not here because their kiss worked like a lie detector so she knows something is wrong. She aches since the 12th System cannot protect her from a broken heart, but she cannot go soft now - she must go inside.

As Ringer enters the warehouse in Chapter 78, she notices the corpses and blood covering the first story which was obviously used as a field hospital. On the third floor, she finds a chessboard, and when Vosch notes that they never finished their game, Ringer asks why she is here, and he explains that it was a test of the 12th System which she has not quite passed. After attempting to shoot him and learning that the magazine is empty, she throws the rifle at Vosch who tells her "to pass, you must overcome what cannot be overcome" (page 281) before opening his arms to offer the opportunity Ringer desires.

While Ringer and Vosch grapple in Chapter 79, he knows her strengths and weaknesses, disabling her four times before warning that she can overload the system, allowing her injuries to kill her. When he asks the answer, she finally understands that the question was never about the problem of aliens but humans; the answer is nothing because no alien consciousness was downloaded into any human. The humans have merely been enhanced, and Vosch is the controller. Ringer does not know whether he is human, but if he is, there is no hope.

In Chapter 80, Vosch carries Ringer to a cot and leaves Razor to tend to her. He is pleased with what he had achieved in her. Ringer does not speak to Razor as he tends her wounds after Vosch leaves, but sharing her theory of rats, she tells him that risk is the only difference between a human who carries an alien consciousness and one who thinks he does. They were never here because they would not risk themselves like that. Razor defends his betrayal with the reminder that he is a soldier, causing Ringer to realize that Vosch plans to use her to find Evan.

After a week, Razor empties the warehouse of the dead in Chapter 81. Ringer believes that Vosch has kept Teacup alive to use as leverage, but Razor is indifferent to the fate of one girl when the world is at stake. Admitting that he must believe Vosch or it is too late for him, Razor begs Ringer to kill him and run. He admits that most of what he told her was the truth, and she is glad because she needs his past to have existed. As he kisses her, nothing is hidden, but the rage and hate she finds is not the answer. Although Razor does not believe everything Ringer says, he tells her she is right that "some things, down to the smallest of things, are worth the sum of all things" (page



290). She mentally begs him not to leave her as they hold one another, filling the emptiness and defiling the void.

In Chapter 82, Razor again urges Ringer to run, but she cannot. When he closes himself off, she cannot bear the emptiness now that he demonstrated how enormous it was by filling it. He begs her to run, insisting that Teacup is not worth Ringer's life, but she insists that they taught them what matters and what does not.

When the chopper returns for them on the eighth day in Chapter 83, Razor mouths "run" to Ringer as he helps her dress, and leading her into the airfield tower, he informs her that he knows what matters. They enter a room where Vosch stands with Ringer and a recruit who prevents Teacup from running to Ringer. When Vosch asks if she has figured out the riddle of the rocks, she tells him it would defeat the purpose for some to live so they are burning the village in order to save it. She does not know why they used this deceitful method when a rock would be simpler and more direct, but she suspects it has something to do with luck. Pleased, Vosch asks what happens now, and Ringer guesses that he will take her to Evan's last known location to track him since he is an intolerable flaw in the system because he fell in love and love is an irrational weakness; however, Vosch disagrees, claiming love is predictable, but he agrees that he needs Ringer to track Evan because he knows enough to cause serious damage. Whispering "run," Razor shoots Teacup, and Ringer turns in time to see Razor's chest blown apart by the recruit. Falling, Razor tells Ringer that she is free, and as Vosch approaches her, she jumps from the tower, falling into the open air and embracing her freedom.

Part VIII: Dubuque contains only Chapter 84 in which Cassie and the others are five gray ghosts in the woods at dawn. Sam and Megan sleep, while Dumbo eats. Ben is filled mostly with grief and some anger, but Cassie's dominating emotion is anger because she is tired of reliving the hello and goodbye cycle. It is not hard to figure out that Evan found the bomb and blew himself up with Grace, and she assumes this was his plan all along. Hearing a noise, Dumbo aims his gun as a shadow raises his arms, and Cassie knows that Evan has found her again before she hears his voice. Heading toward him, she thinks how they leave things behind, but things never leave them, that the world ended and will end again but always comes back. She tells Evan that her nose is broken, but since he informs her that his ankle is broken, she says "Then I'll come to you" (page 300).

## Analysis

Foreshadowing is fulfilled in Chapter 77 as Ringer learns of Razor's betrayal through the lack of boundaries imposed by their kiss. Although Razor insists that the complex to which he leads Ringer is safe, she insists on a weapon which she uses to knock him out due to his betrayal. His argument that she would already be dead if the aliens were at the complex is invalid since she has already realized that they do not want her dead. The 12th System acts as a lie detector during the kiss, alerting Ringer to Razor's intentions, but unfortunately, it cannot protect her from a broken heart; this observation reveals the extent of her feelings for Razor. Still, Ringer shows determination and



courage in her refusal to go soft now, forcing herself to enter the building for Teacup's sake, despite the risk. All of this foreshadows Vosch's presence.

Foreshadowing related to Razor's betrayal and Vosch's presence is fulfilled when Ringer finds Vosch inside the warehouse. He explains that the entire escape was a test of the 12th System, and he had to convince Ringer that it was real in order to gain her cooperation, yet he still says she has not passed her test. Not surprisingly, the rifle she commandeered from Razor is unloaded, preventing her from shooting Vosch, and in his typical cryptic way, he tells her she must "overcome what cannot be overcome" (page 281) in order to pass. He obviously anticipates her attack as he opens his arms to receive the assault.

Ringer demonstrates her courage and resilience in Chapter 79 as she attacks Vosch, despite her injuries and the fact that he knows her moves in advance, just like during their chess game. His warning that she will overload the system again indicates her importance to his plans. And she finally understands that the answer is nothing; the aliens never invaded Earth - they were a delusion, and he had managed to enhance and brainwash the humans. Ringer is uncertain whether Vosch is human, but she notes that there is no hope if he is.

In typical Ringer fashion, she is damaged but not broken when Vosch lays her in a cot in Chapter 80, and he shows vanity in his self-pride at his accomplishments. Comparing his goals with the humans to her theory about rats, Ringer observes that the only difference between humans carrying an alien consciousness and those who believe they do is the risk, again emphasizing this theme, as she realizes the aliens would never risk themselves this way. When Razor justifies his actions with the claim that he is a soldier, Ringer realizes that Vosch needs her to track Evan; because Evan has gone off the grid, he needs to utilize someone that Evan will trust. This explains why Ringer is so important to Vosch.

In Chapter 81, Ringer still believes Teacup is alive for use as leverage, but Razor's belief that one girl is irrelevant in comparison to the rest of the world reveals his lack of humanity and serves as a foil to Cassie and Zombie's insistence on saving Megan. Despite his brainwashing, Razor urges Ringer to run, showing that he is conflicted and that he does care about her. Her bravery prevents her from complying, even though she knows there is a good chance that the 12th System may sustain her until she is literally the last human on Earth. Ringer is glad that most of what Razor shared about his past was true, showing her need for a human connection, and when they kiss this time, she does not find betrayal in his soul. This connection's importance is emphasized by her mental plea for him not to leave her, and the space between them is filled, enforcing her attachment to humanity.

Chapter 82 begins with Razor again urging Ringer to flee, but when she refuses, he shuts down emotionally, causing her to experience the loss now that she knows how wide the void was. He insists that it's not worth her life to try to stay and fight, but her belief that the Others taught her what matters shows that, despite their efforts to squash her humanity, they have only managed to reinforce the value of a single human life.



When he says "run" again, she does not believe he is talking to her, suggesting his internal conflict.

Razor reiterates his plea for Ringer to run when the chopper returns for them in Chapter 83, and combined with his statement that he knows what matters, this foreshadows his subsequent actions. Vosch reveals Teacup, showing his intent to continue using her as leverage against Ringer, and when he asks if Ringer has figured out the riddle of why the aliens did not just destroy mankind in a simpler, more direct way, she explains that they used this deceitful method because it has to do with luck. Again, Vosch is pleased with Ringer, especially when she predicts his next action will be to order her to track Evan because he demonstrated an intolerable flaw in the system by falling in love with Cassie; however, when she identifies love as a weakness because it is irrational, he dissents that love is predictable. He is proud that she understands that he needs her to track Evan because the boy knows enough to cause serious damage to his plans. Fulfilling foreshadowing as he reiterates his message to run, Razor shoots Teacup, destroying Vosch's leverage and sacrificing himself for Ringer who complies, jumping from the tower and embracing her freedom. The presence of the 12th System foreshadows that she will survive to continue into the next installment in this series.

Part VIII: Dubuque concludes the novel with a single chapter, told from Cassie's first-person perspective. Cassie, Zombie, Dumbo, Sam and Megan have established a camp in the woods. Zombie's focus on his grief over his anger contrasts with Cassie's emphasis on her anger over her grief as she laments losing Evan again, believing that he sacrificed himself in the hotel. The reader's knowledge of Poundcake's sacrifice foreshadows Evan's reappearance, and this foreshadowing is soon fulfilled when Cassie hears his voice and knows he has found her again. Heading toward him, she thinks of the things they leave behind and the things that never leave them as well as how the world ended and will end again but always comes back. Both Cassie and Evan are injured, but since his injury is worse, she goes to him. Their reunion and survival foreshadows their continued attempts to fight Vosch and the Others in subsequent installments in Yancey's series.

## Discussion Question 1

How and why does Razor betray Ringer? How does he save her?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Vosch need Ringer, and how does she gain her freedom?

## Discussion Question 3

The novel's conclusion is very open-ended; what foreshadowing has occurred for the next book in Yancey's series?





## Vocabulary

symbolic, omnipresent, empathetic, myriad, olfactory, ricochets, cavernous, quantum, extinguishes, nostalgia



# Characters

## Ringer

Ringer, formerly known as Marika before the alien invasion, is one of the novel's main characters and protagonists. She is also the narrator of Parts 1 and 7. A soldier, she is determined and brave, always evaluating the risk before taking action, and she is the best marksman of the group residing at Walker Hotel.

Ringer leaves her group at Walker Hotel as she sets out in search of a new hideout, but when she is followed, she shoots her pursuer who turns out to be her young friend, Teacup. Evaluating the risks as the enemy approaches, Ringer decides against abandoning or killing Teacup.

When Part 7 begins, Ringer has been captured by Vosch who uses Teacup's life as leverage. He orders Dr. Claire to inject Ringer with the 12th System, but she befriends Razor, an enemy recruit who helps her plan her escape. After killing Dr. Claire, Ringer rescues Teacup and escapes with Razor's assistance. After bailing from the chopper stolen in their escape, Ringer finds Razor who leads her to a warehouse where he claims Teacup is waiting; however, their kiss allows Ringer to see his betrayal, and inside, she finds Vosch who explains that her escape was designed to test the 12th System. Razor tends Ringer's wounds, often urging her to run, but she refuses. When Vosch returns with Teacup, he is pleased by Ringer's progress as she realizes that he plans to use her to track Evan who possesses dangerous knowledge. Razor kills Teacup and is shot, allowing Ringer to jump to freedom.

## Cassie Sullivan

Cassie Sullivan, the only character besides Evan who does not acquire a nickname after the invasion, is one of the novel's main characters and protagonists. She is the narrator of Parts 2, 5 and 8. Cassie loves Evan, though she often questions the wisdom of her feelings, and she is very protective of her younger brother, Sam.

While Cassie and Sam struggle with their father's death, Teacup sneaks off to follow Ringer, and Poundcake follows to retrieve her. When Dumbo disappears as well, Cassie and Zombie search for the intruder who incapacitates Zombie, but Cassie shoots the intruder and knocks him unconscious.

Despite her anger at him, Cassie nurses her beloved Evan, fearing he will die. A chopper deposits Megan at the hotel, and furious that Vosch is using young children as bombs, Cassie disables the bomb and saves the girl's life with Evan's guidance. Grace arrives at the hotel and attacks, fatally wounding Poundcake. Evan insists Cassie and her friends leave, entrusting Cassie with the bomb to attack the mothership and end it all. While they are still in the parking lot, an explosion rocks the hotel.



After fleeing the hotel, Cassie and the survivors from her group have set up camp in the woods. An intruder arrives, and Cassie is happily reunited with Evan.

## **Evan Walker**

Evan Walker, the narrator of Part 3, is Cassie's alien love. He shot her when they first met, subsequently saving her and helping her escape from Camp Haven before he bombed it with the promise to find her. In his younger years, Evan was overcome by an alien entity, and in the present, he wakes from the injuries incurred at Camp Haven to find Grace tending his wounds. Intent on keeping his promise to return to Cassie, he incapacitates Grace and escapes, but she follows him. They are attacked, allowing Evan to flee to Walker Hotel where his stealthy entrance causes Cassie to attack him. At the hotel, he helps Cassie save Megan's life, but then he insists on staying behind to deal with Grace, and Cassie believes he is dead after the explosion. They are ultimately reunited in the woods where Cassie's group has set up camp.

## **Poundcake**

Poundcake is a soldier who is part of Cassie's group at Walker Hotel. At age eight, Poundcake was put in charge of his three-year-old brother and stopped talking when the younger boy disappeared. Poundcake was captured and trained as a soldier for the Others. Poundcake is abandoned in the parking lot because he is dying, so he uses his last moments to retrieve the bomb and enter the hotel where he battles Grace before detonating the bomb.

## **Zombie**

Zombie, formerly known as Ben, is one of the leaders of the group at Walker Hotel, despite his injuries.

## **Commander Alexander Vosch**

Vosch is the leader of the alien invaders, running the camps to brainwash children, using children as bombs and leading the waves of destruction. He captures Ringer and injects her with the 12th System, planning to use her to track Evan.

## **Teacup**

A young member of the hotel group, Teacup follows Ringer on her expedition and is shot. Ringer allows herself to be captured to protect Teacup who is used as leverage against her. Razor shoots Teacup to allow Ringer to escape to freedom.



## **Nugget**

Nugget, also known as Sam, is Cassie's little brother. He blames his sister for their father's death and refuses to seek comfort from his teddy bear, claiming he is too old.

## **Grace**

Grace is an alien-controlled girl who met Evan at age 16. She nurses him back to health after the bombing at Camp Haven and follows him to the hotel where she attacks the group. She is presumed dead after Poundcake sacrifices himself to bomb the hotel.

## **Megan**

Megan is a young girl injected with a bomb and sent to the hotel to determine if Evan is present. Cassie and Evan manage to disarm the bomb, saving Megan.

## **Razor**

Razor is one of Vosch's recruits who tends to and befriends Ringer. He helps her plan and enact her escape, only to betray her to Vosch. Ultimately, he shoots Teacup and gives his life to help Ringer gain her freedom.

## **Dr. Claire**

Dr. Claire is the White Coat who injects Ringer with the 12th System, and Ringer kills her during her escape.

## **Lieutenant Bob**

Lieutenant Bob is the helicopter pilot Ringer and Razor hijack for their escape, and Ringer uses her enhancements to persuade him to cooperate.



# Symbols and Symbolism

## Promises

To Ringer, promises are priceless, so she is reluctant to give them, yet she still promises to return to Zombie and their group and to protect Teacup. Promises symbolize the instability of the world presented in this novel.

## Poundcake's Wrapper

Poundcake's wrapper symbolizes his search for food during which his three-year-old brother disappeared. It is also the reason for his nickname, referencing the fact that he is overweight.

## Teddy Bear

Sam's refusal to seek comfort from his teddy bear because he is too old symbolizes the harsh conditions of his world that forces him to grow up too quickly.

## Bomb

The bomb implanted in Megan symbolizes Vosch's ruthless cruelty, while Cassie and Evan's efforts to save her reveal their humanity. Poundcake uses the bomb in his sacrifice to protect his friends.

## Chess

Vosch turns chess, a game Ringer played with her father, into a torment, showing her that she can never defeat him because he always knows her next move.

## Tapping Language

The tapping language that Ringer and Razor develop symbolizes their friendship and reveals his intent to help her escape from Vosch.

## 12th System

Vosch injects Ringer with the 12th System, forcing her to achieve the next stage of human evolution in mere days. This symbolizes his plans to enhance the surviving humans for his own benefit. It also aids Ringer in her escape.



## **Ringer and Razor's Kiss**

When Ringer and Razor kiss, the 12th System allows her to recognize his betrayal.

## **Rats**

The rats in the hotel prove a constant source of agitation to Ringer and her friends. Vosch's mention of these creatures shows the parallel between how the humans view the rats and how the aliens view the humans.

## **Red Death**

The plague that the aliens unleash on the humans is called the Red Death, symbolizing how it makes people regurgitate blood. The name echoes the Black Death, showing how it has decimated the population of Earth.

## **Operation Early Checkout**

Cassie's group calls their plan to leave the hotel Operation Early Checkout, and this symbolizes their desire to survive.



# Settings

## Camp Haven

Camp Haven was a camp established by Vosch to brainwash children and train them to become soldiers. Evan helped Cassie escape before bombing the place.

## Walker Hotel

The Walker Hotel is where Cassie, Ringer, Zombie, Dumbo, Poundcake, Teacup and Sam hide from the aliens, but they know they will be found so Ringer leaves in search of a more sustainable hideout. Evan finds Cassie here, but Grace soon attacks. Dying, Poundcake sacrifices himself to bomb Walker Hotel with Grace inside.

## Wonderland

Wonderland is another alien camp where children are manipulated and trained as soldiers. Ringer's memories are uploaded here after she is captured by Vosch.

## Camp Ashpit

Another alien camp, Camp Ashpit is where Vosch killed Cassie's father.

## Grace's Station

Grace's station is a one-story frame house on Highway 68 in the center of her patrol sector. Evan instructs Cassie to hide out here until the mothership lands to retrieve Grace, giving her a chance to end it all by bombing them.

## Vosch's Camp

After her capture, Ringer is taken to Vosch's camp where she is injected with the 12th System. She escapes and rescues Teacup with Razor's help.

## Warehouse

After their escape, Razor leads Ringer to a warehouse where he betrays her to Vosch. Here, he also nurses her back to health and ultimately sacrifices himself so she can regain her freedom.



# Themes and Motifs

## Hope/Hopelessness and Promises

One of the prevailing themes in “The Infinite Sea” is that of hope and its counterpart, hopelessness, as well as promises. The status of the world in which the novel is set influences the importance of these concepts as the alien invasion has filled many characters with a sense of hopelessness, though several characters attempt to counteract these negative feelings by being hopeful for the future. The role of promise is closely related to this theme of hope as characters value promises greatly as a source of hope.

The importance of promises is first introduced in Chapter 1 when Ringer refuses to kiss Zombie before her departure because that is a type of promise. Despite Vosch’s attempts to fill Zombie with hate, Zombie gains hope for the future; however, Cassie believes that Vosch wanted to teach Zombie the hopelessness of hope, hence deterring any positive efforts the boy made. After being separated from Cassie, Evan’s focus is on returning to her because he promised that he would return, and battling Grace and escaping enemy forces, he overcomes the odds to keep his promise. Just before Evan arrives at Walker Hotel, Cassie accepts that he is never coming, giving in to hopelessness, and this positive event in the face of such a negative feeling shows the importance of the characters continuing to have faith in the world’s future.

When Megan shows up at the hotel as part of the aliens’ attempt to attack the children, Cassie is hopeful that she will save the child, and she succeeds. The group is also hopeful for the success of Operation Early Checkout, planning to get far away before the aliens realize their ruse. Evan expresses a great deal of hopelessness about the future because, as a presumed alien entity lives inside him, he knows what the future holds; however, he manages to muster up some hope when he realizes that Cassie can finish it all, and he elicits a promise from her that she will bomb the mother ship. Unfortunately, Sam loses the bomb, preventing Cassie from being able to keep this promise.

When the narrative returns to Ringer, Ringer knows that Vosch is leveraging Teacup’s life to give her false hope, and this leverage is only possible because of Ringer’s promise to keep Teacup safe. The delusion of Ringer’s father offers a sense of hopelessness as he warns that she now belongs to the aliens. Despite this, Ringer finds hope in her friendship with Razor who promises to help her escape, and she is able to fulfill her promise to Teacup when she rescues her young friend, filling her with more hope that wrongs will be righted. Before her escape, Ringer keeps her promise to kill Dr. Claire.

Although Razor’s betrayal temporarily causes Ringer to lose hope, she finds hope again in their next kiss which fills an emptiness inside her. Despite his previous betrayal,





Razor ultimately keeps his promise to help Ringer regain her freedom when he shoots Teacup and sacrifices himself in order to allow Ringer to escape from Vosch.

The cycle of greetings and farewell comes full circle for Cassie and Evan in the final chapter when he returns to her, and although she acknowledges a sense of hopelessness in the acceptance that the world will end, she also expresses hope in her belief that it will always come back.

## Humanity and Evolution

The concepts of humanity and evolution play a significant role in this novel as the aliens force the humans to evaluate their own humanity while setting themselves up as the next stage of evolution and even forcing some humans to undergo the next step in evolution as well. The novel's preface, "The Wheat," introduces the concept of humanity when it describes the use of a child bomb to destroy a farmhouse filled with people who embrace the child, detonating the bomb, because they cannot yield all of their human instincts, despite the great peril their present world presents. Cassie's belief that Evan is human when her friends know that he is possessed with an alien entity shows a deeper meaning to the concept of humanity than the superficial definition concerning the origin of an individual's birth.

Ringer's belief that the aliens do not want all of the humans dead raises an important question that she later broaches with Vosch. Cassie's guilt over killing a soldier demonstrates her humanity as does her belief that the aliens can kill all the humans but not what lasts in them. Vosch's desire to fill Zombie with hate reveals his determination to rid the world of humanity, and later, this causes Cassie to contemplate the consequences of destroying humanity only to fill the world with humans devoid of humanity. She also insists that "I am humanity."

This lack of humanity is explored in many of the characters' actions. Razor's betrayal of Ringer is the most obvious example as he turns on his own kind for the benefit of Vosch; however, he later redeems himself when he gives up his life to ensure her freedom. Zombie believes that he can kill Megan in order to protect his friends, concerning Cassie with his lack of humanity, but his inability to sacrifice the one to save many reinforces the goodness within him. Likewise, Cassie and Evan risk their lives to save Megan. The only characters who truly and consistently show a lack of humanity are those who have already been deemed "other." The most obvious of these is Commander Alexander Vosch, and even after her discovery that the humans containing alien entities really have just been enhanced as she is, she notes that she is uncertain whether Vosch is human or not, noting there is no hope if he is human as an indicator of his true evil.

Another topic connected with theme explores the evolution of certain humans. Dr. Claire and Grace both demonstrate a lack of humanity, but both are identified as humans containing alien entities, until Ringer discovers otherwise. Ringer is made more than human when Vosch injects her with the 12th System, creating a new sense of



consciousness within her, and with this evolution that occurs in mere days, she realizes that the aliens would never risk themselves to come to Earth; instead, they have developed a generation of enhanced humans brainwashed to believe that they possess alien entities within them. Vosch uses Ringer's humanity to leverage Teacup against her in exchange for her cooperation, but despite the enhancements made to her, she does not follow the path of others of her kind, turning on humanity, and instead continues to strive to protect humanity, frequently noting "The Earth is my charge."

## Courage and Sacrifice

The absence of fear is not courage, but the characters in this novel are very much afraid, quite often. Despite their fears, they overcome these demons to confront the challenges they face head-on, and often, they deny what is best for them in order to protect the larger group of which they are part. The concept of humanity proves a major motivator in the characters' bravery as they often make decisions based on what is best for mankind as a whole, identifying with humanity as the greater good despite acknowledging mankind's faults. Even after Ringer is enhanced, making her quintessentially more and better than other humans, she identifies as a human and embraces the mantra "The Earth is my charge."

From the beginning, Ringer shows her bravery. She adopts a solo mission to scout out distant caverns as a potential new hideout for the group she belongs to, and when she feels herself being followed, she acts courageously in her own defense, though the result is that she shoots Teacup. When enemies approach, she decides against killing or leaving her friend, though those options pose the least risk, and instead, Ringer sacrifices herself, permitting both of them to be captured by the enemy.

When the narrative returns to Ringer, she is defying Vosch who has absolute control over her as his captive, yet she shows no fear as she defies him, even calling his bluff about his use of Teacup as leverage. After she believes Vosch killed Teacup, Ringer valiantly attempts to kill herself to defeat him because she knows that he intends to use her in some way, and she is willing to sacrifice her life to prevent him from achieving his goals as the greatest evil in her world.

Razor shows bravery in helping Ringer escape, and of course, Ringer's courage is continually displayed as she escapes from Vosch, rescues Teacup and valiantly rejoins her friends after bailing from the helicopter. Despite the unlikelihood of their continued survival, Ringer insists on returning to her friends, in a courage demonstration of loyalty, and when she realizes that Razor betrayed her, she still courageously confronts Vosch. Redeeming himself, Razor commits the ultimate act of sacrifice when he kills Teacup and is killed in the process, allowing Ringer to escape.

A similar act of bravery and sacrifice is witnessed in Poundcake's actions when he yields his life, though already failing, to bomb the hotel with Grace in it, aiding in ensuring his friends' safety. Before Poundcake's sacrifice, Dumbo exhibits bravery when he offers to bomb the hotel before they realize they can accomplish this without any



casualties among them. When Grace poses a threat, the entire group bravely salutes when Zombie asks how his soldiers will die.

Cassie's bravery is shown when she attacks the intruder in the hotel, and in entering the hotel to keep his promise despite personal risk, Evan also demonstrates courage. The pair bravely act to save Megan by removing the bomb, and after Grace's attack, Evan offers to sacrifice himself to save the rest of the group, allowing them to escape. After the hotel bombing, Cassie assumes that Evan sacrificed himself to facilitate Operation Early Checkout, so she is thrilled when they are reunited, showing that they will bravely face the future together.

## Risk

Throughout the narrative, the theme of risk is utilized repeatedly to highlight the characters' bravery and emphasize the sacrifices they make. Risk is also introduced in terms of hope and promises. Due to the unstable environment in which the novel is set, the characters constantly evaluate the risk associated with any potential action before deciding how to proceed, and this clearly identifies the danger of the world in which they live. The relevance of this theme is introduced in the prologue when the men's consideration of the risk inherent in allowing the child in their midst is overruled by the woman who succumbs to her instinct to protect the young, thus resulting in disaster for the inhabitants of the farmhouse. This serves as an example of how risky even mundane situations are in this world that has been manufactured by Vosch's cruelty and evil.

On her way to the caverns, Ringer evaluates the risk that each route offers before choosing her path, and after shooting Teacup, she examines the risks associated with each decision that she can make, observing the risk of allowing Teacup to be captured and noting that the least risky option is to kill Teacup, though her humanity prevents her from making that decision. She also observes that the aliens chose to use the option of the Fifth Wave because it posed the least risk.

When several members of their group disappear, Cassie and Zombie check through the hotel in order to eliminate any potential risk; meanwhile, Evan takes the risk of leaving Grace and allowing her to follow him to the hotel, and once he reaches the hotel, he disregards the risk of entering the unknown situation in favor of keeping his promise to return to Cassie. Cassie convinces her friends that it is stupidly risky to search for Teacup and Poundcake, and the chopper that deposits Megan poses the risk of their location being confirmed. Megan's presence also presents a risk in terms of the bomb with which she has been implanted, but despite the danger, Cassie and Evan remove the bomb and save the girl's life.

Grace's arrival reveals the bravery of Zombie, Dumbo, Poundcake and Sam who decide to fight her, despite her greater strength because of her enhancements. The group must leave the hotel before the aliens return to kill them, and Cassie risks Poundcake's life in order to protect Evan, allowing Grace the opportunity to fatally wound her friend. Evan



risks his life to help Cassie and the others escape, and although Zombie initially sets out carrying Poundcake, he decides that he cannot continue taking that risk once Dumbo assures him that Poundcake is dying.

Although Vosch uses Teacup's life as leverage to bend Ringer's will, Ringer risks her friend's life to attack him, planning to kill herself as well, and Vosch later risks Ringer's life when he orders Dr. Claire to inject her with the 12th System. There are obvious risks inherent in Razor's secret relationship with Ringer, but these risks prove to be irrelevant after she discovers his betrayal; however, he redeems himself when he takes the ultimate risk – and gives the ultimate sacrifice – when he shoots Teacup and dies himself in order to ensure Ringer's freedom because he believes that saving Teacup is not worth Ringer's life.

## Betrayal and Loyalty

As with most of the themes in this novel, the duality of betrayal and loyalty is explored in-depth. Many of the characters reveal the duality of man by exhibiting the contradiction of both of these responses. The first mention of this concept appears early in the narrative when Ringer and Cassie argue over the likelihood of Evan betraying his own kind for Cassie's benefit, but this is shown to be fact by Evan's later actions; however, Cassie's loyalty to Evan occasionally causes her to betray other members of her group. Thus, this theme shows how loyalty to one can also be betrayal to another, and this is frequently the case.

Ringer's refusal to leave Teacup after shooting her is an obvious example of loyalty, as is Zombie's certainty that Ringer will return from her expedition. While Cassie shows complete faith in Evan, the others in her group doubt his loyalty to humankind, but he proves his loyalty, to Cassie at least, by keeping his promise to return to her, though he has to betray and attack Grace to do so.

Poundcake's guilt over leaving his brother suggests his feelings of betrayal, and he tries to rectify this by constantly searching for his brother in the camps. During their escape from Walker Hotel, Zombie is forced to leave Poundcake behind when he learns that his friend is dying, and while this appears as a betrayal, Poundcake does not view it this way, instead understanding why giving up on him will benefit the group as a whole. In fact, he uses his remaining moments to sacrifice himself for the greater good when he bombs the hotel with Grace inside.

Ironically, Cassie had questioned Poundcake's loyalty earlier in the book, causing Zombie to accuse her of betrayal, chiding her for doubting their friend while holding the enemy's hand. Despite her frequent anger at Evan, Cassie shows her loyalty by her vast concern every time he is endangered in any way. Cassie, Zombie and Evan all demonstrate their loyalty to humanity when they risk their own lives to save Megan's, and Evan shows loyalty to Cassie and humanity yet again when he insists on her leaving him behind. Although they are parted at the hotel, they are eventually reunited



because their loyalty to one another causes them to continue seeking each other out whenever they are separated.

Throughout Vosch's experimentation on her, Ringer remains loyal to Teacup, allowing the Commander to use the girl as leverage. Vosch betrays the trust of Ringer and many others at many times, showing the evil incarnate that resides within him. Razor demonstrates loyalty in his attempts to help Ringer escape, only to betray her after her escape because he is a soldier working for Vosch the entire time to assist with the testing of the 12th System; Ringer is destroyed by this betrayal, especially after realizing Vosch's ultimate betrayal in convincing enhanced humans like Evan that there are actually alien entities residing inside them. Fortunately, Ringer's questionable loyalty pendulum swings back in the direction of good when he gives his life so that Ringer can escape from Vosch.



# Styles

## Point of View

The point of view throughout most of this novel is first person, but the narrator varies between several of the protagonists. There are also a couple exceptions where a third-person narrator steps in to tell part of the story. The novel is divided into eight specific parts, and this is also how the narration is separated. Ringer is the narrator in Parts 1 and 7, while Cassie narrates Parts 2, 5 and 8. Evan narrates Part 3, and Parts 4 and 6 are narrated by a third-person narrator who focuses on Poundcake's perspective. All points of view that are used are limited with the narrators only being able to share their own perspectives. Some background information is provided to demonstrate the extent of the difference between the modern world and the post-apocalyptic world in which the narrative is set.

The novel's narrators are mostly reliable, but because the narrators are only privy to their own thoughts and experiences, untruths and misunderstandings are occasionally unveiled which may cause readers to question their credibility. By focusing on the post-apocalyptic world and the individual characters residing in it, the author places a lot of emphasis on the importance of each person in relation to the entirety of humanity, and the novel's protagonists frequently contemplate the relevance of individuals as part of the whole. The novel presents a fairly equal distribution of exposition and dialogue, allowing multiple characters to express their views and to reflect on others' opinions.

## Language and Meaning

"The Infinite Sea" is written using casual, informal language that parallels modern American vernacular and which is conducive to being understood by the target audience of young adults. Occasional allusions to pop culture shows the timeframe in which the novel is set is in the not-so-distant future. By providing background information pre-apocalypse as well as during the early stages of the alien invasion, the author offers readers an opportunity to examine the differences between the past and present, ultimately creating empathy for these characters who are so like modern youths.

Scientific terms are used in regards to the alien invasion and their technology, but this jargon is explained to enhance comprehension. The novel also contains allusions to the Bible, mythology and pop culture. Repetition is often used to reinforce certain concepts, such as "I am humanity" and "the Earth is my charge." Along with the emphasis on the importance of promises, this enhanced comprehension of the characterization of the novel's world. The distribution of exposition and dialogue is fairly equal, allowing narrators to present various viewpoints, while the emotions expressed elicit empathy for the characters. Overall, the novel is easy to understand, despite the abstract nature of its topics and themes.

## Structure

This novel is comprised of 300 pages, divided into two books and then further into eight parts, composed of a total of 84 chapters. The first book encompasses Parts 1-6, while Book 2 includes Parts 7 and 8. Part 1 consists of 10 chapters and details Ringer leaving the hotel up to her capture. Part 2 includes 4 chapters, focusing on Cassie's time at the hotel up until Evan's unannounced arrival. The 15 chapters of Part 3 provide background on Evan's past, following him to his arrival at Walker Hotel, and the single chapter in Part 4 provides background information on Poundcake. Part 5 consists of 18 chapters which follow the events at the hotel until its explosion, and Part 6 contains a single chapter detailing Poundcake's sacrifice. Part 7 contains 34 chapters which follow Ringer through her time with Vosch and subsequent escape. The novel concludes with a single chapter in Part 8 which reveals Cassie and Evan's reunion.

*The Infinite Sea* by Rick Yancey is a science fiction novel intended for a young adult audience. It follows a group of teenagers and children, especially protagonists Cassie and Ringer, as they adapt to and survive in a post-apocalyptic world threatened by alien entities intent on squashing humanity. Overcoming their fears, the characters face each new challenge with bravery and purpose as they define what it means to be human.

The novel's chapters are titled, rather than numbered, but the parts of the book are titled according to major concepts presented. The chapters vary in length and in regards to the timeframes covered. Background information is provided on the pre-apocalyptic world and the beginning of the alien invasion, and this information serves as a foil to the world of the narrative. The pace of most of the novel is fairly slow with limited bursts of fast-paced action scenes. Overall, the narrative is extremely creative and entertaining.



## Quotes

Back to the R word. It's all about risk. Not just ours. Theirs, too: embedding themselves in human bodies, establishing death camps, training kids to finish the genocide, all of it crazy risky, stupid risky. Like Evan Walker, discordant, illogical, and just damn strange. The opening attacks were brutal in their efficiency, wiping out 98 percent of us, and even the 4th Wave made some sense: It's hard to muster a meaningful resistance if you can't trust one another. But after that, their brilliant strategy starts to unravel. Ten thousand years to plan the eradication of humans from Earth and this is the best they can come up with? That's the question I can't stop turning over and over in my head, and haven't been able to, since Teacup and the night of the rats.

-- Ringer as narrator (chapter 3 paragraph 11)

**Importance:** This quote introduces the importance of risk while expressing confusion about Evan's betrayal of his own kind. It also provides background information about the world in which the novel is set.

I AM NOT ALONE. I can't see him or hear him, but I feel him. Every inch of my body tingles with the sensation of being watched. An uncomfortably familiar feeling now, present since the very beginning. Just the mothership silently hovering in orbit for the first ten days caused cracks in the human edifice. A different kind of viral plague: uncertainty, fear, panic. Clogged highways, deserted airports, overrun emergency rooms, governments in lockdown, food and gas shortages, martial law in some places, lawlessness in others. The lion crouches in the tall grass. The gazelle sniffs the air. The awful stillness before the strike. For the first time in ten millennia, we knew what it felt like to be prey again.

-- Ringer as narrator (chapter 4 paragraph 1 & 2)

**Importance:** This quote demonstrates Ringer's heightened sense of awareness as she feels that she is being watched.

Sometimes you're in the wrong place at the wrong time and what happens is nobody's fault. You just want to feel bad so you'll feel better.

-- Ringer (chapter 5 paragraph 5)

**Importance:** In this quote, Ringer explores the injustice of life and the unlikelihood of coincidence.

Wherever you were, we were there, too.

-- Zombie (chapter 11 paragraph 56)

**Importance:** In this quote, Zombie reminds Cassie that all of the survivors have shared similar experiences.

They can kill us, even down to the last of us, but they can't kill – can never kill – what lasts in us.





-- Cassie as narrator (chapter 11 paragraph 3rd to last)

**Importance:** This quote reveals faith in people and the hope that their feelings cannot be destroyed, even if the population is decimated.

You know what he told me? Well, more like promised. He promised he would empty me. He would empty me and fill me up with hate. But he broke that promise. He didn't fill me with hate. He filled me with hope." – Zombie "The Others understood that, understood it better than most of us. No hope without faith, no faith without hope, no love without trust, no trust without love. Remove one and the entire human house of cards collapses."

-- Zombie & Cassie as narrator (chapter 12 paragraph 61 & 62)

**Importance:** When Zombie expresses his feelings of hope, despite Vosch's efforts to fill him with hate, Cassie recognizes the aliens' desire to destroy humanity's hope.

That's been my worry from the beginning, Grace: The longer we play at being human, the more human we become.

-- Evan (chapter 18 paragraph 31)

**Importance:** The fact that Evan is overcome by pretending to be human foreshadows him embracing his humanity and betraying his own kind.

The world ends. The world ends and the world begins again. It's always been that way.

-- Grace (chapter 34 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** Grace's acceptance of the circle of life foreshadows the other characters' realization of this concept.

He brought me to that place against my will and then my will brought him to this place, and maybe that meant we sort of owned each other. Or owed each other. Anyway, no debt is ever fully repaid, not really, not the ones that really matter.

-- Cassie as narrator (chapter 34 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** Here, Cassie expresses her desire to repay her debt to Evan, as well as the realization that repayment is not really possible in more intense situations such as theirs.

You say you know how we think? Then you know what I'm going to do. I'll rip your face off with a pair of tweezers. I'll tear your heart out with a sewing needle. I'll bleed you out with seven billion tiny cuts, one for each one of us. That's the cost. That's the price. Get ready, because when you crush the humanity out of humans, you're left with humans with no humanity.

-- Cassie as narrator (chapter 36 paragraph 30 & 31)

**Importance:** In this quote, Cassie expresses anger towards the aliens for destroying



humanity, and the quote also foreshadows the realization that humans have not actually been invaded by alien entities.

They made a major mistake, the dumb bastards, when they didn't start by killing you first.

-- Zombie (chapter 40 paragraph 14)

**Importance:** In this quote, Zombie recognizes Cassie's potential to save the world, and this idea is later reiterated by Evan.

You can end it, Cassie. You. And that's the way it should be. It should be you. You. I can't make any promises this time. But you can. Promise me, Cassie. Promise me you'll end it.

-- Evan (chapter 47 paragraph 21 & 23)

**Importance:** When Evan recognizes Cassie's potential, he elicits a promise from her, reinforcing the value of promises.

I understand the game within the game now: There is nothing private, nothing sacred. There is no part of me hidden from him. My stomach churns with revulsion. He's violated more than my memories. He's molesting my soul.

-- Ringer as narrator (chapter 50 paragraph 36)

**Importance:** Vosch fills Ringer with a sense of hopelessness as she feels violated by his knowledge of her thoughts and believes she cannot win against him since he has access to all of her secrets.

First they taught us not to trust them. Then they taught us not to trust each other. Now they're teaching us we can't even trust ourselves... You belong to them now.

-- Delusion of Ringer's father (chapter 54 paragraph 4th from last)

**Importance:** Here, Ringer's father explains the aliens' goals and their desire for her to join their ranks, but more importantly, the presence of this delusion shows Vosch's ability and willingness to manipulate her for his means.

It isn't about the dead. It never was.

-- Vosch (chapter 56 paragraph 4th from last)

**Importance:** By telling Ringer how unimportant the dead are, Vosch helps her come closer to understanding his goals.

Despair is addictive, for the one watching it and the one experiencing it.

-- Ringer as narrator (chapter 61 paragraph 8)

**Importance:** In this quote, Ringer enumerates upon her experience with despair which helps her comprehend why Vosch's plan is so successful.



Never noticed all the crap in the world until there was nobody left to pick it up. The Earth is my charge.

-- Ringer (chapter 72 paragraph 47)

**Importance:** Razor's acceptance of Earth as his charge in this quote leads to this mantra becoming Ringer's motto, foreshadowing her efforts to save humanity.

I know they're probably dead. And I know I'll probably die long before I reach them, even if they're not. But I made a promise, Razor. I didn't think it was a promise at the time. I told myself it wasn't. Told him it wasn't. But there're the things we tell ourselves about the truth, and they're the things the truth tells about us.

-- Ringer (chapter 76 paragraph 45)

**Importance:** This quote reinforces the importance of promises and honesty, and it also demonstrates Ringer's honor.

They're not here. There are no entities downloaded into human bodies. No alien consciousness inside anyone. Because of the risk. The risk. The risk is unacceptable. It's a... a program, a delusional construct. Inserted into their minds before they were born, switched on when they reach puberty – a lie, it's a lie. They're human. Enhanced like me, but human... human like me.

-- Ringer (chapter 79 paragraph 12)

**Importance:** When Ringer realizes that alien entities never took up residence in human bodies, it shows that humans relinquished their humanity based on lies without actually being forced to do so.

Some things, down to the smallest of things, are worth the sum of all things.

-- Razor (chapter 81 paragraph 45)

**Importance:** In this quote, Razor recognizes the value in individuals, echoing Cassie's earlier belief about the importance of Megan's life.

Because love is irrational. It doesn't follow rules. Not even its own rules. Love is the one thing in the universe that's unpredictable.

-- Ringer as narrator (chapter 83 paragraph 23)

**Importance:** Here, Ringer identifies the salvation found in love and recognizes why the aliens tried to eliminate love, hope and all other positive emotions that humans feel.

The things we leave behind and the things that never leave us. The world ended once. It will end again. The world ends, then the world comes back. The world always comes back.

-- Cassie as narrator (chapter 84 paragraph 9)

**Importance:** In this quote, Cassie recognizes that the Earth will be destroyed, but she also finds hope and faith that it will be rebuilt in the future.