

Little Brother Study Guide

Little Brother by Cory Doctorow

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Plot Summary

The novel *Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow tells the story of a teen who takes on the Department of Homeland Security and wins. Marcus Yallow starts his campaign against the DHS after he is arrested, questioned, and tortured without good cause for nearly a week in connection with a terrorist attack on San Francisco. Themes such as invasion of privacy, American rights, loyalty, and standing up for what one believes in are dealt with in this engrossing story. Marcus learns that he, as an American citizen, is responsible and able to stand up to the leaders and protectors of the country when they do not uphold the rights up which the country was built.

Marcus and three of his best friends skip out of school one day to play their favorite game, *Harajuku Fun Madness*. As they search for a clue in the game, terrorists strike the city, blowing up the Bay Bridge. Darryl is stabbed as the four friends try to catch a subway back home. Trying to get help for his friend, Marcus flags down a military jeep. Instead of helping, the people in the Jeep shackle and place hoods on the heads of the four friends. They are held for questioning for nearly a week before Marcus, Vanessa and Jolu are released to go home. Darryl is not released with them and no one will give them any information about their friend.

Back at home, Marcus finds a bug in his homemade computer and realizes the DHS is spying on him. He uses an Xbox game station and *Paranoid Xbox* software to create an Internet connection that the DHS can not track. Marcus distributes *Paranoid Xbox* discs and encourages his friends to use the secure connection. Soon, teens all over America are using this Internet connection to share information about the illegal activities of the DHS. As Marcus becomes more active in his plan to uncover the activities of the DHS, his two closest friends, Vanessa and Jolu turn their backs on him. He meets a girl, Ange, who supports and helps Marcus in his cause. As Marcus and Ange try to get the word out about what the DHS is doing to the country, their efforts seem to always be twisted out of context so that they work against them.

After a fight with Ange, Marcus bumps into a strange man named Zeb who gives Marcus a note telling him that Darryl is still alive and still being held captive. Depressed and discouraged, Marcus' mother catches Marcus crying. He breaks down and tells her what has happened to him. They turn the story over to an investigative reporter who breaks the story just after a large number of teens have been arrested in a *VampMob* in San Francisco's Civic Center. Marcus had set up the *VampMob* as a cover for himself, Ange and another girl to go underground. When he and Ange are separated and he fears she has been arrested, Marcus decides to stay and fight. Marcus is arrested again by the DHS but not before he gets a picture of the four teens together just before the terrorist attacks, proof that Darryl was not killed in the terrorist attacks, as well as a video showing a government leader telling the DHS he knew when and where the next terrorist attacks would take place but planned not to do anything about them because it would help get his man re-elected. *Treasure Island* - an abandoned military base in the San Francisco Bay where Ange, Darryl, Marcus, and dozens of other DHS prisoners are being held - is stormed by troopers from the California Highway Patrol just as Marcus is

being waterboarded in an attempt to gather information from him. As a result of Marcus' fight, the DHS is thrown out of the state of California. Many members of the DHS are arrested as a result of their actions. Marcus is convicted only of a charge of misdemeanor theft.



Chapters 1 and 2

Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

The novel *Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow tells the story of a teen who takes on the Department of Homeland Security and wins. Marcus Yallow starts his campaign against the DHS after he is arrested, questioned and tortured without good cause for nearly a week in connection with a terrorist attack on San Francisco. Themes such as invasion of privacy, American rights, loyalty and standing up for what one believes in are dealt with in this engrossing story. Marcus learns that he, as an American citizen, is responsible and able to stand up to the leaders and protectors of the country when they do not uphold the rights up which the country was built.

In Chapter One, Fred Benson, one of the vice-principals of Cesar Chavez High School, calls senior Marcus Yallow, also known as W1n5t0n, to the office. On the way to the office, Marcus gets a message on his cell phone telling him there has been a new posting on Harajuku Fun Madness. Benson tries to get Marcus to admit to using the web handle of W1n5t0n. Marcus claims he is not familiar with the name, then tells Benson that if he has evidence this person has been hacking the school's security system, he should call the police. Benson tells Marcus to go back to class until the police are contacted. When Marcus says he can wait in the office until the police get there, Benson yells at Marcus to get out of his office. Once he is back in class, Marcus contacts Darryl on his secret instant messaging program. Darryl doesn't want to skip class because he is in danger of being expelled but Marcus convinces him.

In Chapter 2, Marcus and Darryl cook Darryl's library book in the microwave of the teachers' lounge to deactivate the arphid in the book. On the way out of the lounge, they almost run into Charles Walker, a student who often snitches on other students. Marcus jams the signal on Charles' phone to distract him. Instead of going somewhere private to figure out what is wrong with his phone, Charles stands in the hall and is caught by Mr. Benson.

Vanessa, also called Van, spots Marcus and Darryl at their meeting place and they are soon joined by Jose-Luis Torrez, the fourth member of their group. They head toward a section of town known as the Tenderloin. Once in the Tenderloin, a girl takes their picture and threatens to post it to the web if the group doesn't allow her to solve the clue first. Their confrontation is disrupted by what they believe is an earthquake. A huge black cloud rises from the area of the bay. Sirens start and announcements warn them to go to the closest shelter immediately. Marcus tells his crew to go to the BART station.

Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

In these chapters, the techy teen Marcus Yallow is introduced. Marcus is a high school senior who is more concerned with learning how to get around the surveillance



measures and devices set up in his school that he is about impressing his teachers. He has set up his school owned SchoolBook laptop to allow him to send instant messages to friends and do all sorts of things he shouldn't be doing, but aren't exactly illegal on the larger scheme of things. The instant messaging, for instance, is like the high tech version of passing notes in class.

Marcus shows his finesse for technological finagling when he uses his knowledge to get himself and his friend, Darryl, out of class to try to solve a clue in their favorite alternate reality computer game. They put gravel in their shoes to fool the gait recognition cameras, microwave a library book to kill the arphid on it that is used to track the book's location, and scrambles the cell phone of a boy whom they are afraid will catch them in the act of leaving school. Although Marcus' actions may require specialized knowledge and above average intelligence, what he is doing by sneaking out of school is really no worse than what generations and generations of school kids have done through the years.

It can quickly be gathered that surveillance and the spreading of information through the Internet are topics that will be dealt with in this book. While at school, Marcus is surrounded by gadgets teachers have set up to try to keep tabs on the students. Right to privacy has already clashed with these tracking devices as authorities have been required to trade in face recognition cameras for gait recognition cameras as the face recognition cameras were considered unconstitutional. Marcus also notes that even though the teachers aren't allowed to put tracking devices on the students, they can put them on library books, which can be used, indirectly, to track the students. Even on the streets, Marcus and his friends face high tech snitches who take their pictures and threaten to put them on the Internet as proof the students skipped school.

The tone of these first two chapters is mostly in the happy go lucky style of a teen who is secure in his ability to outsmart his teachers and even his friends with his technological knowledge. Note also, that Marcus has a fair knowledge of the way the justice system works as he realizes that if his principal really had anything on him, he would have called the police in the first place instead of trying to force Marcus to admit to a crime.

The tone changes as Marcus and his three friends begin working on solving the clue in their game and it is indicated their lives are about to change, forever. As they are on the street, there is a jolting of the earth that they believe is an earthquake. Instead of being silent, however, there is unbearable noise and a mushroom cloud in the Bay area. The tone of the story turns from one of normal teen pranks to one of fear and uncertainty.



Chapters 3 and 4

Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

In Chapter 3, Marcus and his three friends are surrounded by a huge mob of people as they get closer to the BART. People fall down in the crowd and are trampled. The friends decide to work their way out of the station back to the streets above. They work free of the crowd and find a bench. They discover that Darryl had been stabbed in the crowd at BART. Marcus tries to flag down a cop car or ambulance. A military-style jeep finally stops but the four friends are shackled, hooded and taken away. Marcus tries to explain to their abductors who they are, but the men don't listen or respond. He believes at first they have been kidnapped by terrorists. Marcus is taken out of the jeep, up some stairs and chained with his hands behind him. When his hood is finally removed, Marcus is in a big, 16-wheeler truck. When a man enters the truck wearing a United States military uniform, Marcus realizes he hasn't been captured by terrorists, but by the United States.

The captors set up a screen in the truck behind which they conduct interviews. During Marcus' interview a woman with a severe haircut tells him he has been detained by the Department of Homeland Security. She asks Marcus to unlock his cell phone for her but he refuses. He asks to be told what he has been arrested for and to speak to a lawyer. The lady refuses and suggests that Marcus cooperate because he is under suspicion for the terrorist attack. Marcus continues to refuse. He indicates at the end of the chapter things might have been better if he had unlocked his phone for them.

In Chapter 4, Marcus is reshackled and rehooded. He is driven to an actual jail and put in a cell where his arms and legs are freed and the hood removed. When he is later questioned, Marcus is told that if he cooperates by giving them the information they want, he will be rewarded by being given certain privileges. The lady with the severe hair cut tries to convince Marcus that if he is innocent, he has nothing to hide. One day when Marcus is allowed exercise, he sees Vanessa in the exercise yard. The two try to talk but are quickly separated by guards who reshackle Marcus and take him back to his cell. He is left shackled until he urinates on himself. Soon after, he is taken back to the interrogation room where the severe haircut lady asks him what he and Vanessa talked about. Marcus again tries to explain they are friends in high school and not terrorists. He asks about Darryl but the lady will not answer him.

At the next day's interrogation, the lady tells Marcus they have enough information to put him away for a long time. Marcus wonders if he is about to be set free, but then the lady asks him about the delivery systems for the bombs on the bridge. Marcus cries and screams that he doesn't know what she is talking about. The next day, Marcus is taken back to the interrogation room where the lady tells him they are finished questioning him. She tells Marcus they are sending him home, but that they will be watching him. She gives him a stack of papers to sign. Marcus gathers they say that he was questioned and held voluntarily. When he asks what will happen if he refuses to sign the papers, she acts as if she is going to send him back to his cell again. He begs to be



allowed to sign the papers and does so. When Marcus is taken back to his cell, his clothes are washed. He changes and men come for him. They put the hood back on him. Marcus feels himself being taken to a ship where he is chained. He is then taken back to the truck where the severe haircut lady returns his electronic devices to him. He is allowed to walk out of the truck and down stairs. At the conclusion of the chapter, he is grabbed from behind by strong arms.

Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

Marcus' story takes an unreal turn as he and his friends are "detained" by the Department of Homeland security. Marcus is trying to get help for his friend, Darryl, who has apparently been stabbed in the melee in the BART station. Instead of helping, however, the people who stop hold the teens at gunpoint, shackle them and place hoods over their heads so that they won't know where they are being taken.

In the days that follow, Marcus is tortured in a way so as to force him to make a confession. Again, Marcus shows his savvy and understanding of the American justice system by asking for what he has been arrested. He also asks to see his lawyer. The lady with whom he deals indicates to him that he has no right to ask for either of these things. The conditions under which Marcus is held are similar to those in a torture camp. He is not given food or drink, not allowed to shower, and is not given contact with any people other than his guards. When his hands are shackled behind his back so long that he urinates on himself, Marcus is made to feel dirty and bad because of his actions when he is taken back to the interrogation room. After he finally signs the papers ensuring him his freedom, Marcus indicates that after both his privacy and dignity were taken from him, he probably would have signed a confession to killing Abraham Lincoln. Consider this statement coming from a strong willed teen like Marcus. Since the torture was bad enough to break his will, how bad was the torture on those who were not as strong as Marcus.

Notice the main clash between Marcus and the lady questioning him is the confusion between protecting one's privacy and hiding evidence. As Marcus tries to retain his privacy, the interrogator tells him that he should have nothing to hide if he is innocent. Marcus struggles for the innate right to have a life that only he knows about. He doesn't want a stranger reading his e-mails, checking his phone records and reading instant messages. This right to privacy, even in the virtual world, seems to be emerging as a very important theme in this novel. The main reason that the DHS seems to be looking at Marcus so closely is because of the many technological gadgets that he carries with him. Marcus reasons that none of the things that he has in his possession are illegal. The DHS, however, takes the stance these devices could be used for illegal purposes.



Chapters 5 and 6

Chapters 5 and 6 Summary

In Chapter 5, the person hugging Marcus is Vanessa. Jolu is there too. Darryl is the only one who is not with them. They cry because they don't expect they will ever see him again. They sit down at a restaurant to talk and eat. They figure they had been held five or six days. The captors were harder on Marcus than the other two. Marcus believes this was because his captors were being vindictive because he had not been cooperative.

As they are walking home, they buy a newspaper to find out what really happened in their city. Marcus had assumed the Golden Gate Bridge had been blown up when in reality it was the Bay Bridge that had been destroyed. Jolu suggests they tell their parents about what happened while Vanessa suggests they get a lawyer. Marcus, however, tells his friends not to tell anyone what has happened to them. He believes the best line of action, to get people to care about what happened, is to try to handle the situation by himself.

When Marcus arrives home, both of his parents are waiting for him. He tells them that he and some friends had been working on a project in Oakland and were all quarantined there. He learns from his parents that the terrorists had also blown up the BART. Thousands of people were dead. In his room that night, Marcus discovers a bug has been planted in his homemade laptop.

He uses a free Xbox Universal that he got last Christmas using the ParanoidXbox DVD to try to talk to other people with the Xbox using the Internet connections installed for multiplayer gaming. This program also scrambles information sent over it so that it cannot be decrypted. Marcus decides at the end of the chapter that he should try to get everyone that he knows to use this program.

In Chapter 6, Marcus' parents make him go to school the day after he returns home. When Marcus stops at a Turkish coffee shop for a cup of coffee, the owner tells Marcus he will no longer take debit cards because he doesn't want to aid the government in keeping tabs on the people.

Once at school, Marcus is greeted warmly because he was thought to be dead. New security cameras have been installed in every classroom. Students whose parents won't give permission for the cameras are to be taught in camera free classrooms. Marcus tries to make the point in class that the cameras won't make them any safer, but is cut off by his teacher. Also at school that day, Marcus hands out twenty of the ParanoidXbox discs he has burned. When he gets home, Marcus learns that some parents are already suing the school board over the use of the cameras.



As Marcus' Internet connection spreads, it is nicknamed "Xnet." He worries that he has broken one of the rules by the DHS and will be picked up at any moment. He uses Xnet for all of his Internet communications now. He also changes his Internet handle to M1k3y. Marcus is burning and handing out 50 - 60 copies of ParanoidXbox daily. One day when Marcus gets off the BART, he gets the feeling he is being followed. Marcus believes he has no incriminating evidence on him and has covered his tracks well so he steps into a burrito restaurant to get a good meal before he is arrested. As he is eating dessert, the two men who identify themselves as San Francisco Police Department officers demand that he come with them.

Chapters 5 and 6 Analysis

One of the major topics in this section of the book is the role of terrorists. Marcus has learned that terrorists don't blow up bridges or airplanes because they have a grudge against these objects, but because they want to create as much terror and instability as they can. They want the people to respond in fear, actions which the people of San Francisco are doing. Marcus realizes the uselessness of the cameras in the classrooms, the x-rays and the identification checks. If someone wants to do something to hurt others Marcus believes they will find a way to carry out their plan even if there are cameras and other surveillance devices present.

When Marcus realizes that the DHS was harder on him than any of his friends, he believes he was treated as he was out of vindictiveness. He voices his intentions to his friends to get back at the DHS. He believes that if they tell their parents what happened to them, they won't be taken seriously. Marcus thinks that if he takes on the terrorists himself, he can do it in a way that will be believable and will make people care.

One interesting aspect of these chapters to note is the stance that the owner of the Turkish coffee shop takes. He decides to no longer take debit cards because he does not want to assist the government in tracking his customers. He is from Turkey where he experienced government surveillance. He tells Marcus that he left Turkey to be free of that sort of intrusion into his privacy. Now, he does not want to in any way help the government take this right to privacy away from the people in America.



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

In Chapter 7, the cops take Marcus to their car. The officers tell him they are watching him because his BART pass shows he's been riding to strange places at strange hours. Marcus is angered because his subway pass has been used to help the government spy on him. The police tell him they use the system to catch drug dealers and terrorists. They decide to take him home so that they can talk to his parents. When Marcus makes a comment about his parents being interested to know where their tax dollars are being spent, the cops get angry. When they threaten to take him to jail, Marcus apologizes. At his home, the first question the cops have for Marcus' mother is whether or not she is a U.S. citizen, which puts her in a smart aleck mood. Marcus wants to buy her a bunch of flowers when she signals the cops to hush, checks Marcus' bag to make sure he has nothing suspicious, asks for the cops' badge numbers, then asks them to leave.

When Marcus' father arrives home Marcus is angry because his father takes up for the cops. He explains how his business has used computers and similar information for profile information. When Marcus starts up his Xbox that evening, he suddenly worries that he may be putting all of his friends in danger because their Internet usage profiles will be "nonstandard." As he realizes what a terrible situation he has created he wishes that he could talk to Jolu, who works for an internet service provider, about his problem. The next day Marcus meets Jolu and Vanessa for coffee. Van accuses Marcus of being crazy for going against the government when he tells her what is happening. When Marcus tells Jolu the problem with Xnet, Jolu comes up with a solution that would change the definition of normal Internet usage. They work up a plan to change this definition; then the two spend the night at Jolu's house rewriting the indiecode for Pigspleen.

In Chapter 8, the police begin using not only the BART information but also toll booth FasTrak passes in locating "suspicious" people. The DHS has installed readers all over the city to track these passes. Groups of people bound together to demonstrate against these invasions of privacy are popping up all over the city. One day during a discussion with his father, his father tells Marcus he would be proud to be pulled over and do his part to protect against terrorism.

Although Van doesn't intend to, she gives Marcus the idea that things might change if the "normal" people were getting pulled over. She kids that this would cause total gridlock of the city. Marcus, however, runs with her idea. By using arphid cloners to overwrite the codes on people's cards, the information gathered from the cards would be so skewed that everyone would appear abnormal. Vanessa is angry, but Marcus tries to reason with her that if they don't do something, life as they know it is as good as it will get.



Marcus describes in his blog, Open Revolt, how to make the arphid cloners and skew the data. A few days later he passes San Francisco's General Hospital and notices a long line of employees at the front doors trying to scan into work. The next day, there is a similarly long line at the BART. Schools have also been disrupted by all the false positives that the DHS has been receiving. The best part for Marcus is when his dad gets pulled over twice in the same evening on his way home from work.

Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

In this section of the novel, Marcus gets questioned by the police again. Only this time it is not because he is suspected of any terrorist activity. A computer scanning program has deemed that his public transit usage is "abnormal." It is a new technique being used by the police and DHS to weed out criminals. This new attack on his privacy makes Marcus freshly angry with the police. He believes the government should not be able to access these records to "spy" on him. Marcus figures out a way to scramble information on people's identification cards so that everyone in the city appears to have abnormal behavior. Vanessa actually suggested this idea to him, but then gets angry with him when he actually puts it into use. At the conclusion of the Chapter 8, the city is experiencing a sort of gridlock because of the mass confusion of the cards.

Notice also in this section the way that Marcus' love of technology shows. As he spends his evening writing code with Jolu, Marcus writes about the power of being able to make a machine do exactly what he wants it to do. It is a feeling of control that he finds exhilarating. He indicates that some may let their computers control them. For those who choose to control their computers, they learn to write code.

These chapters also highlight Marcus' need to feel in control and in charge of things. The feeling of being able to control his computer makes him feel powerful, as does reprogramming people's subway and identification cards. He, however, feels as if he is in the control of someone else when he learns the police are spying on him through the use of his subway card.

It is also in these chapters that Marcus loses the support of a friend because of his desire to bring down the DHS. Van becomes angry with Marcus and calls him crazy because he insists on continuing to fight against the government organization. Although Marcus thought Van would have been supportive of his efforts because her own family left Korea as a result of persecution there Jolu reasons that Van is not more supportive because she realizes how bad things can get when one goes against the government.



Chapters 9 and 10

Chapters 9 and 10 Summary

In Chapter 9, Marcus' father is angry when he is pulled over twice on the way home. He argues he is not angry because he was pulled over, but because of the incompetent nature of the reasons that he was pulled over. Marcus' father apologizes to him about his earlier opinion of the tracking. The next morning, however, Marcus' father tells him the city's situation may get better because the DHS has requested a 300 percent budget raise for the San Francisco area. They believe these false positives they have been receiving are the terrorists' way of throwing them off the track of the real trouble. The extra money will be used to investigate all the unusual activity they find. Marcus wonders how many people his attempt to screw the system will hurt. He also wonders why his father has made a 180 degree turn in his thinking since the night before.

Marcus learns some kids have been caught jamming passes, but luckily are allowed to go free without being questioned. Marcus' dad is overjoyed when the DHS in San Francisco get their requested budget raise. Because Marcus is still confused about his father's attitude, Marcus' mom tries to help him understand how upset they had both been during the days that Marcus was missing. That night, Marcus can't sleep. He notices the sound of an engine on his street and looks down to see a van with a roof covered with antennas and a spinning dish. A DHS worker gets out of the van and is using a wifinder to search for Xnet nodes. Marcus quickly unhooks his box and takes pictures of the van. To calm himself, Marcus tries his pirate game again but a character asks him for his exact location so her turns it off. He finds a quiz on LiveJournals that would allow spies to track down the Xnetters. Marcus contacts Jolu to find out how they should handle the spies. They decide to set up a web of trust. They will throw a party at Sutro Baths to get people to attend the first meeting.

The first section of Chapter 10 describes public and private keys and how they work together to allow secret messages to be sent. In the remainder of the chapter, Jolu and Marcus plan and throw the keysigning party. While they are waiting for the guests to arrive, Jolu tells Marcus that he has to get out of the Xnet business. Because he is a Mexican, Jolu knows he will spend more time in prison than Marcus if they are caught. Jolu says that he is tired of being scared of being caught all the time. It is after this announcement that Marcus gets up and tells the twenty or so people who are there what the meeting is for. After he is finished, the kids gathered around just look at him.

Chapters 9 and 10 Analysis

In this section of the book, Marcus is surprised by his father's rapidly changing opinions of the anti-terrorism movement. One day he is angry at the police for pulling him over and being incompetent, the next day he is happy because the DHS will be getting more money for even more interrogations. Marcus' mother tries to explain to him how upset



his father was during the time that Marcus was missing. Right now, safety is the main priority for the family. Marcus still doesn't fully understand how his father cannot clearly see how wrong the actions of the DHS are.

Meanwhile, Marcus is trying to clean up the mistakes that he has made with Xnet. He is aware that the people with DHS have discovered Xnet and are trying to track down the people who are using it. He and Jolu come up with a system that will allow users of Xnet to trade messages without worrying about spies or middle men. They organize a party where they will introduce the idea to those who attend.

As the two set up for the party, Jolu follows Van's lead and tells Marcus that he also is getting out of Marcus' cause. He explains to Marcus that he can't stand the paranoia any longer. He says he is tired of being scared of being caught all of the time. Jolu, however, reasons that since he is Mexican he will be required to serve more time in prison if he is arrested than Marcus would be. Marcus seems to take the news that Jolu plans to abandon him better than he took Vanessa's departure.



Chapters 11 and 12

Chapters 11 and 12 Summary

In Chapter 11, Jolu speaks out to help convince the partygoers to join in the keysigning. When Marcus sees the people still aren't buying in, he tells them about his experience right after the bombs went off. Ange, one of the crowd, stands up in favor telling them they can't trust anyone over the age of 25. She is the first one to sign up for a key. After all the kids have had keys assigned to them, Marcus smashes the laptop that he used to create the keys so that they know he will not nark on them. He soaks the computer parts in seawater, with the help of Ange, in order to completely ruin them. Ange later contacts Marcus on Xnet and the two flirt most of the night. Ange invites Marcus to go with her to an illegal open-air concert coming up Saturday at Dolores Park. The next day on his way to get coffee, Marcus sees new graffiti. The words: "Don't trust anyone over 25" Ange's quote from the night before are sprayed on the walls. As he wanders around town, Marcus realizes the concert, which has been in the works for about three weeks, is named "Don't trust anyone over 25."

In Mrs. Galvez's class, the slogan is written on the blackboard. She teaches a lesson on the source of that quote, the hippies of the 60s and 70s. She talks about the civil rights movement of that time. She talks about the way that the kids banded together to stand up for one another. She talks about the Yippies who played pranks on the government. She explains to the children the origin of the phrase they are now using in their own revolt. She says that while the protestors did exactly win, they didn't exactly lose either. She explains that the modern protest movement is a direct result of the revolt in the 70s. Charles, however, is angry at his teacher's lecture. He believes the protestors were actually terrorists in their own right. Near the end of the debate, Marcus reads the portion of the Declaration of Independence that indicates that if a government is not working for the people, it should be abolished and a new one created.

In Chapter 12, the debate continues with Charles blatantly against the ideas of free speech or revolutions. After the class, Mrs. Galvez commends her students for an interesting discussion.

Ange is really excited about the concert in the park. It is estimated that somewhere between 5,000 and 20,000 people, including kids as young as ten and twelve, attend. Ange and Marcus start out the night up close to the tennis courts where the bands are playing where they dance with the others gathered. The crowd responds to the chants of: "Don't trust anyone over 25" and "Take it back" referring to their city and privacy. After they get tired of dancing, Ange drags Marcus to the edge of the crowd where they make out. They then move further away from the party, toward an old church on the park property. It is at this time that the police begin demanding through the use of sirens and loudspeakers that the people disperse. Instead of dispersing the people begin to chant "Take it back" to the police. As the crowds continue to resist, the police move in and helicopters above mist the area with pepper spray. There is screaming, then the



area is flooded with light. Marcus tells Ange they need to start walking as if they were just passing by. They make it away from the crowd without being arrested but Marcus is ashamed of leaving his followers to the mercy of the police and DHS.

Monday morning in school, the principal tells the students that Mrs. Galvez will no longer be teaching the social studies class. Charles smiles in pleasure. The begin studying about the DHS. Marcus sits behind two adults on the subway reading about the concert in the park. They wonder if they were ever that stupid. Marcus gets up and moves away from them.

Chapters 11 and 12 Analysis

In this section of the novel, the revolt that Marcus has started begins to take on a life of its own as more and more people become more vocal about the rights that are being taken away from them. An illegal concert in Dolores Park comes to a violent climax as police gas the revelers, then arrest them. Marcus is saved from arrest only because he and Ange have moved away from the crowd to make out. They are caught on the edge of the gas, but are able to walk away unnoticed. Since it is a concert that has been advertised and hyped over the Xnet, many of the people are those whom Marcus introduced to the movement through his own creation. Now he comments that he feels guilty as he walks away from these people.

In her social studies class, Mrs. Galvez teaches her students about the revolts in the 60s and 70s. She explains to them that the people at that time felt people over thirty could not be trusted because they were old enough to remember World War II and couldn't understand the importance of not going to war as a way to protect the country. Keep in mind that those revolting against the modern government are using a similar slogan, but they believe they can't trust anyone older than 25. They feel as if the adults have forgotten what it is like to be young and be under suspicion all the time. One student in Mrs. Galvez's class, however, believes the civil rights movement was led not by citizens worthy of praise, but by terrorists, Americans attacking their own country. He tries to counter everyone else's arguments, but doesn't make any arguments that are convincing to the rest of the class. He apparently begins a campaign against Mrs. Galvez and has her removed as their teacher. The principal takes over their class and begins a new lesson on the DHS.

Although Marcus has lost Van and Jolu as supporters of his cause, he has gained a new friend and supporter in Ange. This section of the novel introduces a new theme in the book as Marcus begins to experience his first real love relationship with a girl. Because Ange is equally active in the movement, however, this relationship does not interfere with the main theme of the novel and Marcus desire to get revenge on the DHS. Although Ange has not had the same experiences as Marcus, she seems equally dedicated to bringing the DHS down.



Chapters 13 and 14

Chapters 13 and 14 Summary

In Chapter 13, Ange and Marcus are upset that the news media reports only one side of the story of the concert at Dolores Park. They decide to open a portion of Xnet so that the media can log on to get the Xnetters' side of the story. As Marcus is working on putting reports of the riot on the Internet, he is contacted by Dr Eevil, one of the prime maintainers of ParanoidLinux with instructions concerning how to keep these pictures from being traced back to the people who posted them.

The next morning National Public Radio is running reports, video, and pictures of the riots from the rioters' point of view. They report these images have been found on Xnet, an Internet connection that the reporters say is used by students and Al Qaeda sympathizers in the Bay area. Marcus' parents ask him if he uses the Xnet. Marcus says he does for games. His father tells him to stop using it.

A young woman named Mrs. Andersen takes over Mrs. Galvez's social studies class. She begins by having the students talk about the times when the Bill of Rights can be suspended. Although Marcus doesn't believe there are any times that these rights should be suspended, the teacher believes it is a living document that can and should be adjusted at will. When Marcus becomes so angry at the teacher's views that he screams that Xnetters are doing what they are because they recognize their rights were being taken away in the name of protecting them that he is sent to the office. The principal has been watching on a closed circuit television and suspends Marcus for two weeks.

In Chapter 14, Marcus turns on the news when he gets home. On one station he sees the Regional Commander of the DHS showing literature he collected from the Dolores Park rally. He tries to use the pamphlets to prove the rally was a recruiting event for the terrorists. Eight hundred and twenty-seven were arrested the night of the concert. As the coverage continues, Marcus is angry because the news media makes the concert look like a riot.

Even though Marcus' mother reminds his father that the principal has had a grudge against Marcus, Marcus' father still gives a lecture and tries to impress upon Marcus the way the world is changing when he learns of Marcus' suspension. During his suspension, Marcus has been assigned to write a paper for each of his classes. Ange offers to help him with his papers and she meets him after school the next day. Because she attends the same school as Vanessa, Marcus and Vanessa bump into one another. Marcus is uncomfortable. He learns that Vanessa and Ange don't get along. Once Marcus and Ange get to her house, they go to her room and Marcus checks his Xnet mail. He has been sent a video of DHS workers tackling a man in an officer's uniform. After Marcus posts the video clip, he gets a message identifying the officer as General



Claude Geist. Using this as a starting point, the teens create a new section of the blog named AbusesOfAuthority.

One morning at breakfast, Marcus' parents are listening a newscast about AOA on the radio. Stills from the video have been used on newspapers in other countries. These other countries find it interesting that the American press has not covered the other side of this story. Marcus' parents feel as if these countries are trying to undermine the DHS' efforts to keep them safe. Online that day, Marcus is contacted by several news media in different countries requesting interviews. Marcus and Ange decide to set up a press conference.

Chapters 13 and 14 Analysis

The role of the media becomes important in this section of the novel. Freedom of the press is one of the crowning freedoms of America. In this instance, however, the reporters only cover the information that they are given from the military and DHS. They present the concert in Dolores Park as a riot and a terrorism rally. They do not try to get anything from the viewpoints of the people who attended the rally. Eventually even the foreign media picks up on these discrepancies especially after more videos and pictures appear on Xnet. While Marcus and his group feels these videos show the way that the DHS is abusing their power and invading the privacy of the people. Marcus' parents feel these videos will undermine the measures that the DHS is taking to keep Americans safe. The question brought to light is whether or not the press has the responsibility to tell a story even if it might cause controversy and perhaps instability in a country.

It is also interesting to note the reactions that Marcus has when he hears reports of what his group is doing on newscasts. Most times he is angered because the news media seem to be presenting the people who attended the Dolores Park concert as terrorists in training. He feels both sides of the story are not being told. He is also surprised and wonders if his parents realize he is part of the group that is leading the riot. Also note the irony of Marcus' father asking Marcus if he uses Xnet, especially since Marcus is the one who created it.

It is also in this section of the novel that it appears that Charles could become a real problem. From his grin as the vice-principal announces that Mrs. Galvez has been removed from her position as a teacher it appears that Charles may have had some hand in her dismissal. Charles has been an enemy of Marcus since the beginning of the novel. In his first appearance, Marcus and Darryl can't leave school because Charles is in the hallway. Charles has the reputation of being a teen who likes to start trouble and tell on other students. He seems to be living up to his reputation as he has apparently caused trouble from Mrs. Galvez because she chose to teach a lesson about the civil rights movement and its connection to the current unrest in the city.



Chapters 15 and 16

Chapters 15 and 16 Summary

In Chapter 15, Marcus and Ange set up the press conference to take place on the Xnet in the context of a game so that there will be complete anonymity and also more than one person answering the questions. Marcus and Ange set up for the conference in Ange's bedroom. As they are waiting, they get involved in some heavy petting, but are interrupted by the beginning of the press conference. M1k3y is cheered as he enters the conference. Although he tries to explain why he and his friends devised and use the Xnet, the press completely misrepresents their side of the story in the next day's news media. The Xnetters are portrayed as immature children who are not taking the terrorist threats seriously and are perhaps even inviting new attacks. After the press conference and Marcus prepares to head for home, Ange hugs him and tell him that she loves him. Although he beats around the bush a bit, Marcus tells Ange he loves her also.

The result of the press conference is that the DHS steps up security and begins arresting teens they suspect of being part of the Xnet movement. Marcus is frisked by the police about four times daily. While he is not arrested, many of the Xnetters are. The police search the cell phones of those arrested, trying to implicate their friends. One night at Ange's house, Marcus realizes that he has to try to put an end to all the arrests. He believes that if he tells the Xnetters to stop jamming, they will do so and will be spared the terrors of jail. Angie does not agree with him. He leaves her house angry. He posts on Xnet explaining to his followers why he has taken a break from jamming and why it would be smart for them to do so also.

As Marcus leaves school his first day back to class, he is run into on the way out by a teen with the name Jeb. Although Jeb appears to be homeless, Marcus notes that his teeth are good and he speaks intelligently. Later when Marcus cleans out his pockets at home he realizes Jeb had slipped a note in. The letter is from Jeb telling Marcus he was imprisoned with Darryl on Treasure Island. Jeb had managed to escape but Darryl is still in custody. Zeb tells Marcus that the DHS is scared of him. As his ordeal comes back to him, Marcus begins to cry. His mother hears him. When she asks what is wrong, he tells her what happened to him after the bridge was exploded.

In Chapter 16, Marcus' mom cries when she hears the story. She tells Marcus that he has to tell Darryl's father what happened. They wait for Marcus' father to come home and tell him the story. After his father goes out for some air and calms down, they head to Darryl's house. After they tell him the story, Darryl's father, Ron, dresses up in his military uniform and the whole group heads to the house of Barbara Stratford, an investigative reporter who works with the Bay Guardian. They tell Barbara their stories. She listens, takes notes and records the sessions. She tells the group she believes them because she has heard similar rumors. She tells them that she must investigate every aspect of their story and that they must be completely honest with her. She also warns that DHS may take out it anger at being exposed on Darryl. Marcus goes with



Barbara when she makes copies of the letter. He tells her that he is M1k3y. She sets up a private interview at her office, ensuring him that his identity will be kept secret.

Marcus is headed to his appointment with Barbara the next day when he is met by Ange. Ange tells him she liked his post about not jamming and understands why he feels the way he does. Marcus catches Ange up on what has taken place since they talked last. She insists on going to the interview with him.

Chapters 15 and 16 Analysis

In this section of the novel, Marcus' plans for his press conference backfire making the Xnetters even more vulnerable to DHS searches, arrests and attacks. In an effort to keep his followers from being arrested, Marcus wants to post a suggestion that they stop jamming on the Xnet but Ange feels he shouldn't do so. As Marcus struggles with the despair he feels about his argument with Ange, he learns that Darryl is still alive. Reading the note from Zeb brings back all of his memories and feelings associated with being held captive. When his mom finds him crying in his room, it is a turning point in the novel. Marcus tells his mother what actually happened to him after the bombing. When Marcus' dad hears the story, he is infuriated about what the DHS has done as well as his own blind trust in the department. It is his idea to take the story to the press.

It is also in this section of the novel that Marcus learns that Darryl is still alive and has not been sent to a jail overseas. Marcus describes what he sees in Darryl's father's house as he and his parents go to tell him that Darryl is not dead. This shows the effects of what the DHS is doing. Darryl's father is a military man who is generally well groomed and neat, but because he is lost in mourning he has let his house get in a despicable state with rotting food, dirty dishes, and garbage laying about. He does not appear to have taken a bath or changed clothes in days. The agonizing irony is that this man is mourning a son who is not even dead. The boy has been kidnapped by the same government that his father enlisted in the armed forces to protect.



Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary

In Chapter 17, Ange and Marcus take turns explaining the Barbara how the Xnet works. Since Barbara has covered the fight for the Constitution in cyberspace since her early days as a report, she understands what the two are talking about and gives them background on the issue. At the conclusion of the interview, Barbara asks the two not to talk to anyone about the story. She also warns Marcus that now that the work on the story is in motion, he will not be able to stop it. Although this scares Marcus, he realizes it must be done. That evening, Ange and Marcus have sex for the first time.

After their experience, Marcus checks his Xnet mail. He has a letter from a girl named Masha who claims to have been arrested by the DHS at the same time Marcus was. The DHS decided she was innocent, though, and hired her to work for them to hunt down terrorists. She soon realizes she is instead spying on kids her own age. She warns Marcus that the DHS is coming close to learning who he is. Masha is getting out because she believed she would be helping to fight terrorists but is not. She is going to people in Los Angeles who can keep her safe, she asks Marcus to come also. She says they can figure out how to win the fight against the DHS together. To prove she is legitimate, Masha sends Marcus a hack he had not considered before. Masha links him to a video feed of the conference room from Treasure Island. Kurt Rooney, the president's chief strategist, talks to the people there via a video screen telling him that he knows when and where the next terrorist attack will take place but won't disclose this information because he hopes to use it to get his man re-elected.

The video scares Marcus but Ange reminds him why he is leading the revolt and that he is making a difference. It is when he mentions that he could be sent to jail that Ange tells him he needs to consider running away with Masha. She will go with him because she will be found guilty in association. Masha tells Marcus he needs to arrange for something big to happen with the Xnetters so she will be sent to attend it. It will be at this point they will make their move. While he is on the BART, Marcus comes up not only with a problem with the potential get away, but also a solution.

In Chapter 18, Marcus remembers the time he spent in the Live Action Role Playing games. One of the games he was involved in was Wretched Daylight, a vampire game. While playing this game, Marcus is approached by a member of the press. He makes up a story about the teens being from the woods of Pennsylvania. He claims they are looking for a descendant for their prince. Unfortunately, the journalist believes him and prints an article about what he tells her. Several more stories are written, but when one paper actually researches the group and discovers the truth, the news media attack the LARPer's representing them as pathological liars. Marcus uses the embarrassment of this incident to try to devise a strategy for the Xnet problem.



He realizes that he has to plan something that will come off quickly enough that the DHS can't do anything to stop it, but also gives enough time for lots of people to get there. He wants too many people there to arrest them all, but also wants the press there to watch firsthand what happens. He also needs something media friendly. He winds up organizing a VampMob. He and Ange pack in preparation for leaving the city.

Chapters 17 and 18 Analysis

It is in this section of the novel that Marcus first seriously considers going underground. He has gotten a message from Masha, a girl working on the inside of DHS, telling him that the DHS is coming close to figuring out who he is. To prove that she is who she says she is, Masha sends him a video of the president's chief strategist talking to the DHS about when and where the next terrorist attack will occur. It is at this point that Marcus realizes that the DHS and the government are really not interested in helping them at all but instead want only to further their own interests.

Doctorow's treatment of Ange and Marcus' first sexual encounter is interesting in its own right. The act is not given the importance of the end all, be all that it is in some teen novels. First, Ange is careful to get them condoms for their act. They are smart teens. They have protected sex. The fact that the box is still sealed shows that although Ange has been the one to initiate most of their sexual encounters, she is not promiscuous. Marcus also admits that although he had often imagined what sex would be like, it was not at all like he had imagined. The two are teary, wobbly, and emotionally sensitive after their experience.



Chapters 19 and 20

Chapters 19 and 20 Summary

In Chapter 19, at 4 a.m. on the day of the VampMob Marcus has 400 responses to his email invitation. The Civic Center is bustling the time of day when the VampMob is planned. Marcus estimates there might be as many as a thousand kids actually there. The gathering has caught the attention of the SFPD and the DHS. Officers are starting to gather. Ange and Marcus start the game. The group is having fun. Marcus hears helicopters approaching. He starts the endgame process telling everyone to pretend they have been gassed when the police tell them to disperse. The gag, however, causes panic. Marcus can't get to Ange, but is apprehended just before the real gas begins to fall. The girl who has caught him is Masha. She is the girl with the pink spiked hair that took pictures of Marcus and his group just before the terrorist attacks. She pushes him to leave the center without Ange. Masha and Marcus change out of their costumes and head for their getaway vehicle. They are stopped by Charles who has video on his phone of them initializing the mob. Masha shows her DHS badge and tells him that she has already apprehended Marcus and Charles is obstructing national security. She takes his camera from him. Marcus tries to run from Masha at this point. He has a sprained ankle and can't run fast enough to get away from her. Masha catches him and the two of them hide in the packed moving van that will take them to Los Angeles. Masha shows him the picture she took of Marcus' group on her phone before the terrorist attacks. This picture is proof that Darryl was still alive at that point.

Marcus waits until Masha goes to sleep and then decides he doesn't want to run away after all. He is in the process of sneaking her phone out of her pocket to leave when she wakes up. Although she tries to stop him, Marcus manages to get away from her with her phone, which is still unlocked and opened to the picture. She had threatened him with deleting it because he was thinking about running away from her. She tries to follow Marcus out of the truck but he accidentally smashes the door down on her finger, then padlocks it shut.

In Chapter 20, as Marcus tries to get away from Masha, he finds himself in the same neighborhood where he and his friends were caught by the DHS the first time. He realizes he has to get the phone picture as well as the video clip to Barbara. When he sees that his story has already broken in the Bay Gaurdian, he realizes it will be dangerous for him to try to contact Barbara. He sits down on the same bench as they had with Darryl after he was injured to read the article. He realizes he needs an intermediary to deliver the information to her. He spots two boys who are obviously jamming and enlists their help. They are honored once they learn he is M1k3y. They let him get on Xnet at their home, let him take a shower and get a nap. Among his emails is a letter from Jeb about the newspaper article. Jeb offers to help Marcus and Marcus accepts the offer. He meets Zeb on a BART car. He tells Jeb he has information he has to get to the reporter. He enlists Zeb to arrange a meeting between Marcus and Van.



Zeb sets up the meeting and the information is passed to Van. When Marcus returns to Zeb's tent, there is a pizza waiting for dinner, fresh out of the trash.

That night, Marcus is woken up by people arresting him. Even as the severe haircut woman talks to him in the van on the way to Treasure Island, Marcus feels calm and happy because it is over. He is left handcuffed on the floor of his cell where he again has to urinate on himself. He is not embarrassed this time. The next morning, however, he is taken to a room where he is waterboarded, a severe form of torture. Marcus is aware of scuffling in the hallway outside as his torture is taking place. When Marcus opens his eyes next, he realizes there are more people in the room than there were at first. These people are wearing armor and masks, telling the DHS workers to stand down, that they are under arrest. One of the men videos the room. Two of the people step forward to unstrap Marcus from the table. They flip up their visors and smile at him. They are members of the California Highway Patrol. Barbara enters the room. She hugs Marcus. It is at this point that Marcus realizes the DHS prison has fallen into the hands of the "enemies."

Chapters 19 and 20 Analysis

The action of the story climaxes in these two chapters. Marcus turns back just a few steps from disappearing into the underground to finish his fight and save his friend, Darryl, from the DHS prison. It is in this section of the novel that Marcus learns that it was he, and not Darryl that Vanessa was in love with. Although Vanessa is clearly repulsed by Marcus' love for Ange, she still agrees to help him out by getting the phone picture and video to Barbara. Van shows that her opinion of Marcus' fight for freedom has still not changed when she asks him if all that he has been through has been worth it.

Marcus is surprisingly relaxed when he is arrested again by the DHS. He believes that there is nothing left that they can do to him that they haven't already done. As Marcus' tormentors are trying a new form of torture on him, waterboarding, troopers from the California Highway Patrol are in the process of taking over Treasure Island. During the waterboarding, Marcus is embarrassed and angry at himself because he can not control his body's reaction to the waterboarding. The scene is topped off as officers in body armor fill the room, swatting the severe haircut lady's phone away from her and arresting her. The story has come full circle with the ones who arrested and tortured Marcus and his friends being arrested themselves.



Chapters 21 and Epilogue

Chapters 21 and Epilogue Summary

In Chapter 21, Barbara explains to Marcus that even though the jail has been raided, he and the other people being held there are still under arrest. She does tell him, though that the governor of California had thrown the DHS out of the state. The two search the jail and finally find Darryl and Ange in a high security area of the base. It takes nearly 30 minutes to find the correct codes to open the doors of Ange and Darryl's cells. When she comes out, Ange tells them she was drugged when she wouldn't quit screaming for a lawyer. Darryl is laying naked in his cell, curled up. Darryl keeps apologizing over and over again. Marcus notes he sounds as if he is completely broken.

At court the next day, the judge grants Marcus bail even though the prosecutor has said that Marcus might possibly run away. Marcus reasons that if he was going to run away, he would have already done so. The judge allows Marcus to go telling him that he is a well-spoken and brave young man. Marcus is met by his parents who take him to see Darryl. He calls Ange on the way to the hospital. At the hospital, Darryl has been sedated. As Marcus lays his head on the pillow next to Darryl, he tells his friend that he made it.

In the Epilogue, Marcus is charged only with stealing Masha's phone. All charges of electronic terrorism and inciting riots were dropped. He is sentenced to serve three months in a day release program at a halfway house for juveniles. Barbara calls Marcus to let him know that they are letting Carrie Johnstone, who he had known only as the severe haircut lady, go free. She is being returned to active duty and sent to Iraq. The tribunals set up to ensure that those who were guilty in the Treasure Island incidents were punished fail. The government suggests that those who feel they still have a need for further justice should file a civil lawsuit. There are more than 20,000 civil lawsuits filed.

Marcus tells Barbara he plans to put together a video about the outcome of his experience. He indicates in this video that it is Carrie Johnstone who holds the encryption keys to unlock the files notating where all of the Treasure Island prisoners might have been sent. He blames the president of the country for not standing up for the people but instead freeing Carrie Johnstone. He challenges the people to vote for freedom in the coming election.

Marcus and Ange work at an office called the Coalition of Voters for a Free America, but referred to as the Xnetters. Darryl and Van are spending a lot of time together even though Van claims their time together is not romantic. Marcus plans on attending Mrs. Galvez's hearing as the teacher's union is fighting to help her get her job back. Before he and Ange go out for burritos, Marcus checks his email one last time and finds he has a message from Zeb. He has met Masha and thinks she is hot. Marcus and Ange



discuss this new relationship briefly, then kiss. Marcus ends the novel by indicating that it was a long time before they actually go for their burrito.

Chapters 21 and Epilogue Analysis

It is in this final chapter and the epilogue that all of the loose ends in this novel are tied up. Marcus and Barbara locate both Ange and Darryl in a special high security section of the jail. Darryl is sent to the hospital where he is sedated because of his emotional state. Marcus' dad tries to assure Marcus that Darryl will be okay.

The judge who arraigns Marcus seems to be highly respectful of what the teen has done. As he sends the boy home with his parents, the judge tells Marcus to stay out of trouble. Others, such as the troopers who guard Darryl's hospital room along with reporters, also recognize Marcus. He seems to have become a celebrity overnight.

One disappointment in the conclusion of the novel is that the lady responsible for most of Marcus' torture is not convicted of any crimes. She will not speak in court. Special closed military tribunals are set up by the government to try those who worked in the Treasure Island prison. In these hearings, Johnstone is cleared of wrongdoing. Marcus and more than 20,000 others file civil suits against the government.

Fittingly, Marcus and Ange now work in an office they have created to encourage people to vote intelligently in the upcoming presidential elections. They seek to continue to show the discrepancies in the current president's handling of the terrorism attacks and the ensuing DHS activities.



Characters

Marcus Yallow, aka W1n5t0n, aka M1k3y

Marcus Yallow is the main character and narrator of the novel. Marcus is a senior at Cesar Chavez High. He is a computer geek and gamer. He is also known by the screen name of W1n5t0n as well as M1k3y to the Xnetters. He enjoys figuring out ways to fool the ever-increasing surveillance gear intended to keep tabs on him and his friends at school. Marcus and three of his friends are "detained" by the Department of Homeland Security when they are found on the streets after a terrorist attack on San Francisco. While he is held nearly a week by the DHS, Marcus is tortured and interrogated because of the technological gadgets that he carries with him. He and two of his friends are released from the DHS while the fourth remains in custody. Marcus is angered by his treatment at the hands of the DHS as well as their refusal to release Darryl from custody. He vows to get even with this government agency.

Marcus tells his friends they don't need to tell their parents what happened to them because he is afraid no one will believe them. Instead, he tries to get even with the DHS on his own. He discovers that agents from the DHS have bugged his laptop so he creates a secure Internet connection that the DHS can't hack using an Xbox and software called Paranoid Xbox. As the connection's popularity increases, the users of the connection dub it the Xnet. Marcus continues to try to fight against the DHS as they portray the Xnet and those who use it as terrorists and Al Qaeda sympathizers.

Even though Marcus is abandoned by his two closest friends and encouraged to stop his fight against the DHS, Marcus will not give up. He finds a new supporter in the form of Ange, a girl he meets at a keysigning party. It is only after Marcus hits a low spot when he and Ange have a fight, then he relives the emotions of his experience in the DHS prison after he learns that Darryl is still alive that he breaks down and tells his parents what has happened to him. His parents have him tell Darryl's father what has happened, then set up an interview with an investigative reporter.

In quick succession at the conclusion of the novel, Marcus is given information that secures his case against the DHS. He manages to get this information to the reporter, but is arrested again by the DHS. Officials at the DHS prison are in the process of torturing Marcus through the use of a simulated execution called waterboarding when troopers from the California Highway Patrol storm the jail, removing the DHS from control.

Ange

Ange is the girl who joins Marcus in his revolt against the DHS. Ange and Marcus meet at the keysigning party for the Xnet. Ange is the first one to volunteer to have her keys



made. She also speaks up in support of Marcus and Jolu. At the party, it is she who goes with Marcus to soak the busted computer parts in seawater.

Ange is a friend of Jolu and learns about Marcus from him. She manipulates Jolu into telling her that Marcus is M1k3y by giving him the information that it was she who stole state achievement tests. Ange attends the same school as Vanessa. The two know each other, but don't like one another.

Ange is Marcus' first real love interest. It is to her that he loses his virginity. As the two become closer, Marcus allows her to use his screen name of M1k3y during the press conference. When Marcus considers going underground, Ange goes with him. Ange is one of the first people whom Marcus wants to find after Treasure Island is taken out of the hands of the DHS officers. The only argument between Ange and Marcus occurs when Marcus decides to encourage his followers to stop jamming because he doesn't want any more of his friends to be arrested. Ange, however, believes these people are taking the risk of being arrested because they believe in the cause. She doesn't want Marcus to encourage them to stop what they are doing.

Woman with the Severe Haircut

The woman with the severe haircut is eventually identified in the novel as Carrie Johnstone. It is with this woman that Marcus has the most interaction during his time at Treasure Island. She is the one who seems to be in charge of orchestrating his torture. She is the one who interrogates Marcus during his first stint at Treasure Island making him feel demoralized and broken. This same lady is in the video that Masha sends Marcus showing that the government knows when and where the next terrorist attack will take place. Carrie is also the one who tells Marcus' guard to start the waterboarding torture. When the troopers from the California Highway Patrol storm the room where Marcus is being held, Carrie is making a call on her cell phone and will not put the phone down when ordered. One of the troopers slaps the phone out of her hand and handcuffs her. Despite her acts, Carrie is cleared of any wrongdoing in a military tribunal. She is returned to active duty and sent to Iraq.

Jose-Luis Torrez

Jolu Torrez is one of the group of four friends who plays Harajuku Fun Madness together. He was one of the ones arrested and detained by the DHS after the terrorist attacks. He works as a programmer at an Internet Service Provider called Pigspleen Net. Because of his experience in writing code, Marcus relies on Jolu to help him with the security requirement of the Xnet. Jolu also suggests the use of public and private keys on the Xnet and helps Marcus arrange a keysigning party. Although he works with Marcus closely for a long time, Jolu eventually tells Marcus he must break his affiliation with the Xnet. Jolu is afraid they will be caught and is tired of living in fear all of the time. He tells Marcus that if he is arrested that he will be given more jail time and a harder sentence simply because he is Mexican.



Darryl Glover

Darryl has been a friend of Marcus since they were babies. Darryl has a crush on Val. Although he didn't want to skip school with Marcus on the day they were arrested, Marcus convinces him to do so. Darryl is stabbed when the four friends are in the confused mob in the BART station. Marcus is trying to get help for Darryl when he flags down the military style jeep carrying the people who arrest them. No one sees or hears from Darryl again until Marcus gets a note from Zeb telling him that Darryl is still alive. After Treasure Island is stormed by the California Highway Patrol, Marcus and Barbara find Darryl in a high security cell. He repeats "I'm sorry" over and over again. Marcus believes that he sounds scared and broken. When Marcus later goes to visit Darryl in the hospital, he has been sedated because he was so upset.

Frederick Benson

Frederick Benson is one of the vice principals at Cesar Chavez High. Marcus describes him as clueless as he tries to get Marcus to admit to jockeying with the school's security systems on the day of the terrorist attacks. Mr. Benson teaches Ms. Galvez's social studies class after she is fired for teaching about the civil rights movement in the 1960s. He chooses to teach about the Department of Homeland Security. Mr. Benson is also the vice-principal who gives Marcus two weeks suspension after Marcus argues too favorably for the rights of the constitution. In the end of the book, Mr. Benson is one of the witnesses set to testify against Ms. Galvez at a hearing to determine if she should get her job back.

Charles Walker

Charles Walker is a boy in Marcus' school with whom Marcus does not get along. Charles has a reputation of telling on other students when he catches them in the act of wrongdoing. Charles is the student who is made angry by Mr. Galvez's lesson on the civil rights movement of the 1960s. He seems happy to learn she has been fired. Later, Charles hangs out on the fringes of the VampMob and takes video footage of Marcus starting the vampire game, then later calling it to an end. Charles believes that he can use this information to incriminate Marcus. Instead, Masha shows Charles up when she flashes her DHS badge at him and tells him it is he who should be in trouble for obstructing national security.

Vanessa Pak

Vanessa is one of the kids in Marcus' Harajuku Fun Madness group. She is among those arrested on the day that Darryl disappears. Although Darryl has a crush on Van, she loves Marcus but keeps this crush a secret. Although Van's parents were refugees from Northern Korea, she doesn't seem to understand why Marcus is fighting against the DHS. She believes it is a waste and refuses to be associated with him. Near the end



of the novel, however, Van helps Marcus by getting the cell phone with the picture of the four friends just before the terrorist attack, as well as the video exposing the United States Government's knowledge of a coming terrorist attack to Barbara, the investigative reporter.

Masha

Masha is girl who contacts Marcus wanting him to set up a big Xnet gathering so she can get free from Treasure Island and go underground. Masha has a picture of Marcus, Van, Jolu and Darryl just before the terrorist attacks. The picture proves that Darryl was not killed in the terrorist attacks. Masha also gives Marcus the video showing the president's chief strategist talking to DHS officers about when and where the next terrorist attack will take place.

Zeb

Zeb is another teenaged boy who is held with Darryl at Treasure Island. He accidentally runs into Marcus after school one day and slips him a note. The note shows tells Marcus that Darryl is still alive and still imprisoned at Treasure Island. Zeb later contacts Marcus after the newspaper article from Barbara breaks. Zeb wants to know if Marcus wants to go underground with him, but Marcus instead asks Zeb to contact Vanessa for him. Zeb does later go underground and meets Masha, whom he believes is hot.

Mrs. Andersen

Mrs. Anderson is the teacher who takes over Mrs. Galvez's social studies class. It is during a discussion about the constitution that Marcus argues his point too strongly and is suspended. When he returns to school, Marcus gets the feeling that Mrs. Anderson is looking for another reason to have him suspended.

Major General Graeme Sutherland, Regional Commander, DHS

Sutherland is the man who came into the truck when Marcus is first arrested by the DHS. When Marcus sees this man's uniform, he realizes he is a prisoner of the United States, and not terrorists. It is this same man who appears on the news claiming that the Dolores Park concert was a terrorism rally.

General Claude Geist

General Claude Geist is the military officer who commanded the joint UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti. DHS workers are caught on video tackling this general as he tries to



pass through a security checkpoint. The video headlines Marcus blog [AbusesOfAuthority](#).

Ron Glover

Ron Glover is Darryl's father. He lives for several months believing that his son is dead when in reality his son is being held at Treasure Island. Ron goes with the Yellows when they give Barbara the information for the newspaper article. Ron is a retired member of the U.S. Navy.

Dr. Eevil

Dr. Eevil is one of the prime maintainers of ParanoidLinux. He is the one who tells Marcus how to put pictures on the net without them being able to be traced back to the people who took them.

Trudy Doo

Trudy Doo is the founder of the Internet Service Provider Pigspleen Net. Her band, the Speedwhores, performs at the illegal concert in Dolores Park. Trudy is described as a privacy freak and San Francisco punk legend.

The Turk

The Turk is a man owns a coffee shop where Marcus often stops to get coffee. He is surprised when the man tells him he will no longer take debit cards because he does not want to aid the government in spying on its people. Marcus believes this man is a hero.

Barbara Stratford

Barbara Stratford is the investigative reporter for the Bay Guardian who Marcus' mother contacts about writing a story about Marcus' experience at Treasure Island. It is Barbara who is allowed to go along with the California Highway Patrol troopers when they storm Treasure Island and remove it from the control of the DHS.



Objects/Places

Cesar Chavez High

Cesar Chavez High is the high school in San Francisco's Mission district where Marcus attends school.

Gait Recognition Cameras

These cameras were installed in Marcus' school about a year prior to the time of the novel. These cameras are intended to keep track of students by recognizing the way each student walks. Marcus and his friends have found numerous ways to outsmart these cameras.

SchoolBooks

These SchoolBooks are laptop computers issued to every student. Their main function seems to be to allow the school's teachers and officials to track the movements and activities of students.

IMParanoid

IMParanoid is an instant messaging system that Marcus uses to communicate with Darryl during class.

Harajuku Fun Madness

Harajuku Fun Madness is an alternate reality game that Marcus believes is the best game ever.

Arphid

An arphid is a radio frequency identification tag that allows librarians to check out a book or determine its location on the shelves by using a scanner. Can also be used to track the location of the students carrying the library books.

The Tenderloin

The Tenderloin is a nasty part of San Francisco. This is where Marcus, Darryl, Van and Jolu are when the Bay Bridge is blown up.



A Big, 16-Wheeler Truck

Marcus and his friends are held in this truck and questioned before they are transferred to the jail on Treasure Island.

Department of Homeland Security

The Department of Homeland Security is the organization by which Marcus and his friends are detained and questioned after the Bay Bridge is blown up by terrorists. Marcus manages to win his battle with the DHS and the prison and torture center at Treasure Island is shut down.

A Phone, Arphid Sniper/Cloner, Wifinder and Memory Keys

These electronic devices are the things the DHS seizes from Marcus when he is arrested. They believe these things make Marcus seem suspicious.

Goat Hill Pizza

Goat Hill Pizza is the restaurant from which the DHS gets Marcus' pizza.

A Stack of Papers with SIGN HERE Post-its Stuck on Them

Marcus signs these papers, that say he was voluntarily held and questioned by the DHS, in order to get released from jail.

The Golden Gate Bridge

The Golden Gate Bridge is the tourist attraction and landmark that Marcus assumes has been destroyed when the severe haircut lady tells him a bridge has been blown up.

The Bay Bridge

The Bay Bridge is the bridge that the terrorists blow up during this novel. Although Marcus had thought they would have blown up the Golden Gate Bridge, he realizes it makes more sense to blow up the Bay Bridge because this would cause the most disruption in San Francisco.



Portrero Hill

Portrero Hill is the area of San Francisco where Marcus lives.

A Bug

Marcus finds this tracking device in his laptop computer when he returns home after being detained by the Department of Homeland Security.

Salmagundi

Salmagundi is the name that Marcus has for his homemade laptop computer.

Xbox Universal

The Xbox Universal is the free gaming machine that Marcus uses to get on the Internet without being detected or spied on.

ParanoidXbox

ParanoidXbox is the program that Marcus uses on his Xbox Universal to talk to other people without having to worry about being spied on.

PATRIOT Act II

This PATRIOT Act II, passed by the government after the attack on San Francisco, allows the government to track the use of the peoples' debit cards.

Xnet

Xnet is the name that is given to the form of Internet communication that Marcus' creates using the Xbox Universal and ParanoidXbox. Jolu calls this the last open communications network in America.

Pigspleen Net

Pigspleen Net is the Internet Service Provider that Trudy Doo created. Jolu has worked for this ISP since he was 12. At the conclusion of the novel, Marcus and Ange also have jobs at Pigspleen.



Open Revolt

Open Revolt is a blog started by Marcus against the government and their methods of scrutiny.

Operation False Positive

Operation False Positive is Marcus' name for his first attack against the DHS. This is when he and others begin jamming identification cards and passes to create mass confusion making even the normal travelers seem as if they were guilty of some abnormality.

Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda is the terrorist group that takes responsibility for blowing up the Bay Bridge.

Sutro Baths

Sutro Baths is the place where Marcus and Jolu throw their web of trust party.

Dolores Park

Dolores Park is the location of the illegal open-air concert.

Speedwhores

Speedwhores is the name of Trudy Doo's band.

AbusesOfAuthority

This is a section of Marcus' website dedicated to videos that show the way the DHS is abusing their power. This section is headlined by the attack on General Claude Geist.

Patcheye Pete's Market

Patcheye Pete's Market is the location on a game on the Xnet in which Marcus' press conference takes place.



Treasure Island

Treasure Island is an abandoned military base where the teens and adults kidnapped by the DHS are being held captive.

Civic Center

The Civic Center is the area of San Francisco where the VampMob takes place.

Asian Massage Parlor

It is near this Asian Massage Parlor that Marcus and his friends are first captured. It is here that Marcus finds himself after he gets away from Masha.

Waterboarding

Waterboarding is a form of extreme torture. It is referred to as a simulated execution. In the last chapter of the novel, Marcus is being waterboarded when the California Highway Patrol takes charge of Treasure Island.



Themes

Right to Privacy

One of the major themes in this novel is the American's right to privacy. Although Marcus lives in a culture that is under much surveillance, he is still unprepared for the invasions of privacy that come to the city of San Francisco after the tourist attacks. In fact, Marcus' desire to keep his personal life private is one of the major areas of contention between him and Carrie Johnstone, the lady with the severe haircut. As she questions him, this lady reasons that Marcus would not be so concerned about keeping his information secret if he didn't have something to hide. Marcus believes he should not have to prove his innocence by showing that he has nothing to hide. Although he doesn't have anything illegal in his phone or any of his devices, he has information about himself and his friends that he doesn't want shared with the whole world.

The idea of privacy surfaces again when the police begin tracking the people's subway use, driving routes and debit card use in order to determine which people might be committing crimes. Along with criminals, the police also identify and uncover people who are doing things that are immoral, but not necessarily illegal. Marcus is pulled aside for questioning because the police say that his subway riding patterns are abnormal. Marcus and his father disagree about whether or not the government should be allowed to use this data to incriminate people. Although Marcus' father argues that he is willing to give up his privacy to ensure that his country and city is safe from terrorists, he is enraged when he first learns that there are scanners set up to track FasTrak cards even in places where there are no toll bridges.

Ability of the People to Stand up to the Government

Another major theme in this novel is the idea that the American people not only have the right, but also the responsibility to stand up against their government if their government isn't acting in the best interests of the people. Marcus reads a portion of the Declaration of Independence that states that the people have the right "alter or abolish" the government if it fails to act as it should. The novel uncovers the reality that not only are many people not aware that they have a right to abolish the government if it doesn't work for them but that they also don't feel they should have any say against the government at all. Many times Marcus is told that he can't wage war against the government, or that he can't win against the government. Marcus, however, sticks with his resolve and manages to make a statement that is heard and incites a change.

It is interesting that one of the other people in this novel that takes a stand against the American government is a Turkish refugee. Although the man owns a business and stands the risk of losing business, he refuses to accept debit cards once the PATRIOT II Act is passed to allow the government to track the people through their debit card usage. When Marcus questions him about his reasoning, the man tells Marcus that he



has personally seen what can happen when the government spies on its people. He moved to America 20 years ago to have his freedom from a spying government. He tells Marcus that he will not be responsible for helping the government spy on the people. Compare his reaction with Vanessa, however, whose parents are refugees from Korea. Although her family has also been under persecution by the government, Vanessa does not approve of Marcus trying to fight against the government. In fact, she seems to believe that he is foolish for trying to stand up for what he believes in.

Teen Love

Teen love is a theme that is important in this novel. This theme seems to be included in the novel to offset Marcus' intelligence in other areas. Although he is a whiz when it comes to computers, Marcus is still just a gawky teenaged boy when it comes to love. Like other teen boys, Marcus admits that he thinks about sex and wonders what it will be like his first time. He's kissed some girls, but never really had an experience like he has with Ange. Ange encourages Marcus to explore her body. He even goes so far as to describe Ange as being the "sexual" one in their relationship. Marcus and Ange also take the time to develop a relationship before they have sex. They also don't allow their sexual relationship to take precedence over their responsibilities. Even though they are in the midst of a sexual encounter, they stop to take care of the press conference that they have set up. Note that Ange has prepared for them to have safe sex. She has already purchased condoms, helping to ensure that they won't get pregnant. Note also that the box is still sealed. Even though Ange seems to have a healthy sexual appetite, this seems to be a signal that this is her first time also. Marcus indicates that having sex for the first time wasn't much like what he expected, not a spectacular experience but not necessarily a bad experience either.

Style

Point of View

This story is told from the first-person point of view of Marcus, the main character and narrator of the novel. Marcus tells his story from his own point of view with no ability to look into the thoughts or emotions of those around him. The only way that Marcus, and in that same regard, the reader knows what is going on in the other characters' minds is through dialogue. This story is most effective told in the first person because it focuses the attention on Marcus and his experiences. Use of any other point of view would take the focus away from Marcus and would dilute his story.

Nearly 75 percent of the story is told through exposition as Marcus explains the various computer technology and terminology. These expository passages are important as they explain to the reader exactly what is going on and how these different bits of computer technology work. If this story had been told in any other fashion, it would have been difficult for the reader to keep track of what Marcus was doing and how his work was slipping past the radar of the government.

Setting

This novel is set in San Francisco, California. The time period is some time after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001. This is known because there are several references to the September 11 attacks. However, there is no specific year noted. It is also understood that several months, probably about four months, has passed between the time of the attacks and the time that Marcus is arrested the second time by the DHS. This can be determined because Marcus makes the comment that Zeb had been imprisoned in Treasure Island for three months and had managed to get out. It can be assumed that about a month or more passes between the time that Marcus first meets Zeb and Treasure Island is invaded.

There are a variety of settings notated in this novel, all within the city of San Francisco. Settings include the streets of the city. One of these settings on the streets of the city is outside the Asian Massage Parlor in the section of the city referred to as the Tenderloin. It is this spot where Marcus and his friends are first arrested by the DHS just after the terrorist attacks. It is also to this spot that Marcus returns when he is running away from Masha. Other settings of significance include Marcus' bedroom; Treasure Island; the halls, classrooms, and principal's office at Chavez High; and Ange's bedroom.

Language and Meaning

This book is written in a clear style so that although it is very deeply rooted in technology terms, the reader does not need to know a lot about technology in order to be able to understand the book. Marcus is very adept not only in the area of using



technology, but also explaining how it works. There are many places in the book where Marcus explains how the technology that he uses to outwit the DHS works. Even though Marcus does use techy terms and computer terms, he does not leave his readers in the dark but explains each term that he uses.

The book is also written in the words of a very intelligent seventeen year old. He uses the slang terms of a teen, especially when talking to his friends. Marcus cusses, occasionally, but also has a vocabulary capable of expressing himself in words other than curse words. He holds his own intelligently against both his principal as well as his interrogators with the DHS. Since Marcus is so intelligent and has such a grasp on the English language and its use, writer Cory Doctorow may use the information about Marcus and Ange's sexual experience to keep the reader in touch with the idea that Marcus is a teenager and not an adult.

Structure

This book is divided into 21 chapters plus an epilogue. The chapters are notated simply with a chapter number. These chapters average about 15 pages each. The shortest is the epilogue at 10 pages. Chapter 20 is the longest chapter with 26 pages.

The novel has a linear structure for the most part. The action of the novel starts at the beginning of Marcus' experience with the DHS and works through to the resolution of his experience. There is only one flashback included in the novel. This comes when Marcus remembers his experience with the Live Action Role Playing games when he made up a story about why the teens were acting as they were in the hotel. A representative from the press takes Marcus seriously and her story leads to the end of these games. Marcus relates this story because he does not want to make the same mistake twice.

The story has one main plot - the idea of Marcus outsmarting the DHS and shutting down their operations at Treasure Island. There are also several subplots that are working behind this main plot. One of these subplots is the relationship between Marcus and Ange. This is Marcus' first real "love" relationship. It is with Ange that he also has his first sexual encounter. Hence it is also a coming of age story for Marcus in this respect. Another plot working in the novel addresses how far the government should be allowed to go in its surveillance of its citizens. This is demonstrated in the surveillance at Marcus's school before the terrorist attacks as well as the stepped up surveillance in the city in general after the terrorist attacks. Where does safety end and privacy begin? Another plot that comes into play is the struggle between the teens and young adults and the older adults, those over 25, to come to terms with what is happening in their city. While the adults are mostly willing to let the government do what they will in the name of public safety, the more techy young people are not willing to sacrifice their privacy when these sacrifices do not seem to be making the city any safer, only incriminating the innocent.



Quotes

"We also had to evade physical surveillance, of course, but that gets easier every time they add a new layer of physical snooper - all the bells and whistles lull our beloved faculty into a totally false sense of security" (Chapter 1, p. 21).

"I barely had time to register them before those rifles were pointed at me. I'd never looked down the barrel of a gun before, but everything you've heard about the experience is true" (Chapter 3, p. 39).

"The man who came in was wearing a military uniform. A U.S. military uniform. He saluted the people in the truck and they saluted him back and that's when I knew that I wasn't a prisoner of some terrorists - I was a prisoner of the United States of America" (Chapter 3, p. 47).

"We found a number of suspicious devices on your person. We found you and your confederates near the site of the worst terrorist attack this country has ever seen. Put those two facts together and things don't look very good for you, Marcus" (Chapter 3, p. 48).

"It's not about doing something shameful, it's about doing something private. It's about your life belonging to you" (Chapter 4, p. 53).

"I want us to fight back,' I said. 'I want to stay free so that I can do that. If we go out there and blab, they'll just say that we're kids, making it up. We don't even know where we were held! No one will believe us. Then, one day, they'll come for us" (Chapter 5, p. 73).

"Never underestimate the determination of a kid who is time-rich and cash-poor" (Chapter 5, p. 86).

"The best part of all this is how it made me feel: in control. My technology was working for me, serving me, protecting me. It wasn't spying on me. This is why I loved technology: if you used it right, it could give you power and privacy" (Chapter 5, p. 88).

"I say no. I say my shop will not help them spy on my customers" (Chapter 6, p. 90).

"These guys had no business spying on me — Christ, the BART had no business helping them spy on me. Where the hell did my subway pass get off on finking me out for having a 'nonstandard ride pattern?'" (Chapter 7, p. 106).

"The law didn't care if you were actually doing anything bad; they were willing to put you under a microscope just for being statistically abnormal" (Chapter 7, p. 113).

"Computers can control you or they can lighten your work — if you want to be in charge of your machines, you have to learn to write code" (Chapter 7, p. 120).



"No one had given it much thought. And now that people were paying attention, we were all starting to notice little things, like the fact that the FasTrak doesn't have an off switch" (Chapter 8, p. 122).

"My vow. Not to get Darryl free, but to bring down the entire DHS" (Chapter 9, p. 127).

"God, what are we doing to this country, Marcus? Your generation deserves to inherit something better than this" (Chapter 9, p. 134).

"I felt like I was going to throw up. Those four people - kids I had never met - they nearly went away forever because of something I'd started. Because of something I told them to do. I was no better than a terrorist" (Chapter 9, p. 141).

"I'm saying I'm out. I'm going to be one of those people who acts like it's all okay, like it'll all go back to normal some day. I'm going to use the Internet like I always did, and only use the Xnet to play games" (Chapter 10, p. 159).

"You can't declare war on the government of the USA. It's not a fight you're going to win" (Chapter 10, p. 159).

"Because it seems to me that the founders of this country said that governments should only last for so long as we believe that they're working for us, and if we stop believing in them, we should overthrow them" (Chapter 12, p. 181).

"You have to face the fact that there are people who are hurting, who aren't going to want to argue the finer points of Constitutional law when their lives are at stake" (Chapter 14, p. 217).

"It didn't really feel like M1k3y and me were the same person anymore anyway. M1k3y was the kind of kid who talked to international journalists and inspired a movement. Marcus got suspended from school and fought with his dad and wondered if he was good enough for his kick-ass girlfriend" (Chapter 15, p. 238).

"When — not if, but when — California gets attacked again, these brats will be as much to blame as the House of Sand" (Chapter 15, p. 241).

"I'd rather have a nice clean tale about the secret prison on our doorstep, without having to argue about whether the prisoners there are the sort of people likely to walk out the doors and establish an underground movement bent on destabilizing the federal government" (Chapter 16, p. 266).

"It's so cool to watch people figure out how the technology around them can be used to make their lives better" (Chapter 17, p. 267).



"Sometime in the near future, I would stop being Marcus — I would be a public figure. I'd be the guy who blew the whistle on the DHS. I'd be a dead man walking" (Chapter 17, p. 270).

"I had to show her the video, the one that Masha had sent me — the one where the President's Chief of Staff gloated at the attacks on San Francisco and admitted that he knew when and where the next attacks would happen and that he wouldn't stop them because they'd help his man get re-elected" (Chapter 20, p. 323).

"You can't get anything done by doing nothing" (Chapter 20, p. 333).

"I'd had the worst that they could throw at me, and I'd survived it, and I'd beaten them, beaten them for months, showed them up as clumps and despots. I'd won" (Chapter 20, p. 343).

"Just because the DHS is out, it doesn't mean that you just get to walk out of here. What's happened here is that we're getting rid of the bizarro-world version of the justice system they'd instituted and replacing it with the old system" (Chapter 21, p. 348).

"The state Attorney General has issued warrants for any law-enforcement officers involved in 'stress interrogations' and secret imprisonments. They'll go to jail, Marcus, and its because of what you did" (Chapter 21, p. 349).

"The judge was pretty good about it, but when I realized that some of these people had been locked up since the bridge blew, taken for dead by their families, without trial, subjected to interrogation, isolation, torture — I wanted to just break the chains myself and set everyone free" (Chapter 21, p. 353).

"The funding was kicked off by some tech millionaires who couldn't believe that a bunch of hacker kids had kicked the DHS's ass" (Epilogue, p. 363).



Topics for Discussion

Consider all of the surveillance devices used in Marcus' school. Do you think these devices were necessary? Consider how easily Marcus was able to overcome all of these devices. Was something different needed?

Do you believe there are instances where not only innocent, but also unlikely suspects, such as Marcus and his friends are held against their will in real life? How realistic do you believe Marcus' experience with the Department of Homeland Security might have been?

Consider Marcus' reasoning in Chapter 5 that he and his friends should not tell their parents what happened to them. Do you believe this was the best line of action at this point? Why or why not?

Do you agree with Marcus' father when he argues in Chapter 7 that using data from the subway passes helps the police find the needle in the haystack or with Marcus that the police are just creating a useless haystack?

Consider the punishment that Carrie Johnstone gets for her crimes in the Treasure Island prison. Do you think it was right for her to get away with so little punishment? Why or why not?

Consider Marcus' punishment for his crimes. Do you think it was right for him to have been convicted of theft, but none of the other charges? Why or why not?

What is the role of the press in this novel? Are they represented in a good light? A bad light? Explain your answer.

Do some research on the American judicial system. Find reasons why the things that the DHS was doing to people after the San Francisco bombing were illegal. How was the treatment of the detainees, including Marcus and his friends, against the law? Do you believe any entity should have the ability to act this way in the name of safety? Why or why not?

Consider the reaction of both the Turk in the coffee shop as well as Vanessa to the invasions of privacy and free speech as portrayed in the book. How does each react? In what ways are their reactions similar? How are they different? Keep in mind that both the Turk, as well as Vanessa's family, fled from their countries to avoid what is now happening in the United States.

Do you believe that the government is tracking citizens using technology as they did in this novel? What are your feelings about the idea that the government might be tracking your spending habits based on your debit card usage or your day to day activities using toll passes such as was done in this novel? Do you believe the government would actually do this? Why or why not?