

# **Lock In Study Guide**

**Lock In by John Scalzi**

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# Plot Summary

"Lock In" by John Scalzi is a story of murder and politics in a futuristic world where a virus has dramatically changed society. The virus, Haden's syndrome, starts out like the flu but over time can leave victims' bodies paralyzed with full functioning minds. These people are dependent on electrical transports and other means of being out in the world. The government has been funding research and aid for these victims, but due to the Abrams-Kettering bill, that will soon change leaving millions of people forced to survive on their own. In the meantime, new FBI agent and fellow Haden Chris Shane and his partner Leslie Vann must solve an intricate murder causing them to take a further look at the web of politics and corporate greed.

Chris Shane's first assignment with the FBI comes on the first day of protesting the Abrams-Kettering bill, aimed at stopping all aid to Haden's syndrome victims and cure research funding. Someone has thrown a love seat out of a seventh story room, but once inside the room they find that a man has been murdered. After a quick argument with the local police, Vann is able to ensure that the case is under FBI jurisdiction as the suspect is a known Integrator, someone who is able to take in the mind of a "locked in" Haden so that the Haden may have use of their body. The suspect, Nicholas Bell, was subdued with a stun gun and arrested prior to Chris and Vann's arrival, but they are able to interrogate him. As Vann questions Nicholas, he has already called his attorney, Samuel Schwartz, to the scene. Upon arrival, Schwarz demands Nicholas' immediate release as he threatens to sue the police department for unlawful detainment.

Chris and Vann investigate the crime scene at FBI headquarters using Chris' digital maps and images of the room along with material from the police department. Among the things they find are a headset that would allow a normal person to use an Integrator. They also find the murder weapon, a large glass shard covered in blood. They also notice from videotape of Nicholas' arrest that he has no blood on his hands and says that he does not know if he did the crime or not. This leads Chris and Vann to question whether or not this is an open and shut case. Shortly afterwards, Chris takes a break from work to search for an apartment closer to the office. After being shown several, he chooses a townhouse filled with other professional Hadens and he is welcomed with open arms by the group.

At a dinner party thrown at the Shane house, Chris runs into Nicholas Bell again, as he is working as an Integrator for Lucas Hubbard. During the dinner, many heated conversations break out about the effects from the Abrams-Kettering Bill. In a private phone call to Vann to update her, Chris finds out that the victim comes from a Navajo reservation. Also, during the dinner, one of the guest's medical companies is destroyed in an explosion supposedly set by a Haden. At the scene of the explosion, Chris and Vann make the discovery that an Integrator caused the explosion using a Haden chemist's security card to gain entry to the building. Upon arriving at the Haden's house, they find that he has been murdered along with a confession tape with both the Integrator and the Haden saying that they wanted to destroy the possible cure for Haden's syndrome.

Chris and Vann's attention gets turned back to the murder at the Watergate Hotel when the victim is identified as John Sani, a Native American who left the Navajo Nation. During the autopsy it is revealed that John has a neural network that makes him capable of being an Integrator. Chris is able to integrate into a personal transport in the Arizona FBI office to meet with Klah Redhouse, who takes him to the Navajo Nation to talk to John's family. While there, Chris learns that at one time John did have Haden's syndrome and that he applied to Window Rock Computational Facility to be a janitor but was mysteriously offered a job as a personal assistant instead. Upon further investigation, Chris finds out that he has been living in California under the name Ollie Green and has been regularly sending money back to his family via money orders. The secret job he had been doing involved John becoming an Integrator and though his investigation Chris finds that John had become unhappy with his employers. Upon trying to investigate John's apartment he is attacked by someone in a black personal transport. Chris discovers that the assailant had been looking for an envelope containing a data card. The data card is a video of John talking about his job and the fear he is losing his ability to remember things while integrated.

A short time later, Vann, Chris, and two of his roommates are set to meet with Brenda Rees, the Integrator Samuel Schwartz has been using. Upon her arrival at a local cafe, Brenda shoots Vann in the shoulder and runs off. Chris chases her to the middle of a street where she detonates a grenade. As she lay dying, she tells Chris that Samuel was not at the Shane mansion party during the entire time. Chris returns to the cafe where Vann warns him that there may be another shooter. Chris immediately returns home, just in time to find someone attempting to kill his physical body. Chris' father manages to shoot and kill the assailant, who is revealed to be Bruce Skow, another Navajo who had accepted a mysterious job offer.

After learning that the Agora is going to be bought by Accelerant Investments, Chris comes up with a plan, as he has figured out that it has been Lucas Hubbard behind all of the crimes. Chris has a meeting with Haden activist Cassandra Bell before her brother Nicholas attempts to kill her. When Nicholas is taken in for questioning, he continues to claim that he wanted to show how evil Cassandra is and how he is against Haden's. During the discussion, the knowledge that Nicholas is really being controlled by Lucas Hubbard is revealed. Nicholas tries to maintain that he really is Nicholas Bell, but after discussing the fact that Lucas's attorney Samuel Schwartz had already given himself up as an accomplice and has told the FBI everything about Lucas' plans to monopolize all markets related to the Haden industry, Lucas finally admits that it is he who has been behind everything all along. He goes on to explain that John Sani had figured out what was going on and was determined to stop him but wound up killing himself before Samuel could take over John's body. With this information, Lucas is sent back to his own body to be arrested for his crimes.

# Prologue - Chapter 5

## Summary

In the Prologue, the disease Haden syndrome is described as starting out with flu like symptoms but eventually progressing until the body is completely paralyzed and the mind is "locked in." The disease is usually fatal, but for those who survive, some are "locked in" to their bodies, having full mental capabilities. Others who survive have the ability to allow the ones who are "locked in" to enter their body and use it as their own and are called Integrators. As time goes by, the government sets up funding for cure research as well as the development of the Agora, the online reality space for use by all Hadens, personal transports for Hadens to move around with, and funding to help these people live. Eventually, the Abrams-Kettering bill is signed, cutting funding and assistance to the Haden community.

In Chapter 1, Chris Shane is just beginning his job as an FBI agent on the first day of the Hadens protest of the Abrams-Kettering Bill. He meets Leslie Vann, his partner, at the Watergate Hotel as she is looking at a car that has been smashed by a love seat that has been thrown from a seventh story window. When they go upstairs to look at the room, Vann gets into a mild argument with Detective Trinh, a local police officer, but Vann informs her that the case is under FBI jurisdiction since the suspect, Nicholas Bell is an Integrator. Nicholas has already been detained with the use of a stun gun and is waiting at the police station. Detective Chris makes maps and images of the room to be used in their investigation later. Afterwards, Vann and Chris get a moment to talk and Chris wants to make sure his previous fame obtained as a youth will have no bearing on his job, which Vann respects.

In Chapter 2, Vann gets a chance to talk to Nicholas Bell although he has been silent with everyone else. While Vann is in the interrogation room Chris gets to talk to police chief George Davidson, who accidentally makes a rude comment about Chris and his personal transport. Chris is quick to respond but the situation boils over as George apologizes then informs Chris that Vann was an Integrator many years before, but he does not say what made her quit. Chris remembers the only time he has used an Integrator.

As Vann sits in the interrogation room, she puts Nicholas at ease talking about her own experiences as an Integrator and how she always wanted cheeseburgers afterwards. Nicholas seems more relaxed until Vann brings up the crime and why he was at the Watergate Hotel. She mentions that he may have needed the money for his sister, Cassandra, who is locked in, but he assures Vann that as the leader of the Haden protests, Cassandra is fine on her own. He also informs Vann that he has used his mental software to call his lawyer as soon as he was arrested before ending the conversation altogether.

In Chapter 3, Nicholas' lawyer, Samuel Schwartz, demands Nicholas' release on the basis that he was unlawfully arrested and has been abused by the stun gun. Chris, Vann, George, and Schwartz argue the validity of letting Nicholas out, but Schwartz informs them that they will be sued if they do not let Nicholas go, as his rights have been abused. Vann wants to know if Nicholas was integrated with a Haden at the time, but Schwartz will not allow the question stating it violates the client/Integrator privacy privilege. Vann inquires why a high powered lawyer like Schwartz is there, but Schwartz tells her he and Nicholas they work together on other things. Later at lunch, as Vann and Chris talk about this and Chris' role as Vann's partner, they deliberate on various factors of the case that they know so far. Chris gets a call from his private nurse about some things that are going on with his body. Afterwards, Vann decides it is time to visit the crime scene.

In Chapter 4, instead of going to the Watergate Hotel, Vann and Chris go back to the FBI offices where Chris uploads the images and maps he took in the room. They are able to use these to investigate the room and make the discoveries of the headset and the glass shard. Vann begins to wonder if this is such an open and shut case after all because of what Nicholas said as he was detained and the fact that there is no blood on his hands, meaning he could not have used the glass shard as a weapon. Before they continue any further, Chris says that he needs to take the rest of the afternoon off to go apartment shopping.

The local realtor is happy to show Chris some of her apartment listings in Chapter 5. The first one she shows him, Chris does not like but the realtor explains that it will help him appreciate the other apartments more. The realtor explains that due to the Abrams-Kettering bill, some Hadens will not be able to afford good housing, which slightly saddens Chris. After an afternoon of searching, they finally stop at a townhouse. One of the residents, Tony, meets Chris and they both decide that this will become Chris' new home

## **Analysis**

The prologue of the novel establishes some of the key items pertaining to the novel, including an explanation of the underlying theme of sickness in the form of Hayden's syndrome and how it affects society. Although this section is short, it is extremely important as it also provides definitions for many of the items that will be used throughout the novel. Key items that are used by people who are locked in, such as "personal transports" and "Integrators" are also introduced and defined, as the book begins identifying one of the dilemmas that will be developed in conjunction with the main plot of the novel as the Abrams-Kettering bill will be considered a large factor in the story's motivation. It is interesting to note that this prologue is written as an article on a website, lending a more personal element to the prologue.

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the protagonist, Agent Chris Shane as he begins his new job with the FBI. It should be noted that he is beginning his new position but this beginning is under a cloud of division within the Hayden community. The underlying

conflict of politics is started here as the Haden community is outraged at the onset of the Abrams-Kettering bill, which will cut off funding for most Hayden related items that have previously been funded by the government. There is no personal conflict found in Shane as there is a subtle indication that he is also a member of the Hayden community but has chose to not protest like many others in his condition.

Since the rest of the first day does not progress the story line, the narrative jumps to the second day which introduces Chris to his new partner, Leslie Vann at the crime scene in the Watergate Hotel. This also is the point in which the theme of crime is initiated. There is a slight apprehension on Chris' part as he is unsure what his new partner thinks of him. There is a slight allusion to the fact that he is a Haden, but there is also another hint that Chris is more important than just being an ordinary Haden. Vann disregards both items and the dialogue delves right into the main action of the scene as she is standing by the car that has been assigned to the pair. The car has been smashed by a love seat that has been recently thrown out of a room on one of the upper floors of the hotel. The situation is made further complex by the introduction of the term "Integrator" as the alleged criminal in this situation, which shifts the crime scene from local police control to FBI control.

The "Integrator" issue is especially important as Vann and Chris go to the room that the love seat came out of. It is important to note that local law enforcement is already at the scene. This introduces Detective Trinh, a minor character and a detective with the Washington D.C. police department. The significant part of Trinh's character is that she provides a small amount of conflict for Vann as they both try to assert their dominance over the situation. In this instance, Vann wins the argument as the conversation is slightly sarcastic but it also gets to the point that the crime is considered a federal offense since the criminal in question is an Integrator, which is defined in the Prologue as someone who has recovered from Haden Syndrome and has the ability to become a living transport for patients.

The suspect in question is Nicholas Bell, another key character as the novel progresses. An intriguing factor in his arrest is the fact that a stun gun was used on him almost immediately before being hauled away. The true crime scene is also revealed as a murder as an unidentified body is surrounded by blood in the hotel room. The conflict between Trinh and Vann continues with them arguing about the appropriate actions that need to be taken and the crime scene itself. The conversation mainly excludes Chris, until Vann orders him to turn on the mapping capability of his robotic body. Until this point, there has been little in the way of description of what Chris can do with his Personal Transport device. This section ends with Chris and Vann leaving the area for Trinh to continue her initial investigation, and there is a mutual sense of annoyance between Vann and Trinh.

The next section depicts the building partnership between Chris and Vann. This is the first time that the pair have gotten to speak to one another outside of the investigation. There is only a brief explanation as to what has happened to Vann's previous partner. This short venture outside the confines of the investigation is important as there is a subtle reference during a comical moment that suggests that Vann has had experience



with the Haden community before, but it is quickly blown off as just part of her job in the Haden related crimes unit of the FBI. This also allows the reader a slight glimpse into the fact that Chris is actually well known, but there is nothing other than a mention of his family connections to suggest what the reasoning may be. This is an important part of Chris' character as he wishes to abstain from using his fame and to be known only as a fellow FBI agent. Within this conversation is a brief description of the personal transport he uses and the knowledge that there is a great difference in the personal transports available, depending on price. As a whole, the dialogue at the end of this first chapter represents the solidification of the partnership between Chris and Vann; she is impressed by his abilities and his attitude.

Chapter 2 immediately opens up in a dialogue between local police chief George Davidson and Vann as they have come to interrogate Nicholas Bell. It begins with George using a derogatory term for a Haden using a personal transport, which highlights the theme of differences as well as society as George is unaware that the term is not one used by Hadens. George is quick to acknowledge Chris' fame once he hears the name, but the dialogue progress quickly as Vann is more interested in getting down to business. There is a remarkable difference in the rapport between George and Vann and the one seen between Vann and Trinh as George is more easy going with Vann and willing to cooperate with her. A major point in the crime theme comes from Nicholas not exercising his rights and maintaining his silence, but Vann would still like to interview him, hopeful that she can somehow get him to talk.

In the meantime, there is an opportunity for George and Chris to complete a conversation in which some of Vann's back story comes into play. Chris is informed that Vann was once an Integrator, but the details of her time as an Integrator as well as why she no longer is one are unknown, adding intrigue into Vann's character. The information also helps to understand why Vann is in the Haden Crime division of the FBI. Within this dialogue there are also references to Chris' own past with using an Integrator, which lends a reason as to why he prefers personal transports. Also, there is a more understandable definition of Haden's syndrome as George talks about family members who have been victims of the disease.

The narrative shifts to focus on Vann's discussion with Nicholas Bell in the interrogation room. The dialogue starts as a diversion as Vann talks about her own experiences of being an Integrator and always wanting cheeseburgers after an assignment. This is a ploy to make Nicholas relax enough around her to provide pertinent information about the murder in the hotel room. Nicholas seems to appreciate Vann's discussion, and he initially seems willing to talk. Upon the mention of the murder, however, Nicholas' demeanor changes and has a more dismissive attitude towards Vann. Vann is only trying to understand the situation at hand, especially since Nicholas was stunned without warning, but he has gone quiet again and refuses to cooperate. He is sarcastic in his reply to her. Vann tries to move the conversation along in a way to prompt Nicholas to talk especially when asked about finding other work as an Integrator being the probable cause of his being at the crime scene. The rational she uses is that the Abrams-Kettering bill will terminate the government contracts that most Integrators use as their main financial source. This does not deter Nicholas from remaining aloof. He is



also offended at the mention of his sister, Cassandra, who is a "locked in" Haden who will be affected by the Abrams-Kettering bill. This bill is one of the key components of the politics theme as the bill takes away government funding for Hadens and research into the disease and propels these people into an aspect of life where they will be forced to provide for themselves.

There is a short look into Cassandra's character which may prove useful as the novel progresses in the fact that she is not considered a truly "helpless" Haden. Nicholas' tone is oddly sarcastic as at this point he prefers to use his right to a lawyer. This comes as a surprise to Vann, but technology is once again an important factor as Nicholas reveals that he is able to use the software implanted in his head to call his lawyer unbeknownst to the police. This also adds to the criminal investigation theme of the novel, as Nicholas has invoked his legal rights. Nicholas' is smug as he informs Vann that the situation is about to become very complicated because he was detained without being properly read his rights, but he does not elaborate on how this will complicate things. The chapter closes with a small amount of frustration on Vann's part as Nicholas casually dismisses her because his lawyer has arrived.

Chapter 3 shows gives the introduction of Samuel Schwartz, Nicholas' attorney, as he is being briefed on the situation at hand. This brings about a conversation between Schwartz about the validity of Nicholas' arrest and the purpose of being in the hotel room at the time of the murder. There is speculation that Nicholas was actually integrated by a Haden at the time of the murder, but this is unsupported as Schwartz and Nicholas refuse to divulge this information, causing the conversation to stall. There is a question of legality due to Integrator/client privilege, which causes friction within the conversation. There is clearly no progress made, since Schwartz contends that everything Nicholas has done falls under client protection privileges. Schwartz is at this point very forceful as he demands Nicholas' release due to the police's lack of enough evidence to detain him as well as the unlawful stun gun use. There is a slight deviation as Vann questions how Nicholas is able to retain Schwartz as his counsel since Schwartz is a high profile lawyer. Schwartz receives a transmission about one of the programs that he is in charge of which Nicholas also spends time with, therefore providing the answer to Vann's inquiry. This brief detour does not deter Schwartz from demanding that Nicholas be released immediately or the police department will be sued. The segment ends with this threat but the resolution of this is unseen.

The next segment takes place in a Mexican restaurant while Vann is eating lunch. This allows Vann and Chris the opportunity to go over what they know about the case so far and determine how they should proceed now that the case will be solely in FBI jurisdiction. They also continue to speculate the relationship between Schwartz and Nicholas and the validity of it. Chris makes a useful suggestion that they could actually be working together and there is an addition of how people in upper class society prefer to do favors for others than deal in money. This establishes the ability for Schwartz and Nicholas to work together. Chris also provides a new place as Accelerant, the company that Schwartz works for. With this, there is a sudden addition of another name in this mix, Lucas Hubbard and a short description of him being the richest Haden on the planet is given. This opens up the notion that there may be a connection between

Nicholas and Hubbard, as Hubbard predominantly uses Integrators rather than personal transports. The Abrams-Kettering bill is mentioned once again as a possible motive for Nicholas to work for Hubbard since Nicholas has to find somewhere to work.

Their focus is diverted to give the reader a glimpse into some of the more personal aspects of being a Haden. Chris gets a call from his private nurse and details some of the things that are going on with his physical body. This highlights some of the negative effects of Haden's syndrome and the way it damages the body as his nurse details what his body is doing. This is a small detour from the main action but it helps to propel the illness aspect of the novel. The focus proceeds to shift to display another part of Vann and Chris' partnership as they critique Chris' first day on the job and Vann gives him a few pointers on how he should proceed. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger with a decision to re-investigate the crime scene in an attempt to gather more clues.

Chris and Vann have a unique way of investigating the crime scene without going to the Watergate Hotel in Chapter 4. They are able to investigate the crime scene using software at the FBI office along with scans made by the local police and Chris' video map of the room. This continues to amplify the theme of technology as this allows them to search the room for clues without actually doing any damage to the crime scene. The search of the room is able to take place and is straightforward in the beginning, with basic techniques used in searches. One of the items found is a scanner, it is helpful in establishing the fact that the victim's motive for being in the room could suggest a possible hiring of Nicholas as an Integrator. The author explains the use of a scanner as something a normal person would use to integrate with an Integrator. A major factor about this is that there are no serial numbers on it, which would have helped to identify the owner. At this point, the victim is still unidentified, there has not been much focus on actually learning the identity of this individual except for the fact that the fingerprints have not been identified on any database.

One of the most significant pieces of evidence is a glass shard under the bed. It is covered in blood, presumably from the victim. At this point there is an epiphany made by Vann as she questions why Nicholas would have no blood on his hands if he used this weapon to kill the victim. This adds confusion to the investigation as there is speculation that the victim committed suicide in front of Nicholas. The lack of blood also on the love seat that was introduced in Chapter 1 also promotes the notion that there are hidden possibilities as to what went on in the room prior to it being thrown out the window. There is no motive given but Vann points out in the video footage of Nicholas' arrest that Nicholas says he does not actually know if he killed the victim. This wording is important as it establishes the fact that Nicholas had no knowledge of his actions prior to his arrest. This brings about another piece of information regarding the illness in that Integrators are fully aware and conscious when a Haden takes over their body with the ability to take back their body if the Haden controlling it is about to do something dangerous. At this time all of the evidence suggests that there is more to this investigation than just a clear case of murder. This momentarily shifts the investigation to stop and question whether or not Nicholas was integrated with someone and the identification of the possible client. More dialogue ensues but it is circular as Chris and Vann try to rationalize a piece of information that Schwartz gave in Chapter 3 about



Nicholas working at the time of the murder and how this could be used to circumvent the client privilege laws to get a definitive answer. The only thing that is clear is the priorities placed on both Chris and Vann in an effort to divide the work according to their abilities so that they can continue the investigation. The chapter ends on a much lighter note as they part to complete their tasks with Chris needing to take a break in the action. He has an appointment with a realtor, which is a small opening into Chris' personal life.

Chapter 5 is a complete break from the crime aspect of the novel to focus on Chris' personal life. This is a highlight of his need for independence from the fame he has received from being a main face when he was a child for the media campaign for Haden acceptance. Chris meets with the realtor who is excited to meet Chris, although she is not a Haden herself. As they go to the first apartment, a small bit of Haden etiquette is on display as Chris has forgotten to turn on his public information and the receptionist, another Haden, can see. This continues with the technology theme as the personal transports are equipped to see different things through scanners and different software which allow for people's information to be seen as well as signs and other things meant only for the Haden community.

With the first apartment, the reader gets to see the living conditions of some Hadens. The sizes of apartments range greatly as with any other apartment, but there is no need for things like kitchens which greatly affects the aspects of normal life but not a Haden. There is nothing much with the first apartment shown that is of particular interest, and it is curious why the realtor would show an apartment that Chris would not like, but she explains that it is a foil to get Chris interested in other apartments that would be more to his liking. There is a brief moment of sadness shown by Chris as he understands that this will be all some of the other Hadens will be able to afford and is once again reminded about his notoriety and ability to afford something better.

There is no description of the other apartments shown to Chris, allowing the narrative to jump to the last place the realtor has on the list for him. The realtor describes the place as a bit unusual as Chris would only be renting a room inside a townhouse. The good news for him is that it is a home of fellow Hadens and the realtor has a personal connection to one of the members of the house. This not only allows for the addition of a new setting, but new people as well. The first person Chris meets in the townhouse is Tony. Tony is informative as he conducts the tour of the house and seems enthused about having Chris as a potential roommate. There is an explanation of the way the house runs as well as a brief list of the other residents of the home. The home works like a small community where everyone works together to maintain their physical bodies as well as their personal transports. Chris makes a good impression on Tony allowing Tony to make the decision to rent the room to him and establishes the townhouse as Chris' new home. This gives Chris more independence and adds to his ability to step away from his famous persona, although it is briefly mentioned when Chris asks about whether or not he should fill out an application, but it is suggested that Chris meet the other roommates that evening as well. There is little doubt that Chris will be liked by the others in the house, so the meeting will just be to introduce Chris to his new roommates. This is met with excitement by Chris, but he has to delay the meeting because he has to

return to his parents' home for a special dinner held in his honor. The chapter closes with optimism that Chris has found a new home.

## **Discussion Question 1**

How does Haden's syndrome affect the population? How are "locked in" individuals able to function? What happens to someone who has contracted Haden's syndrome but have recovered?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Why is the Abrams-Kettering bill so important to the Haden community? How does this directly affect Nicholas Bell?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What are some significant things that Vann and Chris learned about the crime scene so far? Why is the fact that Nicholas does not have blood on his hands so important?

## **Vocabulary**

prevalent, degradation, elude, tangentially, subdued, constitutional, reiterated, transitional, apparatus, disingenuous, superficial, logistics, ulcerate, arterial, amble

# Chapters 6 - 10

## Summary

Chris returns home in time for dinner in Chapter 6, only to find that it is not just a dinner for himself and his parent, but it is a dinner party for his father, Marcus Shane, and his prospective partners. Chris is upset by this but his mother tells him that he should not mind and that her thoughts are more on his moving out of the home. After discussing with her his reasons for moving out, Chris goes to check on his body and to talk to his nurse. The nurse gives Chris more medicine for his tooth pain after the afternoon's molar extraction, and Chris is able to examine the bedsores on his body. He feels slightly dizzy as he does this, and makes the visit quick. Afterwards, he goes into the "trophy room," but he is shocked to find Nicholas Bell with his father.

Chris is introduced to Lucas Hubbard, the CEO of Accelerant Investments, in Chapter 7. He is using Nicholas's body for the party and Chris finds out that Samuel Schwartz is there also, but he is integrated with a woman due to lack of Integrators available. Once everyone is seated at dinner, Chris calls Vann to let her know that there is an actual connection between Nicholas and Sam as Nicholas is Lucas Hubbard's Integrator and that Samuel works for Lucas. Vann is unimpressed with this as she is at a local bar, but lets Chris know that the victim's body has not been truly identified yet but it is known that he comes from a Navajo reservation. Vann immediately hangs up as Marcus begins to deliver a speech about the future of the Haden society and the businesses involved with it. Chris figures out that his presence is there to bolster Marcus' position in impressing Marcus' potential business and political partners. After Marcus' speech, Chris is asked about his views on the Abrams-Kettering bill and talk begins of how some are in fear of the Hadens and their ability to cause chaos with a rebellion because personal transports are seen as indestructible. To answer this, Chris gives a little story about being hit by a truck when he was younger in one of his first personal transports.

Shortly after this another argument ensues between Lucas Hubbard and the CEO of Loudon Pharma, Jim Buchold. Lucas wants to make personal transports more human and expand them to be able to be used by the public but Jim feels that life would be better if a vaccine and a cure could be found for Haden's syndrome. During the argument, Jim makes a statement about Cassandra Bell and is angered to find that Lucas' Integrator is her brother Nicholas. In order to calm everyone down, Chris suggests that Jim talk to Marcus for a bit, to which Jim agrees. Within minutes, another new crisis is on the horizon as Vann calls to tell Chris that Loudon Pharma has exploded and the suspect could be a Haden.

Chris and Vann are on the scene at Loudon Pharma in Chapter 8. They do not engage the local law enforcement but begin conducting an investigation of their own. While watching the security footage, they see that an Integrator named Jay Kearney is the last person to drive into the area using the badge of chemist Karl Baer. Upon arriving at the home, they knock at the door, but no one answers. Vann opens up the door anyways,



only to find Karl Baer has been murdered in his cradle. Chris starts examining the room for clues and they find a videotape with Baer and Kearney's confessions, with Baer stating that he believes in the words of Cassandra Bell and that in researching a cure for Haden's syndrome will ultimately execute millions of people who are supposed to be the next wave of humanity.

Some time later, Jim Buchold and other law enforcement have arrived at the the Buchold residence, discussing the crime. Chris asks about Karl Baer and Buchold states that Baer never worked with an Integrator and that he was working on a cure for Haden's syndrome. The unfortunate situation is that all the files pertaining to the drug's research were on servers that were destroyed in the explosion, causing the company to lose all of its data. After Chris is done talking to Buchold, he receives a call from Tony telling him that he has been accepted as a new roommate at the townhouse.

The victim of the alleged murder at the Watergate Hotel is identified as John Sani in Chapter 9. Chris and Vann learn that he is a member of the Navajo Nation, he is poorly educated, and he has limited mental abilities. They also discover that his brain has been wired to become an Integrator. This confuses Vann and Chris as they know the rigorous details involved with becoming an Integrator. Chris and Vann also have unanswered questions as to why Sani would have a headset if he is able to become an Integrator and they find themselves with more questions than they feel they have answers.

In Chapter 10, Chris is paired up with local police officer Klah Redhouse in Arizona, who takes him into the Navajo Nation to meet with John Sani's family. During an interview with the family, Chris learns that at one time John had Haden's syndrome, only the family thought that he only had meningitis. Chris also learns that John applied to be a janitor at a local computer company, but was offered a personal assistant job instead. John's family states that he would send them regular money orders but he was not allowed to talk about his job. Chris makes a scan of the money order so that he can try to figure out where it came from.

After leaving the Sani home, Chris and Redhouse go to Window Rock Computational Facility to question the head janitor. The janitor states that he had received John's application but denied him the job, stating that John's mental abilities were too slow. He also tells Chris that he never called John back for an offer of a second position. Chris wonders who else could have called John and then asks the janitor about the business located within the building. The janitor informs Chris that one of the companies is called Medichord and controls all of the Navajo Nations' medical files. Chris is able to learn that Accelerant Investments is the parent company of Medichord, which provides a link between Lucas Hubbard and John Sani.

Before going back to his own personal transport in Washington D.C., Chris calls Vann to tell her about these things and she tells him that Nicholas Bell signed an exclusive contract to be Lucas Hubbard's and other influential Haden's Integrator earlier in the day. She also tells him that Kearney was Samuel Schwartz's personal Integrator before he destroyed Loudon Pharma. With more questions in mind, Chris says that he is going to get back into his own personal transport and head to his new home for a while.



Before leaving, he discusses John's body with Redhouse and learns that the Sani family does not have enough money to transport it back to them. Chris tells Redhouse to let him know how much this will cost and something can be arranged, only saying that a "friend" will handle this.

## Analysis

Chapter 6 continues the deviation from the main plot to further examine Chris' home life. The subject of Chris' independence is at the center of this section as he is uncomfortable that the intimate dinner he thought was planned by his parents as a way of congratulating him on his new job has turned into an evening where his father, Martin Shane, is trying to further his own political ambitions. Chris is not illicitly told about this, and the main clue that helps him realize what is going on is the number of place settings at the dinner table. His mother does not shy away from Chris' frustration, but she does little to help alleviate his concerns. Her main focus is on the fact that Chris will be moving out soon. Her concerns about this event highlight Chris' desire to find a life of his own. Chris on the other hand, is more upset about the fact that he is aware of his father's intentions. The author makes it clear that Chris has always been used as propaganda for his father's ambitions.

After the brief conversation with his mother, Chris goes to check on his physical body and to talk to his evening nurse about pain in his mouth following a molar extraction earlier in the day. The author's purpose for this exchange is to give the reader a better understanding of the physical aspects of being a Haden. Chris' dental problems and bedsores are only a slight example of how the disease affects both the body and the mind, but it is important as Chris is able to handle the pain by the use of his personal transport. Chris also explains the reaction of seeing his own body through the use of his personal transport and the slight dizziness associated with it.

After getting medicine in Chris' physical body, there is another jump in the narrative. This time it is to give an in-depth description of his father, his successes, and his ambitions. This takes place in Marcus' "trophy room," which is a physical testament to all of the success that Marcus has had from his youth to the present. There is another, more amusing name given to this room, as Chris and his mother call this room the "vet's office," with a slightly more comically vulgar explanation given for the nickname. It's primary use is to impress anyone who comes to visit, especially anyone that Marcus needs to further his own business and political dealings. The narrative gives a full account of these accomplishments, from his sports days to being one of the main people in support of Haden acceptance and government funding. Within this there is a further explanation describing Chris' upbringing and how it intertwines with Marcus' progress. Many examples of how Chris has been an integral part of Haden acceptance is also given, but more in the capacity that they are Marcus' achievements as well. There is no sense of remorse or guilt about this in Chris' tone as he is describing this, it is more of a sense of boredom that comes across to the reader. The scene, as well as the chapter, ends abruptly as Chris enters this room to find Nicholas Bell conversing with his father.





Chapter 7 highlights the workings of Marcus' attempts to gain political allies. Chris is unimpressed by this party, although he is shocked at seeing Nicholas Bell at this gathering. This first scene in the chapter establishes the relationship between Nicholas Bell and Lucas Hubbard, the CEO of Accelerant Investments, as Nicholas is integrated with Lucas. There is another shock as Samuel Schwartz is also on the scene, but Chris finds it peculiar that he is integrated with a female Integrator instead of the personal transport he was using in a previous chapter. The conversation is light between Chris, his father, Lucas, and Samuel, with Chris mostly in the background being observant.

The scene jumps to the actual dinner itself. Chris is trying to be covert and Chris' clever use of technology to silently call Vann is only met with annoyance as Vann is preoccupied at a local bar. This short exchange provides a brief glimpse into Vann's character when she is not working, but it also helps to further the investigation as the information about Nicholas working for Lucas establishes a connection between Nicholas and Lucas but it also makes the relationship between Samuel Schwartz and Nicholas more obvious. Another advancement in the investigation comes from a possible lead on the identity of the victim. It is suggested, but not further developed, that the victim possibly comes from a Navajo reservation. It adds to the curiosity of the victim's identity as the FBI does not have access to Navajo files, which can be seen as a plot device to further engage the reader in the mystery of the crime. The conversation is quickly ended as there is nothing further to add and due to the fact that Marcus is about to speak.

The true intention of the gathering is made apparent to Chris as his father starts speaking in the next segment about the possibility of shifting Haden related corporations from being dependent on government assistance to finding new opportunities. With this speech, Chris' role in the evening's events is also made clear as the author uses this opportunity to once again highlight Chris' desire for independence when he is questioned about his views on the Abrams-Kettering bill. This dinner table discussion not only shows Chris' reluctance to be the center of attention, but it is centered on the topic of politics. The political discussion does provide the author with the ability to expand the affects of the Abrams-Kettering bill as the conversation becomes very heated. There seems to be a general fear by some of the non-Hadens in the room about the repercussions of a Haden revolt. This allows for Chris to use a personal anecdote to recount one of his earliest experiences with using a personal transport as a way to not only show that Hadens share the same vulnerabilities as regular people and to assuage one guest's fears.

There is a side conversation started as Lucas inquires about Chris' personal transport as a youth. This allows the flow of the conversation to circle back to the current topic at hand of the business effects of the Abrams-Kettering bill. There is an allusion made to some of the advancements that Lucas' company hopes to make in order to expand the abilities of the personal transports, triggering another heated exchange. This exchange opens the possibility for a cure and it is revealed that the medical aspect of government funding for Hadens has not been cut. This introduces Jim Buchold, the president of one of the companies whose funding has not been cut. He is not a major character, but Lucas Hubbard makes it clear that Jim is one of the few people profiting with his

company. The exchange between Lucas and Jim becomes more complex as Chris finds himself once again thrown into the middle of things in a peace keeping capacity.

New concepts in the innovations of Haden's syndrome management are bantered between Jim and Lucas, bringing technology to the forefront of the chatter. It is clear on Lucas' end that he is quite content with being a Haden and is developing ways to create resources once thought exclusive to Hadens to be available to the public. This is in direct contrast to Jim and his company goal of absolutely curing the disease itself, making these resources obsolete. The two differing opinion comes to a potentially dangerous point when Jim makes an offhand comment regarding Cassandra Bell, who has yet to be formally introduced in the novel, but has been mentioned in a previous chapter that she is leading some of the Haden protests against the government. The fact that Nicholas is integrating with Lucas at this point is especially enraging for Jim, but Chris is careful to defuse the situation with a clever ploy to get Jim to change seats with someone seating near Marcus.

With this dilemma reaching its conclusion, another major dilemma and plot advancement device begins as Vann calls Chris with startling news. In addition to the original murder that they are investigating, the crime theme is expanded as Jim Buchold's company, Loudon Pharma, has recently been destroyed. At this point, Vann makes a speculation that it was a Haden who committed the crime but there is no evidence at this point to suggest this. This new development adds a new twist to the narrative, but it also allows the chapter to close on a cliffhanger as Jim is made aware of the situation through an unknown person calling him to deliver the news.

Chapter 8 jumps right into the investigation of the crime committed in the previous chapter. A detailed description of the scene is unfolded as Agent Vann arrives on the scene after Chris. A brief chat ensues about the possible suspect, motives, and manners in which the demolition could have taken place. With the further use of technology, Chris and Vann are able to positively identify the suspect. There is a certain amount of frustration from Agent Vann as there are questions as to what their specific roles are in this investigation. Major clues are given here which leads to the realization that an Integrator and a Haden are involved in this crime, providing a crucial plot point. The Haden involved is named Karl Baer, and as one of the Loudon Pharma staff, the only reference to him at this point is the fact that his identification was used to enter the premise. Since he is a Haden, there is no question about the use of Integrator Jay Kearney, whose vehicle is used to enter the gates.

It is interesting to note that Chris admits he has not spoken to any of the investigators on the scene, which lends some anonymity to their investigation. The reader should see that there is no interaction between the local detectives and the FBI agents, although it is briefly mentioned. This can be seen as a plot device in order to advance the story line as Chris and Vann decide that they need to visit Karl Baer to see if his identification card was stolen or if he has an actual part to play in the bombing without the local police. The main objective is to question Baer in an unofficial capacity without any intention to prosecute.

The narrative jumps forward to the arrival at Baer's home. There is no response to a knock at the door, which is an ominous sign to Vann. There is no hesitation made to enter the home anyways, although this could be construed as an illegal entry. The entry into the home takes the plot development further as an unexpected situation occurs. Baer is found in his cradle with a knife in his head, adding another element to the crime theme. At this point, there is a quick realization that Chris and Vann need to provide an alibi for being in the home without proper authority. Once again, technology comes into play as Chris is ordered to videotape the scene as a way to preserve the crime scene and possibly to evade any suspicion as to why they are inside the home. To continue to add to the intrigue, a confessional video is found, but this is also a peculiar piece of evidence as both Baer and Kearney are shown in the video declaring their desire to destroy any hope for a Haden syndrome cure as Haden syndrome is the next wave in the evolution of humanity. Cassandra Bell is mentioned in this monologue by Baer as he believes that she is right in saying that finding a cure would lead to the extinction of the Haden syndrome.

The scene shifts to the local police now at the Baer residence, along with Jim Buchold. Jim provides statements regarding Baer's work to find a Haden cure. The interesting things that come from this include the fact that Baer always used his personal transport at work and that Jay Kearney is someone unknown to the company. The interrogation of Buchold also provides a description of the drug Baer was working on as well as the complications that the newly destroyed building brings as there is no backup for the research data. There is a foreshadowing statement made as Buchold claims that the destruction of his facility is in direct correlation with the passage of the Abrams-Kettering bill. This is only a brief allusion with no more mentioned about it before the conversation turns back to the lost data. With Buchold's indication that the research cannot be recovered, the scene ends with no actual resolution.

The final scene in the chapter is a deviation from the main course, but it still enhances the theme of Chris' independence. Tony, a minor character and one of the people who will be sharing the townhouse, calls to confirm Chris' acceptance into the townhouse. The conversation is light and it provides a sense of ease for Chris as he knows that he will finally be able to start the life he wants. The author uses irony to close the chapter as this is also the close of the first actual day of Chris and Vann's first day on the job together which is supplemented by a small snippet of witty banter about Chris' living with others.

Chapter 9 flows into the following morning and an example of the political upheaval caused by the Abrams-Kettering bill is visualized as traffic has piled up on most of the streets due to Haden truckers purposefully blocking the highways. This opens up a comical discussion between Chris and Vann as he has arrived to work late, but this is shortened to make way for the day's business at hand. A major plot development occurs here as the victim of the murder at the Watergate Hotel is finally identified as John Sani. Technology makes another appearance when it is used to deliver important details of Sani's life so that Chris and Vann can become better acquainted with the type of person that he was. His medical history is also given which is crucial as the fatal wound in

Sani's neck was self-inflicted. This is an interesting discovery as there is no motive for a suicide, plus it opens up other questions concerning this death.

Along with the medical records, Chris and Vann are able to see an x-ray of Sani's brain, which further adds to a new line of speculation. His brain has been infused with the technology necessary to become an Integrator, but Vann and Chris are further made curious as to how this could have happened. A brief explanation is added by the author during Chris and Vann's dialogue to illustrate the process involved in becoming an Integrator. This is significant as it also alludes to Vann's experience of being an Integrator, but the personal connection to Vann is quickly dropped due to her perceived discomfort. The re-introduction of the headset found at the scene of the crime adds further questions because it shouldn't have been needed if Sani had integration abilities. An interesting theory is put forth here regarding an Integrator's ability to integrate into someone else.

With all of this new information comes a new location, the Navajo Nation in Arizona to further the investigation into Sani's character and his motives for being an Integrator. There is a small element of surprise given as Chris is able to unexpectedly integrate into a personal transport at the Arizona FBI office. There is a small deviation as Chris is recognized by the officer on duty as being the son of Marcus Shane, which is a tie-in to Chris' desire for independence. At this point, Officer Klah Redhouse is introduced as a new character to the plot. The introduction is jovial and there is an instant rapport between Chris and Redhouse. It is perceived that since Redhouse is close to members of the Navajo Nation, he will be a liaison for Chris, as there is a general feeling of mistrust among the Navajo Nation towards the federal government. Chris is understanding of this and this chapter closes as he sets out with Redhouse.

Chapter 10 picks up immediately where Chapter 9 ended. There is a brief insight into Redhouse's back story as well as how the Navajo Nation is characterized as being separate from the rest of the federal government. The dialogue helps in continuing to establish a good working relationship between Chris and Redhouse as they talk about their backgrounds. The scene abruptly shifts to encounter John Sani's family, who have just been informed of John's death. The actual conversation is not illustrated, just his family's subdued reactions. Chris' questions into John's life confirm that he was mentally deficient and had very little education, but in a small twist there is the admission that he did not become this way until he became sick as a little boy. Although his family states that John only had meningitis, it is confirmed that John actually suffered from Haden's but recovered. This would answer the question as to how he could become an Integrator, although his family is adamant that he did not have any other disease.

More clues come to light, but it only further adds to the mystery of John's death. John's family is able to calmly go through Chris' interrogation, especially as he tries to make it as easy as possible for the grieving family. An important item is introduced in the form of weekly money order payments for large sums of money. Discreetly, Chris is able to scan the money order for information to be used at a later time. The conversation between Chris and the Sani family yields only the information that John's actual employer has never been mentioned. It is interesting to note that John was not a janitor like he had



applied to be, but something comparable to a personal assistant. There is no further information able to be given by the family as they indicate that John was informed shortly after he started working that he would be unable to discuss the actual nature of his work. This further darkens the tone of John's employment and adds to the suspense of the plot.

Upon leaving the Sani home, a new location is delved into. At the Window Rock Computational Facility, Chris engages in conversation with the head janitor who has a vague bit of knowledge about John, having known him in their youth. When questioned about a call to return to the facility after being initially turned down, a major piece of foreshadowing information comes to light. The head janitor has no knowledge of a second call to John as an offer of employment. This opens the conversation further to portray some of the clients in the building, one of which being Medichord, a company that works exclusively with the Navajo Nation for their medical needs. This is not a major clue, but could prove useful as John's medical records would be stored within this company. Upon further questioning, the janitor makes another helpful bit of information in the fact that these files can only be accessed through specific means. The scene is quickly completed with this knowledge, with little progress in the actual investigation itself having been made.

The next scene is a dialogue between Chris and Vann as they discuss new developments in the case. There is nothing that is overly important as for Chris' side of the discussion, what information is given serves only to confuse the suicide aspect of the crime further. There are new developments in the Loudon Pharma bombing, which encompass not only Baer and Kearney, but also manages to circle back to Lucas Hubbard, Samuel Schwartz, and Nicholas Bell. Various bits of information from previous chapters become useful in this exchange as Chris remembers that Schwartz was not using his regular Integrator, which turns out to be Kearney. Vann finds it curious that Nicholas also has recently signed a contract with Lucas Hubbard to be his Integrator as well as contracts for other influential Hadens. Both Chris and Vann are now starting to realize some of the similarities and coincidences with these circumstances, and this allows the reader to further question the complexity of the investigation to this point. Different opinions and hypotheses are formulated during this conversation, all of which are probably scenarios, but there is still a need to investigate these theories further. The most helpful clue during this is the revelation that Medichord is a part of Accelerant Investments, which provides a strong link between Lucas Hubbard and John Sani.

With these new additions to the plot development, Chris and Vann's conversation winds down with a deviation by Chris as he intends to return to his own personal transport in Washington D.C. and head to his new townhouse, allowing the pertinent parts of the conversation to find closure in this segment. As Chris says a quick farewell to Redhouse, mention of John's remains slightly touch on Chris' independence as the Sani family is too poor to arrange for the body to be brought to them. Chris tells Redhouse that the expenses will be paid for through an anonymous benefactor, but the message implied is that Chris will pay for this himself.



## Discussion Question 1

Why does Marcus change the private dinner party into one involving other business owners? What role does Chris have to play in this?

## Discussion Question 2

Why do Bell and Kearney destroy Loudon Pharma? How does Cassandra Bell tie into this crime?

## Discussion Question 3

What is unusual about John Sani's brain? Why was he made into an Integrator? Could this have anything to do with his personal assistant job?

## Vocabulary

patronizing, inductive, ameliorated, abysmal, scion, citations, enviable, juxtaposition, theology, senatorial, subsidy, inductive, innocuous, dubious, savant, pretense



# Chapters 11 - 15

## Summary

Chris is walking home in Chapter 11 when he encounters a group of men surrounding a female Haden. Chris offers to buy them drinks and to joke with them to detract their attention, but they refuse. Chris is able to identify each man and offers them the chance to leave quietly after he informs them that he has called the police. All of the men except for one leave, who attempts to attack Chris. Chris quickly uses his stun gun to take down the attacker and the female Haden checks to make sure the man is alright. As she is doing this, she informs Chris that she is Dr. Tayla Givens and that she is one of Chris' new housemates. The local police arrive to arrest the man and Detective Trinh is with them. Instead of focusing on the arrest, she pulls Chris aside to talk to him about his partnership with Vann, saying that she will eventually let Chris down and that it could be bad for not only Chris, but his father and his rising political career. Chris shrugs this off and heads to the townhouse where he is warmly greeted by Tony, Tayla, and the other housemates before attempting to rest for a while.

Chris cannot sleep in Chapter 12, so he goes into his personal space in the Agora, that has been nicknamed by himself and others as the Batcave. While there he looks at all of the clues pertaining to John Sani's death and the destruction of Loudoun Pharma. Chris is trying to decide whether there is a definitive link between the two crimes. He also thinks about the money orders sent to John's family and he wonders why they have been sent from an area with a hospital well known for Haden medical technology. Chris also gives thought to Cassandra Bell and how she is linked to the Loudoun Pharma bombing. He also thinks about how he and Cassandra are both alike as Hadens but how they differ as well. As Chris thinks about these things, he is trying to draw a decisive connection between all of his information, but he realizes that he is unable to do so at the moment.

As Chris is still thinking about these things in Chapter 13, his new housemate Tony invites him into his personal Agora space, something that is unusual between Hadens. Tony explains more about his job as a Haden software expert and as he shows Chris a new piece of software that he is working on, he informs Chris that Lucas Hubbard's first company designed a lot of the software that Hadens use. Tony also talks about the piece of software he is working on and how it will protect Hadens from being hacked after the Abrams-Kettering bill goes into effect as many Hadens will not be able to afford the oncoming rates of software maintenance. Tony also speculates that because of the bill going into effect, there will be more Hadens who will be protesting as they will be left without many resources, and he is also worried that he will have less work because of this. As Tony and Chris discuss this, Chris comes up with a question about the ability to hack into a Haden's software to implant suicidal thoughts. Tony does not believe this is possible, but he is not entirely sure. With this, Chris tells him that he may have need for some of Tony's assistance soon.





In Chapter 14, Chris and Vann are at the local police department assisting the agency with the arrests of Haden who are using personal transports, particularly a group of Haden who are using faces that look like dead United States presidents. They claim that they are only providing security for the march and protests, but Vann wants to fully charge them with false identity if they do not voluntarily give up. They agree to this and before Chris and Vann go to assist with other Haden related arrests, Chris goes back to wanting to know more about John Sani's death. He has an interesting theory but he wants to bring his housemate Tony in as an expert on the neural network that was implanted in John's head. Vann is unsure of this at first but agrees telling Chris that she will work with him while Chris goes to Duarte, California to investigate the origins of the money order. Afterwards, Chris questions whether or not Vann will be able to keep her focus, as he tells her what Detective Trinh said about Vann. Vann assures Chris that she is a competent partner and that she will tell him about her time as an integrator at some point.

Chris finds himself in a broken personal transport at the California FBI office in Chapter 15. He is offered a wheelchair by the local FBI agent, but Chris goes out and rents a personal transport. Next, he goes to the local post office to ask about John's money orders. He shows the postal workers a picture of John, who say he is Ollie Green and tell Chris that he lives in an apartment nearby. The workers describe him as nice, but becoming less happy about the secret job he has been doing. Chris leaves from there to check out John's apartment. Chris talks to the apartment manager who agrees to let him see the apartment since John is dead. Before entering the apartment, Chris notices that the patio door has been tampered with. Chris tells the apartment manager to find somewhere to hide while he checks the place out. Upon entry, Chris is confronted by an assailant in a black personal transport and a fight breaks out. Chris is able to get the upper hand in the fight and uses a skillet to beat on the transport head. Chris is able to turn off the power to the personal transport and he finds that the assailant is holding an envelope marked for John's family. Inside there is a data card that Chris can investigate further. The apartment manager is waiting at the front door and Chris tells her to call the police and FBI. As soon as he is finished, Klah Redhouse calls him, insisting that there are very important people that would like to have a word with him.

## Analysis

Chapter 11 is a deviation from the main course of the novel as Chris is caught up in an event that centers around the theme of crime while walking towards his new home. Chris encounters a scene in which four men are surrounding a Haden woman and preparing to assault her. The men are noticeably drunk and in an effort to diffuse the situation, Chris makes a small joke. The attempt at comedy is not appreciated by the men, but the use of a comedic diversion gives Chris the small bit of time he needs to analyze each man's face. Chris' technology is important here as he is able to reference local police data to identify the men unbeknownst to them. Another attempt at trying be polite in the form of offering the men more alcohol only results in the use of obscene language towards Chris. In this moment, Chris' tactics are forced to change before there can be any violence to himself or the woman, who has not engaged in any of this

dialogue other than to confirm that she is uncomfortable in this situation. The scan that Chris conducted shows the identity of each man in the group and Chris is able to use it to his advantage by making a few of the men uncomfortable with the knowledge that they have police records. There is a clear leader in the group, who is agitated at not only one of his partners for questioning Chris' knowledge but at the fact that there is a shift of control in the situation. This is the only time that any of the other men speak, leaving the rest of the dialogue between the leader of the gang and Chris as Chris lays out a brief explanation of consequences for assaulting a Haden. This is a clear ploy to bring the situation to a conclusion peacefully, but it should be noted that Chris' focus is more towards the leader of the group rather than the rest of the men. There is a subtle knowledge that the other men are nervous about the situation, especially as they are quick to heed Chris' warning of being arrested for a hate crime by letting the woman go.

It is predictable that the leader of the group would be the only one who gives Chris any physical challenge, but Chris has been secretly prepared for this the entire time. Once again, the use of his personal transport provides Chris with the easy ability to take control of the situation. The situation is soon over as Chris shoots him with his stun gun, which finally allows for a dialogue between the detained woman and Chris. This dialogue is carried out as the Haden woman attends to the wounded assailant, which is thought of as curious by Chris. The most important item to come from this dialogue is the introduction of Dr. Tayla Givens, a new character that is also revealed to be one of Chris' new housemates.

Another important occurrence to come from this failed assault is the entrance of Detective Trinh to assist with the arrest of the gang leader although the main motive of Trinh's presence is to have a conversation with Chris. This brings about a new set of dialogue between the detective and Chris. The motivation from this comes from Detective Trinh's desire to inform Chris about Agent Vann. This conversation sheds only a small light on Vann's character, but it can also be seen as speculation on Trinh's part as she does not deliver solid facts about Vann. There is a noted sense of animosity towards Vann, but Chris is slightly agitated that Trinh would say these things about his partner. Chris points out the many uses of cliches to describe Vann, but Detective Trinh is adamant in saying that she only wants to help Chris by warning him of Vann's incompetence. There is a final ominous warning given by Trinh at the end of the scene wanting Chris to make sure that having someone as unstable as Vann could lead to not only the ruin of Chris' career but the destruction of his father's political career as well.

The final scene of the chapter is short as Chris arrives at his new home and he is warmly welcomed by the others in the house. This section serves to end this chapter on a happier note and to introduce the rest of the housemates, although most of them, with the exception of Tony and Tayla, will only be minor characters as the story progresses. The interaction is kept small, giving that Chris claims he has had a long day and would like to go to his room to rest. This provides the final closure to the chapter as his roommates bid him goodnight.

A more descriptive representation of the Agora is given in Chapter 12 as Chris finds himself unable to rest after the events in the previous chapter. The necessity of the

Agora is portrayed in deeper detail as well as the complexity of how the space works to provide the Haden community with a common gathering place as well as a private section. This description provides the reader with a greater understanding of the close relationships that are developed between Haden's in the Agora, and it should also be noted that normal people have the ability to log into the Agora as well via the use of headsets. with a slang term given to these areas.

Within the Agora, there is a necessity for a Haden's personal space, this explanation introduces the reader to Chris' own personal space. Since the description given resembles a dark cave, it has been nicknamed the Batcave by those who visit. This introduction allows the flow of the narrative to come back around to the main story line as Chris reflects on recent events. The timeline of events that Chris comes up with is very brief, but it also provides an opportunity to identify a new connection in the form of Brenda Rees as Samuel Schwartz's Integrator from a previous chapter. While Chris is making this connection, there is an ability to visualize the characters that are possibly involved with the death of John Sani. There is a solid connection made with some of the minor characters, including Lucas Hubbard, Nicholas and Cassandra Bell. Within each connection there is a web of other connections, but not between the characters, this time it is in correlation to the events and places that have come into importance since John's death.

As Chris takes a moment to further focus on Cassandra Bell and the way in which her influence was used to destroy Loudoun Pharma, there is a slight shift in the narrative to focus on the themes of crime and independence. There is a link here as Chris thinks about the violence carried out against Haden's by normal people as more Haden's are descending upon Washington D.C. to participate in protests to the Abrams-Kettering bill. This is only a momentary deviation, but it is also foreshadowing as Chris knows that these things will only get worse. In the meantime, the narrative has meandered to the money order John Sani sent to his family. Because of its origins from a well respected area for Haden medical research, there is only more questioning from Chris, but no conclusive answers are brought forth.

Chris' focus inexplicably shifts back to Cassandra Bell, allowing her character information to be delved into further. This section of the chapter relies on discussing her back story and establishes distinct comparisons between Chris and Cassandra. which are highlighted as the section continues. There is a reference made to her connection to the Loudoun Pharma bombing, which allows the topic weighing on Chris' mind to evolve once again because of the the use of Cassandra's words in the motive used by Jay Kearney and Karl Baer's confession video. There is no great deal of analysis made, but Chris is able to come up with a basic layout outlining the key elements in the case so far. As the chapter closes, both Chris and the reader are left with many more questions as there is still too little information to make any conclusive observations.

Chapter 13 picks up right as Chris is considering the information he has outlined for himself in the previous chapter. This chapter engages Chris' housemate, Tony, in more conversation, and it continues to develop their relationship as Tony allows Chris into his private virtual space. Tony's skills working with Haden technology is showcased here as

he is analyzing a new piece of software. This section also allows the reader a chance to see how a Haden mind is supplemented with technology in order to be able to mentally free themselves from their locked in status by way of using personal transports and Integrators. The most useful part of the conversation between Chris and Tony is the fact that Lucas Hubbard's first company dealt heavily with the software creation, something that was not known about Lucas previously.

As the conversation moves along, as Tony explains a bit about what he does by keeping networks safe from hackers and assisting companies in developing software, politics makes a brief appearance. Tony explains that part of what he is currently working on will be helpful in keeping potential hackers out of personal neural networks, especially when the Abrams-Kettering bill goes into effect. This is extremely crucial as this bill will privatize anti-hacking software, causing people who cannot afford this service to be at the mercy of outdated software or constant advertisements against their will. To further prove the political upheaval and the effects this will have on Hadens, a speculation is made about the future of the Agora and its future as a free and safe haven. This causes even more conversation, but this time it deals with the effects in terms of the recent protests and how this situation will affect Tony as he will soon have less work.

Just as Chris is about to end the conversation, there is an emergence of a new idea that could prove useful. There is a question that further details the ability to enter a Haden's mind and plant suicidal thoughts. This is in direct conjunction with trying to find the motive for John Sani's death, although this is not mentioned directly. The answer is ambiguous as Tony finds it extremely unheard of but not impossible, opening the door for a possible clue into John's death. Tony is able to pick up on the fact that this is not a random question, causing Chris to ask Tony to help him with a project, which the reader knows is the murder/suicide investigation. This shapes the way for Tony to become further involved with the narrative as it progresses as his role will be to provide a technical awareness of the facts to Chris and the reader. With this advancement in Tony's character, the chapter is able to end lightly with Tony joking about Chris becoming his favorite roommate because of a new job opportunity.

Chapter 14 presumably begins the next day, but focuses on the political aspect of the novel with the arrest of five Hadens. The interesting thing about this is that since they are using personal transports, they are actually in different parts of the country. This causes the necessity of Vann and Chris' presence at the local police department. There is a comical note to this situation as all of the personal transports are wearing faces of early U.S. presidents and have been arrested for openly carrying rifles, which they assert is their second amendment right. The main purpose of this is allegedly to provide security for the march and protests happening, which are due to the Abrams-Kettering bill. The irony that occurs in the men's claim is that they were not providing security at the time but waving the guns in a local coffee shop. This irony is briefly mentioned but it is quickly played off as well as the fact that Chris has been recognized for who he is and is considered a traitor by these men. At this point, Vann is in total control of the situation as she intends to charge them with a false identity charge, as well as other unmentioned items. This tactic to get the men to go back to their respective homes is a bluff but it actually works although the men are not happy about this.

Once this deviation from the main narrative has concluded, Chris and Vann are able to put further focus on the main investigation of John Sani's death. With this shift, Chris is able to introduce Tony as a software expert, as Chris has begun to formulate a new theory regarding John's neural network. This new addition is met with a mixture of annoyance and aggravation but there is a certain amount of curiosity as to what Tony might be able to uncover. A new addition to the investigation is applied as Brenda Rees, the Integrator Samuel Schwartz was using in a previous chapter, is mentioned as being someone worth investigating as a possible connection to the Loudoun Pharma destruction. With these new developments, yet another one emerges with the introduction of a new location, Duarte, California. This is the place that John Sani's money orders have come from that were mentioned in a previous chapter.

The conversation between Chris and Vann takes an unexpected turn as a small side comment reminds Chris about the previous discussion with Detective Trinh. Chris does not deliver the full conversation, but a summary in that Detective Trinh thinks that Vann is going to "fall apart" on Chris eventually. Vann is nonchalant about this, but it raises questions about her time as an Integrator, although Chris is not forthcoming with his inquiry. Chris is very honest in his desire to have a steady partner, but Vann only provides a foreshadowing statement that she will tell him sometime later about her past. As this chapter concludes, attention is brought back to the current action of helping local police departments with the arrests of more Hadens.

Chris finds himself in the California FBI office in Chapter 15. It is comical to note that the personal transport he has integrated into has immobile legs, which is a point of irony but the local FBI agent is neither amused or caring about the situation. Chris is provided with a wheelchair, but in a slight twist of events, Chris is able to rent a personal transport more to his liking. Chris immediately heads to the local post office, where John Sani has been going to purchase and send money orders to his family. There is a new piece of information given about John as he had been using the pseudonym Ollie Green and seems to be quite known to the post office. More clues about John's life are given by the postal workers, allowing Chris to further add to what is known about John. The most important things that Chris learns are where he lived and the fact that John was becoming less enthused with the confidential job he had been doing for some time. There is no more information given about his job, but the most vital bit of information is that John asked about a post office box so that he could store something in a safe place. This heightens the suspense of John's character and raises questions about what he would want to keep safe and why.

After the postal office scene, Chris goes to the apartment complex John was living in. The apartment manager is jovial towards Chris and is willing to help him in any way she can, which includes opening up John's apartment. An interesting characterization of John is that he was very quiet and considered an excellent tenant. There is no mention of his employment, other than that his rent was paid by Filament Digital, a medical technology company that may prove its importance later in the novel. In usual police procedure, a search warrant would be needed to enter the apartment, but the manager allows Chris to enter since John is dead.





A sinister sense of foreboding is established once Chris sees John's patio door has been tampered with as he walks by the outside of the building. There is no hesitation other than to warn the apartment manager to get to somewhere safe before Chris enters the apartment. Immediately the action rises as he is face to face with a new kind of personal transport, this one is completely black. There is a new sense of intrigue started here as the personal transport is holding an envelope and as Chris tells it that it is under arrest, there is an attack. A fight scene occurs in this instance, which is in its own way ironic as both are using personal transports. It becomes slightly comical as the black personal transport tries to use a knife against Chris and Chris attempts to use a skillet. Chris is successful in this fight scene, having been able to pin the other transport down and bashing its head with the skillet. There is an attempt at interrogation, however, the black transport remains defiantly unresponsive. The important thing to note here is that since Chris is able to cut off the power to the transport and will be able to fully examine the suit. This is not a deterrent to the assailant and the situation promptly ends.

New pieces of evidence include a data card in the envelope addressed to John Sani's family and the onboard memory of the black transport. The end of the chapter happens on a coincidence shortly after Chris tells the apartment manager to call the local police and FBI. Klah Redhouse makes another appearance via a phone call to Chris as he is looking at the data card. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger as Redhouse nervously tells Chris that there are people in the Navajo Nation that need to speak to him immediately although what they want to talk about is not given. This will allow Chris to return to that area as he indicates that he needs to speak with some of the people there as well.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why does Detective Trinh try to warn Chris about Agent Vann? How does Chris feel about it?

## **Discussion Question 2**

How is the Agora a place for the Haden community? What is the necessity of Hadens having their own private place within the Agora? Why do people compare Chris' private space to the Batcave?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What did the black transport want in John Sani's apartment? What was in the envelope?

## **Vocabulary**

blustery, aspiring, phobic, equanimity, clarification, acuity, separatism, correlated, instigated, proclamations, diorama, perjury, personage

# Chapters 16 - 20

## Summary

When Chris comes back from California in Chapter 16, he immediately tells Vann about the assault by the "ninja threep" in John Sani's apartment. He also tells her that this is a new kind of transport unlike any other he has seen before and about the data card that was for John's family that the "ninja threep" tried to steal. Chris wants to go back to the Navajo Nation to talk to John's family and see if they would know any of John's password. Chris finds out that John's apartment was being paid for by a company called Digital Filament but the only American address he has for the company is John's apartment. Vann tells Chris that she spoke to Brenda Rees, who nervously agreed to meet Vann at a local coffee shop later. Through a meeting with Tony, Chris and Vann learn that John's neural network was made up with parts from several other companies, but they do not know how this is possible. Together, the trio start to make links between Lucas Hubbard, Accelerant, and how they relate to John Sani, but they agree that they need to investigate further.

In Chapter 17 Chris goes to the Navajo Nation to meet with Klah Redhouse, the Sani family, and officials from the Navajo government. After talking about John's love of movies about World War II Navajo code talkers, Chris figures out that the password is the Navajo word for May, Tah Tsosie. He is able to pull up a video from John where he talks about the truth behind his employment as a personal assistant. John describes being fitted with a neural network and how he enjoyed the job at first, but he has figured out that something is not right. Towards the end of the video, he has become afraid that his body is being taken over completely and having no memory of what he is doing, he fears that he will do something wrong. After the video ends, the Sani family leaves giving Chris the ability to talk with the officials and Redhouse about being able to remember being integrated and about other Navajos that had meningitis. Before Chris leaves again, he advises Redhouse to tell find others who have had meningitis and to tell them not to accept any job offers from people they do not already know.

Tony, Vann, Tayla, and Chris are set to meet Brenda Rees in a local coffee shop in Chapter 18. Just as Brenda is coming towards them, she takes out a gun and shoots Vann in the shoulder. Chris chases her down the street where she stops and is holding a grenade. Right after she pulls the pin, Brenda becomes horrified at what she has done, drops the grenade, and tries to run; but the grenade explodes, amputating her legs in the blast. Chris holds Brenda as she is dying where she reveals that during the dinner party at the Shane mansion, her client Samuel Schwartz was not there the whole time. Brenda dies before she can add any further details and Detective Trinh shows up to take over the crime scene.

Chris arrives back at the coffee shop just in time to see Vann going to the hospital. She warns him that Brenda was specifically looking for her and to be careful. Chris immediately takes this as a hint that someone may try to attack him and he goes back





to the Shane mansion. He tells his nurse to leave, but before he can get his parents out, the electricity is cut off and someone is lurking through the house. Chris tries to fight the assailant and his transport is shot. Marcus Shane comes in with a shotgun, shooting the assailant who dies instantly. Before the cops arrive, Chris tells his parents to tell them that it was just a house robber so that he can continue to find whoever is behind these attacks. Coincidentally, Klah Redhouse calls saying that there was another person who at one time had meningitis who is missing from the area. Chris shows Redhouse a picture of the dead assailant and Redhouse confirms that the person is Bruce Skow, who has been gone for several months from the Navajo Nation.

Chapter 19 begins with Chris making an enemy of Detective Trinh as he goes over her head to get the local police to release Brenda Rees' body to FBI custody. Chris' personal transport breaks down, causing him to have to try to rent a temporary one, but he cannot find one anywhere local due to a mass of Haden's being in the area for the upcoming march and protests. Chris ends up buying a brand new transport, but of a lower quality because he feels that he may destroy another transport before the investigation is finished. Chris then picks Vann up at the hospital, finding her arguing with the orderlies, but she is happy to hear that Detective Trinh is mad at Chris. Vann wants to go out and drink, but Chris tells her that they can go back to his townhouse. Upon arrival, Tayla turns on the television where she, Vann, and Chris watch a video on the news from Brenda Rees, who said that she will follow Cassandra Bell's words and choose to join the Haden rebellion against normal humans. Also on the news is a segment about the Shane mansion and an attempted robbery. Chris realizes that because his father shot and killed someone, his father's political career is now in jeopardy. As they continue to watch the news, Vann and Chris talk about both John Sani and Bruce Skow, but Vann is set on having a drink while she talks, much to Tayla's disapproval. Chris asks about the abilities of a Haden to consume alcohol, but Tayla advises against it. As Chris gets Vann's drink, Tayla thanks him for his help and he says he is thankful for hers.

Chris returns with Vann's drink in Chapter 20 where Vann announces that she is ready to tell him her story. Vann starts out by talking about her teenage years, where she once went to a party at the onset of Haden's syndrome. She did not know that the party was in a diseased area, but she realized it after she started to become ill. Her father also became ill but her mother and sister did not. Vann eventually got better, but her father died a few months later. This caused Vann to begin drinking heavily for a few years until college. She entered the Integrator program during this time but the first time she integrated with someone she accidentally lost control of her bowels. Before she could start the second session, she drank alcohol to lessen the stress of the integration process. Over time, she continued to drink before integrating so she could handle it. The last time she integrated with someone it was a girl who wanted to go to the zoo. Instead, the girl tried to make Vann jump into a train, but Vann was able to come to her senses and save herself before it could happen. After Vann finishes telling Chris this, she thinks about Brenda Rees and she is more determined than ever to find who caused Brenda's death, but first she wants to have one more drink. Chris gets up to get it for her and checks on Tony's body before coming back to his room to find Vann fast asleep.

## Analysis

Chapter 16 takes place immediately after Chris returns from California. Through conversation with Vann, he tells her of his assault and the new evidence that he has found. By way of their indirect characterization, the reader learns that the transport he was assaulted with has none of the identifying markers that other transports have and that some of its capabilities have never before been seen as well. A clever way of describing the transport is made by Chris when he calls it the "ninja threep," given its color and capabilities. The conversation continues but is abruptly diverted when Chris announces he needs to go back to the Navajo Nation with questions about the data card the black transport was trying to steal. There is an assumption made that John's family would have information regarding either the card or the password. This leads into further discussion about John's apartment in California and the Digital Filament company is mentioned, but Chris and Vann cannot find any pertinent information about them. The only clue given is that the only addresses for them are John's apartment and a Chinese office. There is no further dialogue about this as more information from the California FBI office is needed. The conversation shifts again to allow Vann to discuss what she has been doing while Chris has been away. This gives way to discuss Brenda Rees, the Integrator working for Samuel Schwartz at the Shane house party mentioned in a previous chapter. There is a certain note to be made when Vann says that Brenda was nervous during their phone call as Vann indicated to her that she wants to meet sometime to discuss the Loudoun Pharma bombing. The scene is ended on an abrupt note as another deviation in the narrative occurs with an interruption by Tony, who has been working in the morgue on John's body.

The next scene is an immediate shift to Tony meeting with Vann and Chris to discuss the discoveries he has made on John Sani's brain. It should be noted that the conversation between the three gives the knowledge that John's neural network is unlike any software that is available at the time. This is in direct comparison with the "ninja threep" mentioned earlier in the chapter. Tony's detailing of the network makes the assumption that this is a prototype of a network that has not been seen anywhere before. A subtle clue is given by Tony that John's entire network is made of pieces from a multitude of other companies. Tony is hopeful to find more clues as to the motive for its creation. This also sparks a conjecture as to who would have the funding to build such a network, since such a process would take billions of dollars. Lucas Hubbard's name is proposed, with a definitive link made between John Sani and Lucas Hubbard via John being a Navajo Indian and using the medical care company that is a part of Accelerant. Within this conversation more circumstantial clues are given in that Accelerant is looking to purchase other Haden related companies, some of which have parts in John's neural network. The speculation that Lucas Hubbard is behind this neural network is easily dismissed because of Accelerant's financial dealings, but it is still something to consider as the narrative continues. There are more theories given, but not in any sort of elaborate detail, including government involvement. With this, there are no definitive answers for the questions raised in this chapter as Tony says he needs more time to further analyze this evidence. In order to make the transition to finalize this chapter and transition into the next, the topic of Chris going to Arizona is

brought into view again as Chris is needed to go there and get back again before an evening meeting with Tony's next bit of information.

Chapter 17 takes place with an immediate change of setting as Chris is in the police station office of the Navajo Nation. This time there is a certain bit of tension felt as some of the more important officials of the Navajo Nation have joined Chris and Klah Redhouse along with John's family. The question about the possible data card password is the main focus of the conversation, but both his grandmother, May, and sister, Janis, have no guesses as to what it could be. The dialogue attempts to gain some sort of insight into the process John would use to create a password. After discussion about John's past and preference for a movie about Native American code talkers from World War II, a discovery is surprisingly made from this. John's password is a Native American word for May, Tah Tsosie. This new revelation provides a rising action in the narrative as Chris enters the password into a computer holding the data card and is successful in opening up the files.

The data card is an extremely important piece of evidence as the contents are a video of John Sani himself. This video is a very detailed description of events from the time that John was hired after looking for a job as a janitor. John's monologue is simple yet he is able to convey at first how elated he was to get such a high paying job and over time his declining lack of enthusiasm that evolves into a sort of fear and hatred of it. The video also opens up new possibilities in terms of how he was being used while unconscious, something that should not be able to happen, according to information given in previous chapters. A major example of this is how he woke up in the middle of a room of other men who mentioned murder, but with John not knowing what was being talked about, the others had figured out that the person integrating with him had left. This is a large piece of foreshadowing information but John continues to say that he is now lying to his employers that he is fine although he knows that something wrong is happening. The end of the testimony is a farewell of sorts to his grandmother and sister, another piece of foreshadowing as if he knew that he would never see them again.

With the video ending, the narrative turns back to Chris, Redhouse, the Sani family and the Navajo officials. The Sani family have left the room, allowing Chris to speak freely without adding too much stress to the family. Once again, the question of being able to use an unconscious Integrator comes up, but this time, Chris is unsure of whether it is truly impossible. The motive for using John as a testing subject for this ability comes into question, but Chris is able to outline substantial reasons for this, much to the anger of one of the Navajo officials. As this conversation is winding down, a question about John's remains as a small deviation. Chris assures the group that an anonymous source is handling things, but it is clear that the group knows that Chris is the source.

Towards the end of the conversation with Redhouse, a different approach is devised that requires Redhouse to seek out other Navajos that have contracted meningitis but recovered. Chris makes a final ominous suggestion that Redhouse tell anyone who has not to accept any jobs from outsiders, which adds a heightened sense of danger to the action. Once this conversation is finished, a dialogue opens up between Tony and Chris as Chris has conceived yet another theory to examine about any sort of software codes

that could tamper with an Integrator's conscious abilities. the chapter closes as soon as the conversation is finished as the possibilities of what really happened are starting to become clearer.

Chapter 18 progresses the novel forward to a new meeting between Chris, Vann, and Tony at a coffee shop prior to meeting Brenda Rees. It is here that Tony and Chris' other housemate, Tayla, makes an appearance as the group waits for Brenda, giving them a chance to discuss new developments in Tony's examination of John Sani's neural network. A deeper look at the functions of an Integrator are reviewed here with it being admitted that John's software is set up to rob him of his ability to control his body if need be. This is something different than normal software as usually an Integrator must be able to control their own body for emergency purposes. The way that Tony describes what is happening to the Integrator with this new software bears similarities to actually being locked in but with the slight twist that the Integrator has no memory of the actions being performed while they are integrated.

As Tony gives a much more detailed analysis of the process Chris sees Brenda walking towards them. There is an eerie tone developing as Chris is the only one aware that something is wrong with Brenda. In an instant, the dynamic of the narrative changes as Brenda pulls out a gun and fires at the group. This causes the scene to erupt into chaos as Vann is shot in the shoulder. This evolves into a chase scene, but with an unexpected twist as Brenda is holding a live grenade once Chris catches up to her. The situation is very tense as Brenda pulls the pin out of the grenade, but once she has done so, there is an immediate change in her demeanor. At this point, she is fully cognizant of what she has done, but it is too late. This is a fatal scene as Brenda's legs are blown off of her as she is trying to run away. Chris is able to be beside her as she is dying and although Brenda is dying, she is able to give another clue that will aid in Chris' investigation. Brenda is unable to give the full details of the night of the Shane house party, but she says that she was there the whole time, while Samuel Scharzt was not. There is no further hints given as to why he was gone or where he went, but it does add suspicion to Schwartz's character.

The next scene immediately shows Chris back at the coffee shop as Vann is about to be taken to the hospital. With the new clue that Brenda gave Chris, there is a renewed sense of urgency as Chris tells Tony to keep looking at John's neural network. It is assumed here that Chris is starting to piece the clues together although this is only implied. Chris has a moment to talk to Vann where there is a small exchange but at the end of it there is an ominous yet subtle warning about how Brenda was aiming only for Vann. The tone implied with the emphasis on Brenda suggests that Brenda was looking for Vann, and that there may be other people out who are targeting Chris. Chris is quick to catch on to this hint and he disconnects from his personal transport immediately.

Chris is instantly back in the Shane mansion where his tone is urgent as he warns his caretaker to get out of the house quickly. The caretaker is curious but compliant and Chris barely has time to get to his parents in the kitchen before the electricity is cut to the whole house to set a more ominous atmosphere. A new assailant has entered the area, with intentions to kill Chris' physical body. Another action scene ensues as Chris

tries to stop the killer. In the entanglement, it is unclear how Marcus Shane has obtained a shotgun or come into the room, but he fires on the killer, instantly killing him. In the falling action of this scene, Chris comes up with a run-down to give to the police as he knows the night's events will be made public. This lie is a necessity to provide a cover for Chris to continue his investigation undetected by the main person behind this. There is a detour in the line of conversation between his parents as a phone call comes to Chris. Klah Redhouse's interruption adds new elements to a theory Chris has as Redhouse confirms that there were two more Native Americans who contracted and survived meningitis. An illumination occurs when Redhouse tells Chris that the second person to have survived the disease went off the reservation a few months ago. Chris has a theory which is proven to be true when he shows Redhouse the picture of the dead man in his home. This confirms that Native American Bruce Skow is the dead man in question, which Chris believes relates heavily to the John Sani case, but he informs Redhouse that he will need more time to prove this.

Chapter 19 occurs only minutes after the end of the previous chapter. An undetailed flurry of activity both with dealing with Chris' home invasion and trying to get Brenda Rees' body into FBI custody results in making an enemy out of Detective Trinh for going to her superiors to get his way. It is interesting to note that Chris does not tell his superiors the full truth about how Brenda was killed, presumably for the same reason he told his parents not to tell the entire truth after the home invasion. As all of this is going on, Chris' transport stops working due to the damage received in the previous chapter. There is no way to obtain a temporary one while he has his fixed, the upcoming march has drawn a considerable number of Haden's who have already all of the personal transports in the area. Although Chris does not like to display how rich he truly is, Chris is able to buy a new transport, but this one is of a lesser class than his original one as he is worried about any more possible damage.

The next stop Chris makes is to the hospital to pick Vann up. This is a slightly comical scene as Vann argues with hospital orderlies about staying in her wheelchair until she leaves. Chris and Vann's reunion is highlighted by Vann's trying to maintain a strong persona as she wants to go to a bar to drink, ironically in celebration that Chris has upset Detective Trinh. Chris is against Vann going to a bar, but he does acquiesce to buying Vann a bottle of alcohol to take back to his townhouse. His main motivation for this is to recount the facts of the case so far and to move forward in trying to find the culprit behind everything that has gone on. The next scene is in the townhouse as Tayla instructs Chris and Vann to turn on the television where a new scene has unfolded. A message from Brenda Rees re-introduces Cassandra Bell and her words as the catalysts for a rebellion by the Haden community against normal people. This message directly relates to the Loudon Pharma bombing, which makes the need to keep the true details of the attempted assaults on Vann and Chris secret. There is also an interesting mention on the news about the recent invasion of the Shane mansion. The topic of politics is played out here as Chris admits that this recent turn of events will effectively end Marcus Shane's political hopes.

The focus of the conversation leads back to not only John Sani and his similarities to Bruce Skow. There is a deviation as Vann is more focused on having a drink than





discussing the matters at hand, which is slightly annoying to Tayla. This discussion is a momentary drift from the main plot line of the novel but it shows that Tayla is concerned for both Chris and Vann's wellbeing. There is a moment of conversation where the effects of alcohol on Haden's is mentioned as it shows that Haden's bodies are limited to only the nutrients they receive. As the chapter closes, the conversation is light but there is also an expression of gratitude from Chris for Tayla's help in the evening's events, which is reciprocated by Tayla for Chris' help earlier in the novel. This solidifies their friendship.

Chapter 20 is mostly a deviation of the main narrative but it is crucial in understanding Vann's character. Vann uses the excuse of living through a near death experience to make her want to tell Chris her story which she directly goes into. Vann is very descriptive in describing her persona at 16 years old, which is the time when her life was changed. There is a certain sadness to Vann's tone as she recounts her time as a reckless youth who went to a party in a diseased area at the outbreak of Haden's syndrome. Chris remains silent for the most part, making minimal interjections as Vann has requested that he just listen to her speak. There is a revelation that she inadvertently gave the disease to her father, who did not survive. Vann expresses that she has always felt guilty over this and it is one of the primary causes of her self destructive behavior at a young age.

Vann's monologue skips ahead a few years to her college years. This is crucial as it outlines the process Vann took in order to become an Integrator. Vann details the steps she took and the sensations she felt, including the headaches that came when her neural network was originally installed. She proceeds to give an embarrassing account of her first integration session and the discomfort she felt. Although Vann was self destructive before this point, she takes a turn for the worse with this first session as she drinks while on a break from her first integration session. This is the start of a downward spiral that causes her to heavily drink to withstand the feelings she has during later integrations.

To finish Vann's tale and to finally answer the lingering question of why Vann is no longer an Integrator, she tells Chris of an occurrence where her drinking could have possibly gotten her killed. The surprising thing to Chris is that Vann was never caught drinking on the job, but Vann gives a full description of how a teenage girl she was integrated with was suicidal and while in Vann's body tried to kill herself. Vann's narration of this incident is very detailed as the girl deceived Vann into thinking that it was to be a normal trip to the zoo, but instead, the girl had sinister ideas of jumping in front of a train to be able to feel the sensation of dying. The infuriating thing about this to Vann is that the girl planned the entire situation without any thought of Vann's safety. Vann blames herself for the girl taking advantage of her, but it does nothing to stop her drinking and smoking habits. It is curious to note that there were no repercussions against Vann as this incident caused her to stop being an Integrator, but they allowed Vann to join the FBI in a new Haden related division instead.

With the backstory and monologue completed, Vann is able to bring the focus back to the case at hand as Vann is able to assume that someone is controlling Integrators like



Brenda Rees in the same way that she was controlled by the suicidal girl. Vann is fully committed to bringing the culprit behind this to justice, but there is a certain lack of confidence that they know exactly who is behind the crimes they are investigating. This new resolve is mixed Vann's continued desire for a drink, which Chris is hesitant but compliant about. As the chapter closes, there is a deviation as Chris checks on his roommate's body, leaving him with a good feeling about his new friendships as he notices that Vann has fallen into a drunken sleep.

## Discussion Question 1

Why was it important for John Sani to make a video recording about his job? Why is Chris concerned about other Navajos that have possibly had meningitis?

## Discussion Question 2

Was Brenda Rees being integrated at the time of the shooting? Why was it necessary to try to kill Vann and Chris?

## Discussion Question 3

How did the death of Vann's father affect her? Would she have been different if her father survived?

## Vocabulary

circumspect, boondoggle, distraught, bigotry, detonation, dubious, ostensibly, endorse, propensity, raspy, receptacle, blacklisted



# Chapters 21 - 25

## Summary

In Chapter 21, Chris wakes up to find that a tour group of Haden's have been recently bombed through the news and that the Agora will soon be bought by Accelerant. Before Chris can watch any more of the news, he gets a call from Tony wanting to have a private meeting. Chris allows Tony and Vann into his private online space where both joke that it reminds them of the Batcave before settling into business. Tony explains the neural network he found in Brenda Rees and makes a point of saying that there is a possibility of taking over an Integrator's body completely with this software. Tony talks about Lucas Hubbard's software coding abilities and the past work he has done, leading Chris to suspect Lucas of being somehow involved with Brenda and John Sani. Tony then goes on to explain that the control possibility comes from the interpolator, when in use it helps to connect bad signals of software to the brain but when it is working, other programs can slip in undetected. During the discussion, more suspicion is cast on not only Lucas Hubbard, but his attorney Samuel Schwartz as well. Chris is starting to put together the crimes and has come to the conclusion that Nicholas Bell, being Lucas Hubbard's main Integrator, will have access to his sister Cassandra and will probably make a murder attempt, which would throw the Haden community into panic and cause companies dealing with them to no longer want to do associate with them. Chris reasons that through this Lucas can buy these companies and create his own empire by expanding Haden related devices to a more mainstream market. Chris wants to act on this information, but Vann urges him not to until they have every piece of information they need to make a proper arrest.

Chris meets with Klah Redhouse and the leaders of the Navajo Nation again in Chapter 22 to further assure them that he is still working on the case and mentions another plan of his. When he returns, he visits with his father, who is still trying to mentally process the previous night's home invasion and the loss of his political career. Marcus Shane wants to know why he had to tell police that it was a simple home invasion and Chris finally gives his father the full details of what is going on as well as asking him to join in on his plan.

Later, Chris and Vann make a visit to Jim Buchold's home to continue their investigation of the Loudoun Pharma bombing. Jim states that he is closing the company and is considering the purchase offer made by Lucas Hubbard in a recent phone call as he is no longer able to produce or research his Neurorelease drug. Chris' day continues as he makes his first visit to Cassandra Bell's online space to talk about her brother Nicholas. She tells Chris that they are extremely close and he tells her about Lucas Hubbard and his use of Nicholas. Cassandra demands to know the full details of what is going on and Chris tells her everything, including the fact that Nicholas will be used soon to try to murder her.



Chris and Vann visit the home of Samuel Schwartz in Chapter 23. He is on his way to his children's soccer game and is not interested in answering any of Chris or Vann's questions. Chris and Vann talk briefly about some of the people who were killed in the Loudoun Pharma bombing, but Samuel continues to show disinterest. Seeing this, the pair begin to talk about Brenda Rees and how she killed herself with a grenade. They also tell Samuel about her dying words accusing Samuel of not being at the Shane mansion the entire night, making him a suspect in the Loudoun Pharma bombing. Once Samuel hears this, he refuses to speak to Chris and Vann without his own lawyer present. Vann then asks him about the interpolator, which causes Samuel to demand immunity in exchange for his testimony. Vann cannot guarantee this and says that she will have him charged with all of the recent crimes surrounding the bombing and the deaths of three Integrators if he does not speak. Samuel finally gives up wanting to know when he can see his children again, but Vann can only tell him that the next time he will do so the children will be adults.

Nicholas Bell goes to his sister's home in Chapter 24. He notices a personal transport in the corner, but Cassandra tells him that it is a gift for someone else. Nicholas quietly comes closer to Cassandra's body and begins stabbing it. Chris is in the transport and tries to tackle Nicholas, but is unsuccessful. He chases Nicholas out into the street where he is arrested after he and Chris are hit by a car, causing Vann to make a joke about the amount of personal transports Chris has destroyed lately.

In the FBI interrogation room, Vann and Chris try to question Nicholas but are unsuccessful. Nicholas maintains that he truly intended to kill Cassandra as she is a Haden activist and a threat to the community. Vann argues that this is not truly Nicholas as the body that Nicholas stabbed belonged to another woman and that Nicholas and Cassandra have such a close relationship he should have known it was not her. Vann goes on to deduce that Lucas Hubbard is really in Nicholas' body and that he is staying in there just long enough to have Nicholas convicted for murder, which would leave Lucas unaffected.

Vann later brings in Tony to discuss the software that Lucas has created to fully control Bruce Skow, John Sani, Nicholas Bell, and Brenda Rees. While doing so, Tony also gives a description of the new software that he has created that would not only keep Lucas from reentering Nicholas' body should he try to escape, but Nicholas still maintains he has no knowledge of what Tony is talking about. John Sani's family is brought in to listen to the interrogation and Vann tells Nicholas that Samuel Schwartz has already made a plea deal giving them the information that they need to make a conviction. When even this method does not work, Tony then tells the group that he has also developed a special kind of software for Nicholas that would trap Lucas in but it would give full control of the body back to Nicholas. This would cause Lucas to be trapped as Nicholas would use his position as Lucas' Integrator to sell Accelerant Investments piece by piece and to watch as Chris' plan of having his father join in a business deal where he and the Navajo Nation would create a new kind of Agora that would not be privatized.

Sensing that his company would be ruined and that there is nothing else he can do, Lucas finally admits that it is he who has control over Nicholas' body. Lucas explains that he used Bruce Skow and John Sani as they were mentally deficient and would not be easily missed by the government. Lucas goes on to explain that in doing this, he was able to use them to discover other companies' secrets and use Cassandra's murder as a way to cause chaos with Haden related companies, forcing the sale of those companies to Accelerant. John's family is given closure as they tell him how horrible he is and Lucas explains that John actually killed himself because he had a few moments where he was not integrated with Samuel Schwartz. John felt that in committing suicide, there would be attention drawn to Lucas' plans and that Lucas would be stopped. With this admission, Vann orders Lucas to go back to his own body for his arrest. Nicholas is finally freed from being trapped in his own body and the first thing he wants to do is see his sister.

In Chapter 25, Marcus, the Navajo Nation, and Cassandra are at the protest march for the Abrams-Kettering bill where they announce their new online space. As Vann and Chris watch, a group of Hadens come to Vann, excited to meet the person that arrested Lucas Hubbard. As they want to take a picture with her, they do not know who Chris is, making him very happy as he agrees to take a picture of the Hadens with Vann.

## Analysis

Another bend in the political aspect of the novel occurs in the beginning of Chapter 21 as the morning news shows a tour bus of Hadens was bombed and the resulting fight that ensues afterwards. There is only minor concern over this as Vann and Chris are technically on medical leave due to their own previous attacks, but the focus of the narrative cannot return to the main investigation as another news story is deemed especially important. The effects of the Abrams-Kettering bill takes shape in a major way as the Agora will be privatized following the sale between the government and Accelerant Investments, adding another element of mystery as to why Accelerant would be so interested in buying the Agora.

Although Chris wants to respond, the narrative once again shifts in a totally different direction, but this time it brings the attention back to the plot of the novel. There is a sense of urgency in Tony's tone as he requests to meet Vann and Chris in a secure location. The scene is slightly comical as Chris allows Vann and Tony into his own virtual space as Vann and Tony simultaneously agree that it reminds them of the Batcave. The motive for Tony's meeting is to discuss the neural network of Brenda Rees and to give information that propels the investigation further. Tony gives a technical analysis of how if someone is an absolute expert at the software in a person's neural network, it may be possible for someone to completely take control of an Integrator's body. Through deduction and knowledge given in a previous chapter, Chris makes a deduction that casts further suspicion onto Lucas Hubbard. There is a small bit of back story once again provided by Tony about Lucas, but there is a slight deviation as Chris makes an interjection with incoming news about the "ninja threep" that attacked him earlier. There is a correlation made between the software and the personal transport as

Lucas Hubbard is on a committee that provides licenses for developmental Haden products and the fact that his previous experiences have included extensive software code writing.

Although there is a brief moment of speculation that the main culprit behind these crimes is Lucas Hubbard, Tony's narration is a depiction of how he has used his own hacking abilities as an example of how someone could steal other company's software codes to create something unique, although it is still difficult. From there, there is an admission that his belief that an Integrator could totally be under someone else control is wrong upon further analysis. He bases this on the killing of Brenda Rees, where he introduces a key item called an interpolator. This device is defined as something designed to provide maintenance and to reduce breaks in the streaming of data to a neural network. If deliberately engaged, a hacker can invade an Integrator mind through this channel and can covertly rewrite software codes. Since this is an error that does not have any great attention drawn to it, this is a virtually undetectable except to experts like Lucas Hubbard. This is another piece of not only the technology theme, but also another unmistakable link to identifying the main suspect as Lucas.

The conversation continues with more evidence being presented, but there is a distinct link to Samuel Schwartz as Hubbard's accomplice. There are some shocking elements in this line of dialogue including the fact that Brenda Rees was an expendable person in Lucas' plan. There is a slight moment of reaction made by Vann, as her own previous experiences are parallel to what actually caused Brenda's death. She is angered that Lucas would do something like this, but she is determined to hear more of Tony's presentation of the facts.

At this point there is a major epiphany made as Tony states that the John Sani's neural network had a looking software code. It is here that the narrative touches upon the first crime in the novel and answers why Nicholas Bell and John Sani were in the same room. This important portion of rising action provides the motive for John to be in the room as Lucas uses John to initially make contact with Nicholas so that Lucas can integrate into Nicholas' body before John's death. There is the tone of surprise as Vann realizes that her first interrogation of Nicholas was not with Nicholas but with Lucas Hubbard himself. Through a moment of conjecture, the main motivation behind this first crime has been made clear, so that Lucas can use Nicholas Bell's body to get closer to his radical sister, Cassandra.

The question of what is the purpose of getting close to Cassandra is asked with the answer being a key factor in the politics theme. If Cassandra is killed, especially by her brother who talks about being against Haden rights, then the protest and march occurring in Washington will become even more violent than what it already is. There is also a brief allusion to the Abrams-Kettering bill and how Cassandra's murder will cause companies who are already leaving the Haden supply market will sell their stocks at an even lower price to be rid of it. Through a great deal of dialogue the overall goals of Lucas Hubbard are exposed as he is trying to create a complete business empire by enabling Haden products to be used by others even though they are not suffering from the disease, which opens up the markets for a multitude of other customers.



With this new revelation the narrative is inching closer to a climactic point, but Vann wants Chris to make sure that every piece of missing information is taken care of before they proceed any further. There is an anger in Chris and Vann, but there is also a certain amount of caution, leading Chris to develop a new strategy on how to deal with Lucas. There is mention of the interpolator again as Chris is formulating a plan, which is not disclosed in this chapter. As the current chapter closes, there is a new sense of hope that Chris and Vann will finally be able to make the necessary arrangements to bring closure to this case.

Chapter 22 starts out as a slight deviation as Chris meets with Klah Redhouse and the leaders of the Navajo Nation. The reasoning is unclear, other than for Chris to give his reassurances once again that he will find justice for John Sani and Bruce Skow. There is an intimation that Chris has formulated a plan that needs the cooperation of the Navajo government, there is some recognition that Redhouse already knows this plan and is approving of it, but the scene shifts before this plan the reader is made aware of it.

The scene shifts, presumably with a positive outcome in the Navajo Nation, as Chris is back in the Shane mansion. The narrative shows that although several chapters have passed, it is only the next day when Chris enters the Shane mansion. The dialogue between Chris and his father is heavy with the feelings of anger and remorse that Marcus Shane has over the death of Bruce Skow. There are no charges pending against Chris' father, meaning that the subterfuge of the home robbery has worked to Chris' advantage, but at this point there is a detected sense of curiosity in Marcus as to why it was absolutely necessary. There is no drawn out explanation for this, but Chris explains the details of events up to this point which trigger a remarkable reaction of anger in Marcus Shane. This anger is brought on by the knowledge that Lucas Hubbard is the main suspect behind all of the recent crimes and the attempt to murder Chris.

Another result of the recent murder attempt touches on the political aspect of Marcus' life as he is given a subtle suggestion that he should not run for Senate as Marcus' killing of Bruce Skow could have a negative effect on the unnamed political party that Marcus is in. There is also an implication that Marcus should stay out of politics all together, which is met with a sarcastic comment made by Marcus. He does not seem to be wholly upset by this, he is more interested at this point in helping Chris bring Lucas Hubbard to justice. Chris is able to shift the conversation to one of Marcus' strengths in hopes that by doing so, the plan he has concocted will be successful. There is a slight diversion back to Marcus' feelings of shame and guilt over the death of man who was innocent but being used by Lucas Hubbard. This segues into Chris assuring his father that the plan, which is still totally unknown to the reader, will be totally effective in providing a dual purpose. The first being that Lucas Hubbard will be stopped and the second that will in some way benefit the Navajo Nation, presumably in honor of John Sani and Bruce Skow.

The scene flips to Loudon Pharma with no specific motive that is immediately mentioned for this visit. Right at the onset of the scene a discussion between Jim Buchold and Chris is crucial in establishing a new clue in the investigation. This is the





only other time that the drug Neurorelease is mentioned throughout the narrative as Jim is slightly bitter at the destruction of what could have been a revolutionary drug by curing the Haden community. It is interesting to note that there is a startling revelation as Jim alludes to a phone call from Lucas Hubbard, offering to buy the remains of Loudon Pharma for an undisclosed price. Jim is angered by Lucas' arrogance, but there is a slight hint that Jim may seriously consider this proposal.

The chapter continues to meander randomly between scenes as Chris makes his first encounter with Cassandra Bell, who has only been briefly mentioned by others until this point. There is an unsettling description about the silence and darkness of Cassandra's online area, making it all the more surprising when Chris hears her for the first time. Cassandra's voice is calm and aloof as Cassandra actually talks to Chris. There is a brief moment of irony as the pair agree that they have never met although they are such prominent Haden. As the conversation continues, social influences are discussed in terms of metaphors with Cassandra's admission that she has respect for Marcus Shane and his works. There is also the admission that Cassandra is not good at handling what she considers small talk, but she continues, with a small piece of back story about her brother Nicholas. It is apparent that Nicholas and Cassandra are extremely close to one another, but it is extremely important to note that although Nicholas is an Integrator, Cassandra has never integrated with him.

As the conversation moves forward with small chit chat about the natures of siblings, the tone is slightly darkened as Chris questions if Nicholas plans to be with Cassandra alone soon. Cassandra confirms this and is now wary of why Chris would question this. At this point, the entire focus of crime and how it relates to Nicholas is condensed into a brief synopsis by Chris so that Cassandra understands what has been happening to this point with her brother while he is controlled by someone else. Cassandra is interested in hearing more of the details of what is going on, but once Chris inadvertently offends her by not telling her more, her demeanor changes in a brief flash of anger. Cassandra's personality suggests that she does not like to be treated like an invalid and views herself as more than capable of handling any situation. Chris is reluctant to divulge any more of the details into what is going on but he names Lucas Hubbard as the main culprit. The reaction given by Cassandra is nonchalant and suggests a feeling of boredom with the mention of his name. Cassandra's brief description of her impression for Lucas shows a previously ambiguous regard for Lucas, that is replaced with something more negative at this point. There is genuine concern for Nicholas in Cassandra's next questions as she is hopeful that he can be saved. As the chapter finally concludes, another plot twist is revealed as Chris indicates that Nicholas will try to kill Cassandra soon and that Cassandra should let him get close enough to attempt this. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger as no further details as to why this should happen or how Chris will protect Cassandra are given.

Chapter 23 reunites Chris and Vann as it jumps ahead to the next day in the home of Samuel Schwartz. This is presumably to be a short visit with questions about Jay Kearney and the continued investigation into the Loudoun Pharma bombing. Samuel's attitude is slightly defensive and annoyed, as he is more concerned with getting to his children's soccer games than answer Chris and Vann's questions. Samuel's alibi of



being at the Shane mansion on the night in question is briefly overlooked as Vann supplies previously unknown information about the relationship between Accelerant Investments and the company that provided the materials used in the explosion. This is not exclusively incriminating information, leading to more information about both companies being divulged, with the same passive response by Samuel.

The conversation continues to be distantly polite as the sale of Loudoun Pharma is briefly mentioned. Samuel's demeanor is casual, and it is evident that he is more interested in being with his children than being helpful in the investigation. This causes a change of tactics used by Chris and Vann as they switch to discussion of some of the people killed in the explosion. They give intimate details of their deaths as well as their memorials, which can be seen as a tactic to play on Samuel's sympathies and use guilt as a means of getting him to talk. Once again, there is only a distant response to this line of commentary, causing another turn in the conversation.

The last attempt to prod Samuel into talking draws the reader back to the party at the Shane mansion and the fact that Samuel was using Brenda Rees as an Integrator. This opens up a correlation between Brenda and Jay Kearney as both were Integrators for Samuel who have recently killed themselves. There are undertones of sarcasm as Vann and Chris speak, especially about Brenda Rees' shooting Vann and her subsequent use of a grenade. Samuel tries to make an interjection, which causes the conversation to flip back to a more serious tone as Chris makes the accusation that brings the reader back to Brenda's last words about Samuel's absence from the Shane mansion. This brings forth a detailed conjecture about Samuel's involvement in the Loudoun Pharma bombing.

With Samuel's invocation of his rights to no longer speak without his attorney present, there is a momentary pause before Vann utilizes a single word that changes the entire perspective of the situation. With use of the word "interpolator," Samuel's demeanor changes as a recognition that finally Vann and Chris have reached a climactic point in the novel. Samuel's silence denotes his guilt, marking a definite turn of events in the narrative. The description of options available to Samuel do not provide him with the full immunity that he wants, making the conversation stereotypical of a guilty accomplice trying to use the situation to his advantage. Vann's eagerness to fully implicate Samuel as the sole culprit in the Loudon Pharma bombing as well as the other crimes signals to Samuel that there is nothing more he can do at this point but to provide full cooperation with Vann and Chris. With the first arrest in the crimes that have taken place in the novel, the chapter is able to close as Vann makes a reference to how many years Samuel will probably receive in terms of not being able to see his children again until they are adults.

Chapter 24 brings the true climax of the novel as Nicholas Bell comes to visit his sister Cassandra. It should be noted that Nicholas remains mostly silent as he enters the area, as well the personal transport in the corner is something that causes him momentary confusion. There is a slight deception with the personal transport as Chris is actually in the transport waiting for Nicholas to stab Cassandra's body. This proves to be another ruse as the body does not belong to Cassandra, which twists the narrative into

a violent chase scene. There is a small moment of irony as Chris comments on the potential destruction of yet another personal transport in his possession before the chase continues for quite some time. The chase comes to a conclusion upon hitting Nicholas with a car and his immediate arrest. There is a slightly comical exchange of dialogue regarding the possibly ruined personal transport before Vann goes back on a serious tone and the scene closes.

The next scene is in an FBI interrogation room with Vann doing the predominant amount of speaking as a point of falling action. At this point, the dialogue is of the usual police banter with Nicholas claiming his innocence and Vann giving him his rights. They make a brief mention of Samuel Schwartz, who was arrested in the previous chapter, but Nicholas seems unfazed by this development. Nicholas' demeanor is dismissive and aloof, reminiscent of Samuel's attitude. The banter continues enough for Nicholas to indicate that he purposefully intended to kill Cassandra as she presents a danger to the world.

There is a major plot twist as Vann pretends to be curious about one more item. The true culprit behind the crimes is mentioned, Lucas Hubbard. Vann is slightly mocking as she is continuing to draw information out of Nicholas. The main evidence she wants is the admission that it is really Lucas Hubbard controlling Nicholas. With this, Vann and Chris make assumptions about the particulars of Lucas' control of Nicholas long enough to have Nicholas sent to prison and providing Lucas with the opportunity to go on with his life freely. This evidence is supported by the introduction of the corpse used as a decoy in Nicholas's attempt to murder Cassandra as a substantiating clue as Nicholas should have known just by looking at the body that it was not Cassandra.

More corroborating information comes with the introduction of Tony into the scene. Although Tony is in awe of Lucas Hubbard, there is a need to get to the matter at hand. Once again, Tony's technical prowess is on display here as he is able to explain to Nicholas/Lucas the methods in which he was able to confirm Lucas' work. With Tony's explanation comes a new method in trying to get Nicholas to say that he really is Lucas. This ploy includes informing Lucas that Tony has fully figured out what methods Lucas has used to obtain control over the recently deceased Hadens. Nicholas portrays himself to be still confused, making the discussion useless at this point.

This sort of knowledge is meant to compel Lucas to show his true self, but once again, Vann and Chris' method does not work. There is a sharp turn in the line of communication as John Sani's family is brought in as another means to coerce Lucas to talk. Before this new method can be utilized, there is a certain amount of aggravation and loss of patience shown by Vann, causing her to make a revelation about Samuel Schwartz's arrest. The motivation here is to provide Lucas with the knowledge about the possibilities of Samuel turning into more of an informant against Lucas and the possible activities to come in the forms of search warrants. The narrative circles back to Tony and his technological capabilities as he makes a new development that would have permanent results as there is a claim that he has made software to ultimately trap Lucas in Nicholas' body permanently while Nicholas would have full use of his body and mind. This is an ironic twist as Lucas would suffer a sort of secondary lock in. This is

especially terrible for Lucas as he would potentially be forced to watch as Nicholas is already known to be Lucas' main Integrator and would have complete access to Accelerant Investments. A new smaller twist comes with this as the plan that Chris concocted in a previous chapter comes to light in terms of the creation of a new Agora-like space, which would be made possible by Nicholas selling parts of Accelerant. The plan would then entail the business opportunity hinted at in a previous chapters in conversations with Marcus Shane and the Navajo Nation.

It is the thought of having Accelerant being taken apart that provides the catalyst for this dramatic scene as Lucas finally reveals that he was involved in all of the crimes up to this point. His motives are given: he wanted to use John and Bruce because they were mentally deficient men who would not be traced easily. The rationale Lucas uses brings together the elements of technology and politics as Lucas was originally eager to create a large monopoly through the use causing panic within the Haden community via violent acts against them and their research. With Abrams-Kettering going into effect, more companies would not be able to survive the lack of funding nor would they want to be involved with the potential violence as demonstrated by the Loudoun Pharma bombing. There is a brief interjection by John's family, who have up to this point remained silent, but they finally show their emotions of hatred towards Lucas over using John in such a way. There is an admission that John actually did kill himself in order to get police attention that would finally stop Lucas and Samuel's plans, which did provide the starting point of the investigation.

With this admission, the main actions of the story are completed, giving the opportunity for the falling action of Vann ordering Lucas to return to his own body for immediate arrest. In a final twist to Lucas' story line, there is a revelation that the reverse software keeping Lucas locked into Nicholas' body is actually a hoax devised by Tony as a method of coercion. At this point there is the introduction of the real Nicholas Bell, who has been presumably locked into his own body for the majority of the novel. The main indication that this is indeed Nicholas is his willingness to testify against Lucas for everything that has happened and the insistence that he see his sister to reassure her safety. This falling action provides the closure for this chapter.

Chapter 25 is the shortest chapter and provides the close of the novel and the final actions of Vann and Chris as the investigation is finally over. The theme of politics is displayed here as the march and protest of the Abrams-Kettering bill is being played out peacefully. It is important to note that the Abrams-Kettering bill is set to take effect, but the business venture proposed by Chris between Marcus Shane and the Navajo Nation was not a ruse, but an actual plan. There is a final note towards independence, not only for the Haden community via this venture but for Chris as well. When he and Vann are having a casual dialogue they are met by other Hadens who do not seem to recognize Chris. They are more interested in Vann as she is recognized for the arrest of Lucas Hubbard. During a picture taking moment, there is a certain satisfaction that Chris has finally found the anonymity he has been searching for and his niche as a FBI agent, providing the end of not only the chapter, but the novel itself.



## Discussion Question 1

How do Tony, Chris, and Vann find out that Lucas Hubbard is the main culprit in what happened to John Sani and Brenda Rees? Why are Nicholas and Cassandra Bell such important factors in Lucas' plans?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Chris go to see Cassandra Bell? Why is her online space so dark and quiet? How are she and Chris similar? How are they different?

## Discussion Question 3

How would the Haden community react to the death of Cassandra Bell, especially being murdered by Nicholas? What does Lucas Hubbard hope to gain from this murder? How do the other murders help or hurt him as well?

## Vocabulary

benign, schematic, esoteric, idiosyncratic, puffery, genocide, claustrophobia, obtuse, commune, coddled, conglomerate, clarity, relegating, ruefully, periphery

# Characters

## Agent Chris Shane

Chris Shane is the narrator and protagonist of the novel. He has been a Haden since shortly after birth. In his youth, Chris was the poster child of the Haden acceptance movement. As an adult, Chris is trying to shrug off this fame and find his own place in the world as an FBI. agent. He also exerts his initiative for independence by finding a home for himself in a townhouse with other Haden professionals.

At the onset of the political unrest as a result of the Abrams-Kettering bill, Chris is labeled as a traitor to the Haden cause. Throughout the investigation, Chris has been the one to travel to the different locations, on account of his ability to integrate into any personal transport. Since he can do this, he becomes the main liaison between the FBI and the Navajo Nation.

Chris is also the one to go to Duarte, California to investigate the origin of the money orders that John Sani would send back to his family. Upon learning that John had been using the alias Oliver Green, Chris investigates John's apartment but is attacked by a "ninja threep." Upon his return he is witness to Brenda Rees shooting Vann in the shoulder and then exploding a hand grenade. He learns while she is dying that Samuel Schwartz was not at the Shane mansion the entire time she was supposed to be integrated with him, adding suspicion to Lucas Hubbard.

Chris immediately goes home just in time to fight off Bruce Skow before he can destroy Chris' body. After the discovery of the extent of Lucas Hubbard's involvement, Chris negotiates a deal between his father and the Navajo Nation that would create a new Agora space accessible for free. This not only helps the Navajo people, but it helps to flush Lucas Hubbard out of Nicholas Bell's body and to extract a full confession from him. In the end, Chris finds his place as a competent FBI agent and less as a role model, especially when a group of Hadens recognize Vann at the protest and march but do not recognize him.

## Leslie Vann

Leslie Vann is Chris Shane's partner in the FBI. She once had Haden's syndrome but recovered and had at one time been an Integrator. A near fatal incident with a psychotic Haden caused her to quit being an Integrator and she joined the FBI.'s division dealing with Haden related crimes.

Vann is a heavy drinker and smoker with an often brusque personality. She did not like her first partner, but has come to appreciate new partner Chris Shane for what he can do. Her character foil is Detective Trinh as they argue constantly in an effort to assert legal dominance over crime scenes when they are required to be together. Vann is shot

in the shoulder by Brenda Rees in a botched assassination attempt, but remains committed to finding the culprit behind John Sani's and Brenda Rees' deaths.

## **John Sani**

John Sani is the original crime victim in the novel. His body is found with his throat cut in the Watergate Hotel. Original speculation is that he was murdered by Nicholas Bell, but upon further investigation, it is revealed that he committed suicide.

John was a member of the Navajo Nation and was considered a slow learner after recovering from Haden's syndrome as a child. Upon applying for a janitor job at a local computer company, he was mysteriously offered a job as a personal assistant for an unknown employer.

During his employment, an Integrator neural network was installed in his brain. At first, this did not bother John, but over time he experienced blackouts where he would not remember his own actions, contrary to normal Integrator behavior. Although mentally deficient, John understood that something was not right with this arrangement and in an effort to bring attention to this situation John killed himself as soon as he was free from being integrated while meeting with Nicholas Bell/Lucas Hubbard. This was his attempt to make authorities aware of Lucas' plans and the catalyst for the entire investigation.

## **Tony**

Tony is a Haden and also the first person to meet Chris at the townhouse. Upon showing Chris around, there is an instant rapport between the two. Tony is a software specialist who works as a freelancer for most Haden related companies. Tony is an avid follower of the stock market, particularly Haden related items as he feels that the political unrest with the Abrams-Kettering bill could soon put him in a position where he receives little work. As the investigation into John Sani's death goes on and other crimes occur, Tony is brought in to work with Chris and Vann as a special consultant. Tony is able to delve into the neural networks of John Sani, Brenda Rees, and Bruce Skow and recognizes Lucas Hubbard's codes in each of the neural networks, thus revealing that it has been Lucas Hubbard behind all of the crimes.

## **Nicholas Bell**

Nicholas Bell is introduced as the alleged suspect in the murder of Johnny Sanni at the Watergate Hotel. Because he is an Integrator, the murder case has been assigned to the FBI. As he was taken into custody before the start of the novel a stun gun was used on him although he seemed to be confused and professing his innocence. Nicholas is an integrator for Lucas Hubbard but due to Lucas' illegal software, he is totally controlled by Lucas.





Lucas' motivation for using Nicholas is to frame him for the murder of Cassandra Bell, Nicholas' sister, in an attempt cause chaos in the Haden community and cause Haden related companies to sell to Accelerant Investments. Vann and Chris are able to use Nicholas' devotion to his sister as a way of flushing Lucas out of Nicholas' body as instead of murdering Cassandra, Lucas stabs a decoy, something that the real Nicholas would have noticed.

Once Lucas is out of Nicholas' body, Nicholas is eager to tell everything he knows about Lucas and Accelerant, but he makes visiting Cassandra his first priority.

## Lucas Hubbard

Lucas Hubbard is the president of Accelerant Investments and a Haden. Lucas fully embraces the Haden lifestyle as he feels he has been able to accomplish more as a Haden rather than as a regular human being. Lucas is a genius at Haden software programming and is the creator of the software that is in John Sani, Nicholas Bell, Brenda Rees, and Bruce Skow. Through this software, Nicholas and his accomplice/attorney Samuel Schwartz are able to control Integrators John, Nicholas, Brenda, and Bruce for their own purposes, ultimately ending in the deaths of John, Brenda, and Bruce.

Lucas' main purpose is to purchase as many Haden related companies as he can to create his own monopoly by causing panic within the Haden community along to go with the effects of the Abrams-Kettering bill. To achieve this, Lucas masterminds the bombing of Loudon Pharma and the attempted murder of Cassandra Bell. The framing of Nicholas Bell in Cassandra's murder would ensure that Lucas would be able to get away with his crimes and have the empire he wants, but John Sani's suicide starts the investigation into Lucas' software. Lucas comes clean with his plans after the arrest of Nicholas Bell, where Chris and Vann have made it aware that Samuel Schwartz has already been arrested and has already told authorities the entire story.

## Samuel Schwartz

Samuel Schwartz is the lawyer called by Nicholas Bell once he is arrested. Samuel is also a Haden who relies on the use of a personal transport, but on occasion he will use an Integrator. One of the main times he does this is during a dinner party held by Marcus Shane, he uses Brenda Rees as an Integrator. Upon Brenda's death, she tells Chris that Samuel was not in her body during the entire party. It is revealed that he was absent as he was in the process of bombing Loudoun Pharma in an attempt to further Lucas Hubbard's plans for a Haden product monopoly.

At the end of the investigation, Chris and Vann go to Samuel Schwartz first. He is unresponsive to many of their interrogation tactics, but once Vann mentions the interpolator, Samuel finally breaks down and talks. It is Samuel who came up with the idea of hiring John Sani and Bruce Skow as they are from the Navajo Nation and would not easily be traced by the government. when Samuel is arrested, he wants to know

when will he see his children again, but the only reply Vann can give him is that Samuel will not be able to see them again until some time in their adulthood.

## **Cassandra Bell**

Cassandra Bell is the sister of Nicholas Bell, as well as the leader of the Haden community protesting the Abrams-Kettering bill. Although not featured in the main portions of the novel, Cassandra's words of Haden pride and being the next wave of human evolution are mentioned several times as the motivation for the Loudoun Pharma bombing and Brenda Rees exploding a grenade.

When Chris finally meets Cassandra, he notices that her online space is completely dark except for the light around her face. her manner of speaking is slow and deliberate, but she is quick to anger when it is suggested that she needs to be protected. Cassandra is greatly concerned for her brother and admits that they have a special devotion to each other.

Chris informs her about Lucas' takeover of Nicholas' body and a possible murder attempt. When Nicholas/Lucas comes into her room to kill her, a decoy is set in her place for Nicholas/Lucas to stab and further identify Lucas as the main suspect. After Lucas is arrested, Cassandra attends the march and protest of the Abrams-Kettering bill with Marcus Shane and the leaders of the Navajo Nation to introduce a new Agora run by the Native Americans, giving new hope to the community.

## **Klah Redhouse**

Klah Redhouse is a police officer in the Navajo Nation. He is enlisted to help Chris with his investigation into John Sani's death. Originally wanting to work in computers, he turns to police work when there are no jobs available to him in his local area. Redhouse is assigned to take Chris to the Navajo Nation to tell the Sani family of John's death.

Redhouse is very likeable and he has an instant rapport with Chris. Redhouse is usually the main contact between Chris and the rest of the Navajo Nation. When Chris devises the plan to use the computer facility on Navajo land to create a new Agora space, it is presumably Redhouse that he tells first about this deal.

## **Brenda Rees**

Brenda Reese is the Integrator that Samuel Schwartz used on the night of the Shane house party. She is not the usual Integrator for Schwartz as his usual Integrator was Jay Kearney, who was at the time in the process of blowing up Loudon Pharma.

Later, Vann and Chris want to ask Brenda a few questions about the Loudoun Pharma bombing. Brenda agrees to meet them at a local coffee shop, but upon arrival, she takes out a gun and shoots Vann in the shoulder. After a chase into the middle of a

street, Brenda pulls out a hand grenade and detonates it, blowing off her own legs in the process. As she lay dying, Chris holds her and she whispers to him that during the Shane house party, Samuel Schwartz was not integrated with her the whole time like everyone thought he was.

After Tony is able to examine Brenda's neural network, it is revealed that she was under the same memory erasing and totally controlling software that John Sani and Bruce Skow.

## **Marcus Shane**

Marcus Shane is the father of Chris Shane. He is a retired basketball player who rose to fame through college then as a professional. Upon his retirement from being on the basketball court, Marcus created several successful companies. Marcus has recently started to focus on obtaining a political career, but it is ruined once he kills Bruce Skow during a murder attempt on Chris. After Chris tells Marcus the full extent of what is going on, Marcus is enraged but willing to help Chris in whatever way he can to seek justice against Lucas Hubbard. Chris devises a plan that would entail Marcus making a deal with the Navajo Nation's leaders to use the Window Rock Computational Facility to create a new Agora for the public. Marcus is successful with this and announces this deal with Cassandra Bell and Navajo leaders during the protest march.

## **Detective Trinh**

Detective Trinh is a Washington D.C. detective who is one of the first on the scene at the Watergate Hotel. There is an instant dislike between FBI agent Leslie Vann and Detective Trinh as Detective Trinh tries to show her dominance at the crime scene but is easily outranked by Vann. Trinh tries to tell Chris about Vann's mental instability during a scene where Chris' new roommate is attacked by local thugs. She tells Chris that Vann cannot handle extreme amounts of pressure, but Chris does not seem to be bothered by Vann. After the death of Brenda Rees, Detective Trinh finds that she no longer wants to help Chris as he goes to her superiors to release Brenda's body to FBI custody.

# Symbols and Symbolism

## Haden's syndrome

Haden's syndrome reflects the changes that cause a distinct difference in humans, causing a rift in society. This is an illness similar to the flu or meningitis during the first stage. This first stage originally had a fatality rate of almost 75% of the patients affected, with a great number of the remaining percentage only experiencing the first round of symptoms. The name of the disease comes from the First Lady of the United States Margaret Haden, as she was one of first and most prominent people to get the disease. The second stage of the disease is of being "locked in," where the body is comatose but the mind is still functional.

## Locked in

Locked in is the phrase representative of the way that Haden's syndrome patients are paralyzed but have fully functional minds. The body is stored in electronic cradles while the minds have the ability to travel in Personal Transports (see definition) or able to use a human host, known as an Integrator. Lock in can occur at any age. Chris became locked in as an infant, therefore he does not really know what it is like to have a fully functioning human body.

## Personal Transports

Personal Transport is the representation of Haden's being able to pursue a normal life, although they have no use of their own bodies. Also known as "threeps" they are robotic bodies used to house the mind of a "locked in" Haden. They come in various makes, styles, sizes, but they are all human in basic form. They all have special software that allows them to capture images, go into the Agora, and other things. FBI agent Chris Shane prefers to use a personal transport although he can use an Integrator. His model of personal transport is considered a high end model. He is able to use his transport to take an image of the crime scene so that the area could be investigated with nothing being touched.

## Abrams-Kettering Bill

The Abrams-Kettering Bill is the manifestation of the way that the government plays a deep role in the lives of the Haden community. As a major piece of legislation, the bill was created by David Abrams and Wanda Kettering to eliminate all funding for most Haden related services including housing and medical costs. This is in response to criticism that the Haden community should not be considered disabled given they have abilities normal humans do not have. This is a highly controversial bill that is the cause of the planned march and protests taking place throughout the course of the novel.

## **Love Seat**

The love seat is seen as the beginning major action of the novel as it leads to the discovery of John Sani's death. At first, it is unknown why the love seat has been pitched out the window, but the reason is made more obvious as the novel progresses. This will bring about the investigation that exposes Lucas Hubbard's plot to create a monopoly of Haden related companies.

## **Headset**

A headset is a representation of some of the technology used by people who do not have Haden's syndrome to interact with Haden's. The headset found at the Watergate Hotel is fitted with a scanner and neural transmitter is in the Watergate Hotel room but is not a high powered headset, mainly just medical equipment from the early days of Haden's syndrome fused together. John Sani had this to make it look like he was an average person, but it is a ruse to get Nicholas Bell and John to meet without any suspicions by anyone around Lucas Hubbard and Samuel Schwartz. This becomes a major piece of evidence in Chris and Vann's investigation into John Sani's death.

## **Glass Shard**

The glass shard is demonstrative of the violence that occurs in the Watergate Hotel that causes the death of John Sani. The glass shard is found during the initial part of the investigation and is further tested once Chris and Vann see that it is covered in blood. This turns out to be the alleged murder weapon. Although Nicholas Bell is originally arrested for John's murder, it is revealed that John took his own life so that he will no longer be controlled by Lucas Hubbard and to initiate an investigation that will expose Lucas Hubbard's plans.

## **Confession tape**

The confession tape is a symbol of the alleged animosity held by Karl Baer and Jay Kearney towards Loudoun Pharma's efforts to create a cure for Haden's syndrome. The tape is found after the destruction of Loudon Pharma, when Chris and Vann go to the home of Karl Baer, the scientist whose identification badge was used to get into the company property to destroy it. After the discovery of Karl's corpse, having been stabbed in the head, Chris and Vann find a videotape confession where Jay Kearney, an Integrator, and Karl confess to destroying Loudon Pharma because they believe in the words of Cassandra Bell in that finding a cure for Haden's syndrome would exterminate the next level of human evolution.

## Money order

The money order denotes the way in which payment occurs between John Sani and his mysterious employers. When John Sani was hired, he was given large sums of money weekly after which he would purchase money orders to send back home to his family in the Navajo Nation. Chris makes a copy of one when he goes to talk to the Sani family to determine where the money orders are coming from. They are from a post office in Duarte, California where Chris learns that John has been living under the name Oliver Green for some time.

## Neurorelease

Neurorelease exemplifies the hope that Haden's syndrome could one day be completely cured and that people who are locked in can return to and use their own bodies. This drug was still in testing phases when Loudon Pharma is destroyed by Jay Kearney and Karl Baer. Karl Baer was the lead scientist handling the research, but due to Cassandra Bell's influence, found that curing Haden's syndrome would destroy the Haden community. In an attempt to keep this drug from progressing into a successful cure, the company is destroyed along with years worth of research for it. The primary function for Neurorelease is to allow the brain to control the rest of the body through ways other than the voluntary nervous system, therefore releasing a Haden from being "locked in." When Lucas Hubbard attempts to buy Loudoun Pharma, it is to potentially keep any more research from being done on this drug.

## Data card

The data card is the embodiment of John Sani's final words as he has become aware of being involved in suspicious activity. The data card is found when Chris goes to John's apartment and is attacked by a mysterious black personal transport that has intentions of stealing the data card. It is marked for his family and they are able to view it once Chris figures out the password. On the data card, John talks of his original happiness with the job but then the eventual knowledge that he has been unwillingly recruited to do things he has no memory of doing. This is also deemed as John's farewell to his family as he knows that something bad is going to happen and that he will most likely never see them again.

## Filament Digital

Filament Digital is a representation of the large amount of smaller companies under Accelerant Investments. It is the company paying for John Sani's apartment. When Chris tries to find a local address for the company, he is only given John's address as the U.S. office. The company is actually used to cover up the link between John Sani and Lucas Hubbard.



## Ninja Threep

The ninja threep symbolizes the dark nature of the crimes taking place and the corrupted use of Haden related products. This personal transport is completely black and has many more abilities than the normal personal transport. It is in John Sani's apartment when Chris goes to California and attacks Chris on sight. The threep's purpose for being in the apartment is to steal the envelope for John Sani's family containing the data card with John's video. Chris is able to defeat the threep, but also issues the user of the threep that they will be found.

## Interpolator

The interpolator exemplifies the complicated nature of the neural network but also the way in which it is easily corrupted. It is a small part of the implanted neural networks that acts as a bridge for broken pieces of data that are transferred into Integrator's bodies. Lucas Hubbard is able to make software that would continuously interrupt data streams so that the interpolator is constantly doing its job, but in doing so it allows other programs to slip by undetected. Through this, Lucas is able to install software into the brains of Nicholas Bell, Jay Kearney, John Sani, Bruce Skow, and Brenda Rees that would allow their bodies to be totally taken over with no memory of what has happened and no control to stop whoever is in control. This is how Lucas Hubbard and Samuel Schwartz are able to carry out their crimes.

# Settings

## The Agora

The Agora is the collective online space used for the Haden community. It is the scene where the first protest for Haden rights begins shortly before the Abrams-Kettering bill takes effect. It is a vastly large space meant to signify a whole virtual world, complete with shops, public areas, and other things that are available in the normal world. There are also private spaces that Hadens use for their own purposes and are decorated or made into anything that the Haden would want, such as Chris' version of the Batcave. Towards the end of the novel, it is revealed that the Agora is to be bought out by Accelerant and privatized, meaning many changes in how Hadens use the space.

## Watergate Hotel

The Watergate Hotel is the crime scene where Chris and Vann find John Sani with his throat cut. This is the original crime scene of the novel. During a computerized investigation of the room, Chris and Vann find a glass shard used to cut John's throat as well as a headset that is for non-Haden use. After reinvestigating the blood on the floor and furniture, as well as looking at John's body, it is determined that John cut his own throat. This was not to frame Nicholas Bell, but to stop Lucas Hubbard from continuing with the experiments of a neural network that would make Integrators lose their ability to control their minds and bodies as well as remember when they are being integrated.

## Townhouse

In Chris' efforts to shrug off his famous persona and to find some independence from his family, Chris rents a room in a local townhouse that is near to his office. The townhouse is the home of other Hadens and they form a protective and close knit group. The members of the townhouse work together to monitor their bodies and their transports and the flow of the home is easy going. After Chris and Vann are attacked, Chris takes Vann to the townhouse for a drink where she gives Chris the truth of why she is no longer an Integrator.

## Accelerant Investments

Lucas Hubbard is the president and Samuel Schwartz is the lead lawyer for Accelerant Investments, a leading investment firm in control of other companies such as Medichord. Accelerant is also the owners of other key companies including Filament Digital, the company providing the address for John Sani. Accelerant is already a worldwide company with many different locations, but Lucas Hubbard wants to make it a monopoly of all things that are Haden related in hopes to expand these products to mainstream markets instead of just Hadens. When Chris threatens the destruction of

Accelerant by having Nicholas Bell continue as Lucas' Integrator, Lucas finally admits that he was behind the control of the other Integrators, the attempted assassination of Cassandra Bell, and the bombing of Loudoun Pharma.

## **Loudon Pharma**

Loudon Pharma is a medical company dedicated to the research for the cure and vaccination of Haden's Syndrome. During a dinner party at the home of Marcus Shane, the CEO of Loudon Pharma, Jim Buchold, is informed that the company has been destroyed in an attack carried out by Baer and Kearney. The motive of the attack is given on a confession tape by Baer and Kearney where they claim that finding the cure for Haden's syndrome is wrong as it will destroy the next phase in the evolution of humanity and they cite Cassandra Bell for enlightening them with this knowledge. Due to the destruction of the company, several years of research is gone with no hope of recovering it as all of the information was kept private on a computer server in one of the company's buildings. Some time later, a sale offer is made by Lucas Hubbard, much to Jim Buchold's anger, in an attempt to corner all Haden related companies.

## **Navajo Nation**

The Navajo Nation is primarily a separate government for the Native American population in the Southwest and is the home of John Sani and his family. Since the Navajo Nation is regarded as a separate government, their people are not found under the same identification files as the rest of the United States. There is a computation facility within this land that is only doing mediocre business, but it holds the Medichord company's records. Chris visits the Navajo Nation frequently to conduct the investigation and then to propose a business deal between the Navajo Nation's leaders and Marcus Shane that would create a new Agora and bring a multitude of jobs to the area.

## **Duarte, California**

John Sani moved to Duarte, California shortly after he was hired to be a "executive assistant." He is given an apartment and is able to send money home to his family from the post office a short walk from his home. John lives under the name Ollie Green while he is living there in an apartment funded by Filament Digital. Upon Chris' search of John's apartment, Chris is attacked by a "ninja threep" who is looking for an envelope with a data card inside that is marked for John's family.

# Themes and Motifs

## Illness

The illness of Haden's syndrome is the main unifying factor in the story's plot, as it provides the basis for all of the other elements in the novel. With an extensive Prologue, the illness itself is defined giving the reader a better understanding of impact this disease has had on the world. It is interesting that the author chooses to begin the actual narrative of the story 25 years after the Prologue. This gives society the chance to evolve around the virus in the forms of various technological advances and a form of acceptance within the community.

The opportunity to see the effects of Haden's syndrome first hand come through the main character, Chris Shane. Haden's syndrome is not a deterrent for him as he has lived with his condition since he was an infant. Instead, he grows up as a key part in the Haden acceptance movement. Over time, Chris is able to live a full life through the use of his personal transports. He does not choose to use an Integrator, preferring his own abilities in his transport to move around. Chris actually lives a full life even with the disease and progresses as a normal person, getting a college degree then going on to become an FBI agent.

The beginning of the narrative correlates with the beginning of Chris' partnership with veteran agent Leslie Vann at a time of turbulence for the Haden community. The illness of Haden's syndrome directly links to the politics aspect as the Abrams-Kettering bill would abolish all funding for Haden affairs. Haden's syndrome has created a wide market of services and goods but without this funding, many Hadens will be forced to go without them. It is this catalyst that sets in motion the main actions and crimes throughout the novel as a Haden entrepreneur named Lucas Hubbard tries to corner the Haden market so that he may expand his own company.

Haden's syndrome does not always leave a person locked into their own body. If a person survives the first stages which resembles the flu or meningitis, the individual has the rare ability to become an Integrator. This aspect adds to the development of Agent Vann's character as she contracted Haden's syndrome as a teen. There is a certain amount of guilt that Vann carries with her about this, especially since she passed the disease on to her father who did not survive. Motivated by this guilt, Vann becomes an Integrator, but a near death experience with a psychotic Haden causes Vann to quit but is recruited by the FBI to assist in Haden related crimes.

Other characters are greatly influenced by Haden's syndrome in ways that will define their roles in the narrative. The initial victim of the crimes, John Sani, is someone like Vann who had previously contracted Haden's syndrome but survived. The main difference between the two characters is that Vann is completely in control of her Integrator abilities. John on the other hand is easily manipulated by Lucas Hubbard and

his associate Sam Schwartz because John is mentally challenged. This made it easier to convince John to become an Integrator for their experiment in total mind control.

The main purpose in having complete control over John Sani is to use him for minor spying on other company leaders but to also ensure that their experiment will work. The ultimate goal is to utilize another survivor of Haden's syndrome, Nicholas Bell, in the murder of his sister Cassandra, a radical Haden activist. Cassandra fully embraces her illness, she does not use any sort of personal transport or Integrator. She finds that Haden's syndrome is the next wave in human evolution. It is this theory that is the motivation behind the crimes in the novel, but it is a misconstrued notion. Cassandra does not want to cause harm to other individuals or companies as others have done using her words as a motivation for the violence.

## Crime

Crime is the element that unifies the characters within the novel as Chris is paired with Leslie Vann as an FBI agent. The crime element begins with the arrest of Nicholas Bell for the murder of John Sani. The unusual part of the arrest is that Nicholas seemingly has no idea what he has done or what he has been arrested for. This is the first inclination that Chris and Vann have that this investigation is not going to be as simple as they had thought. It is further complicated by the inclusion of Samuel Schwartz, who enters as Nicholas' attorney, but there is a question of the connection between Nicholas and Schwartz, which is flippantly explained to throw off any other sort of questioning.

The death of John Sani is not the only crime that Chris and Vann are called upon to investigate. At various times they have to postpone their investigation into this case to handle other cases and dilemmas as they are mainly responsible for handling Haden related crimes in the area. Brief interjections into the narrative come as Chris and Vann help the local police department handle minor Haden offenses due to the influx of Haden protesters in the area. A comical interaction between Haden's arrested while wearing presidential faces serves as a primary example of the situations that Chris and Vann find themselves in although this only serves as a deviation from the crime theme as a whole.

Another key crime that Chris and Vann find themselves involved in is the bombing of Loudoun Pharma. Initially, this is regarded as a random terrorist attack on a Haden related company, but it is made clear that once again, the situation is not as simple as it seems. This is especially indicated when Chris and Vann find a confession tape with the alleged terrorists citing the words of Cassandra Bell as their motivation. There is something peculiar about this that Chris and Vann pick up on almost immediately as they find the murdered body of the Haden in the tape. The main question they ask is why would a Haden scientist blow up his own research for the cure to Haden's syndrome, but they cannot quite answer the question quickly.

It takes more crimes for Chris and Vann to start putting together the facts and start drawing conclusions as to how the major crimes in the novel are connected. The

connection is apparent when a murder attempt is made on Vann by Brenda Rees, an Integrator Chris had met at his father's house during a party. It is her final words after she detonates a grenade that gives Chris a major clue as to who is behind everything that is happening. With this information Chris learns that Samuel Schwartz was not integrated with Brenda the entire time during the party, which opens up a major gap in his whereabouts at the time of the bombing.

This opens up a totally new direction for the investigation not only into the Loudoun Pharma bombing but other possibilities as well. There is a new conjecture about the involvement of the Integrators involved in the recent crimes. There is particular emphasis placed on the fact that both Brenda Rees and Nicholas Bell seem to be totally unaware of what is going on right as something negative is about to happen to them, the arrest of Nicholas and the grenade killing of Brenda. Drawing upon this revelation brings the narrative back to the investigation into John Sani's death, as his autopsy reveals that he had been fitted with Integrator software that is almost like every Integrator software that has been seen, but with one exception. There is a small piece of software called the interpolator that can function to give a Haden complete control of an Integrator if it is tampered with. This provides the method in which the Integrators who have been involved in the crimes have been controlled.

The novel eventually swings back to fully disclose what happened in the first main crime of John Sani's death. This does not come until an assassination attempt is made on Cassandra Bell, the sister of Nicholas Bell and a well known Haden. She is the one leading the protest march about the Abrams-Kettering bill and supports the notion that Hadens are the next phase in human evolution. The assassination of Cassandra Bell would cause an even greater schism between anti-Hadens and the Haden community, causing a greater amount of violence, fear and panic. It is Lucas' hope that he can buy Haden related companies once they lose their funding and become fearful of anti-Haden attacks. When Lucas is integrated with Nicholas, he attacks Cassandra with the intent of making a confession that makes it look like Nicholas has always been anti-Haden to further Lucas' own plans.

It is when Nicholas/Lucas is arrested for the assassination attempt that Lucas finally reveals all that he has done. He only agrees to talk once he hears that Samuel Schwartz as been arrested as an accomplice to Lucas' crimes and has been duped into believing that Tony has manipulated Nicholas' neural network to trap Lucas inside so that Nicholas can sell Accelerant. Lucas indicates that John was perfect for the experimental phase of his plan, but he had no idea that John would become wise to Lucas' manipulation. The initial crime is caused by John's new found awareness, especially as the meeting to integrate Lucas into Nicholas and Samuel into John was botched when Samuel was called away from the task for a moment. This gave way to John finally being free of anyone's influence giving John he chance to do the only thing he can think of to make sure the cops come to investigate and he committed suicide with the broken glass. Lucas' initial reaction to this was panic, but he decided to stay in Nicholas long enough to be ensure once again that someone else took the blame for his crime. With this confession, Lucas is sent back to his body for arrest, which provides closure for the main crimes within the novel.



## Politics

The political aspect of the novel is more subtle in the way that it pulls the other aspects of the novel together. The materialization of this theme is found in the Abrams-Kettering bill that was first introduced in the Prologue. This law would eliminate crucial funding for Haden related research and services and cause a great disruption to the Haden community. Many Hadens will lose their jobs, homes, and medical services because of this coming into effect as they will no longer receive aid of any sort. The reasoning for this is due to the fear that the Hadens are becoming more superior to humans and therefore do not need to be considered disabled or have any protected status.

With the bill's passing, at the onset of the novel, there is a feeling of tension between normal humans and the Haden community. This has been ongoing since the outbreak of the virus with many attempts of trying to find acceptance for the Haden community. In a detail about Chris' childhood it is revealed that he was part of the marketing campaign for Haden rights. Until Chris' obtaining a job with the FBI, he was well known for his work on this campaign. At the onset of the novel, Chris makes the decision to not join other Hadens in the protesting, instead opting to start his work. This has him labeled as a traitor to Hadens that he encounters who recognize him. The political arena is not something that Chris wants to become a part of, but his father, Marcus, is intent on becoming a senator in an effort to continue the fight for Haden rights. This hope is dashed when an attempted murder on Chris' body results in Marcus shooting the assailant. The hope for Marcus to continue to serve on the political platform is not altogether lost as he makes a shift in his plans to open up a new Agora space with the help of Cassandra Bell.

Throughout the novel, a planned protest march is mentioned with many Hadens entering the area to participate. As the leader of the protest, Cassandra Bell is considered to be an extremely important Haden. She is the new face of Haden rights and believes that Hadens are a the next wave of evolution for humanity. She believes that Hadens should not concern themselves with finding a cure for the disease and that they should embrace who they truly are and their potential. It is her words that are quoted in the violence perpetuated by Lucas Hubbard and Samuel Schwartz as they destroy Loudoun Pharma through Jay Kearney. Cassandra's words are also used in the confession tape of Brenda Rees shortly after she shoots Agent Vann in the shoulder and detonates a grenade in the middle of the street.

Cassandra's role in the protest makes her a highly visible target. It is Lucas Hubbard's main objective to use her own brother Nicholas to assassinate her and to make an announcement denouncing Haden rights. Once she is dead, there will be an increase in the panic caused by the Abrams-Kettering. The result of this panic will be that many companies who were already losing funding once the Abrams-Kettering bill takes effect will sell themselves to Accelerant Investments to get out of the Haden markets. This will create a monopoly for Lucas Hubbard and he will be able to manipulate Haden products for use by not only Hadens, but the whole world. This plan is ultimately foiled by John

Sani's suicide, leading to a widespread investigation and consequently Lucas Hubbard and Samuel Schwartz's arrests.

## Technology

Along with politics, technology is a motivating factor for the crimes committed within the novel as it is something that is vital to Haden survival. With millions of people "locked in," their minds are not connected to their bodies. In order to assist in the ability to function like normal humans, many innovations were created over the years. The personal transport is a robotic body that a "locked in" mind can inhabit. These bodies allow a Haden the ability to live on the outside of their body on their own. The personal transports, or "threeps" as they are generally called, come in a wide variety of colors, shapes, and characteristics that make them look more human. The cost of these devices are widely ranged, depending on the special features that the user wants. The personal transports have a large amount of abilities built in to the neurological system that gives the Haden the ability to perform all kinds of tasks mentally with ease. With the Abrams-Kettering bill about to go into effect, many Hadens will be forced to use cheaper transports and other medical devices that they are accustomed to.

Along with this, the use of Integrators is the central point of this novel, as they are able to link with locked in Hadens, giving them the ability to interact as full humans. Software is implanted into an Integrator's brain that is used to provide the link between an Integrator and a Haden. The software is made by various companies but they all run on the same basic code. Once a Haden is in a human body, the Integrator is still able to control their own body as well as to remember what is going on. The Integrator only takes back control if there is an emergency situation or if there is something that the Haden does not know how to do.

The ability to completely manipulate an Integrator is at the core of the crimes. The first person in the novel this happens to is John Sani. Originally, he is manipulated to gather corporate secrets from other company leaders. This backfires once John figures out that Lucas Hubbard is controlling him. Jay Kearney is manipulated by Samuel Schwartz so that he can bomb Loudoun Pharma, not only to prevent the release of a possible cure to Haden's syndrome, but to force the sale of the company to Accelerant Investments. Next, Bruce Skow and Brenda Rees are controlled into making assassination attempts on both Chris and Vann. The ultimate goal however, is the control of Nicholas Bell in an effort to murder his sister Cassandra Bell, the radical leader of the pro-Haden movement. With the exception of Nicholas Bell, all of the other Integrators are dead.

The control of the Integrators is found out by Tony, one of Chris' new housemates. Tony is an exceptional software technician who is able to determine that how Lucas Hubbard has been able to have definite control while integrating. The use of the interpolator is the key to this as it connects broken streams of data being downloaded into an Integrator. Lucas is able to write a software program that keeps the interpolator busy, while a secret program enters the Integrator's brain. That program wires the brain so

that it gives direct control of all bodily functions to the Haden and leaves the Integrator without the capability of taking back over even if in an emergency situation.

Lucas Hubbard is a master software programmer, but he wants Haden products to branch out to the entire world, whether they are Hadens or not. Unfortunately, it is his own technology and greed for more that causes his downfall. Since Tony is a software specialist himself, he is able to identify Lucas' style in the codes he put into the Integrators he was using. Once the interpolator is identified as the main way to entrap an Integrator, Tony creates a repair for it since this is seen as a bug. During Lucas' interrogation, Tony indicates that he has created a new piece of software designed to trap Lucas in Nicholas Bell's body but return all functions to Nicholas. This would give Nicholas the opportunity to act on Lucas' behalf, since he is known as Lucas' Integrator, and thereby have the ability to sell off Accelerant Investments a piece at a time.

## Independence

The idea of independence is comprised of three different concepts that affects the main characters in different ways. The first is with Chris Shane, a new FBI agent and lifelong Haden. At the onset of the novel, Chris is eager to make a name for himself outside of his father's fame and fortune as a former NBA star turned successful businessman. Chris is also looking to shake off his own fame as he was a prominent figure of the Haden acceptance media tools as a young boy. He tells his partner, Agent Vann, that others at the FBI Academy often looked down on him as they felt that Chris only attended to cure his boredom. Chris is aware that many people think that he is overly privileged but that does not deter him from achieving his own goals.

With his new job, he also wants to live independently from his family but be close to his job. He is lucky to find a townhouse comprised of other professional Hadens through a local realtor. Through this venture, he is able to meet Tony, the software specialist who comes to Chris and Vann's aid in catching Lucas Hubbard and Samuel Schwartz. He also meets Dr. Tayla Givens, although he initially meet her as he is saving her from an anti-Haden attack. She is genuinely concerned for Chris and Vann after Vann gets shot in the arm, but Chris assures her they will both be fine. Along with the other housemates, Chris feels content with his new arrangement as he has made new friends and has a place that is his own. This contentment is further reached once the investigation is over and Lucas Hubbard is arrested. A group of Hadens come up to Chris and Vann during the protest, but there is a comical bit of irony that they want Chris to take a picture of them with Vann, meaning that they do not recognize him. This makes Chris extremely happy as he finally has the independence he has been searching for.

The Navajo Nation's independence is a factor that helps Lucas Hubbard and Samuel Schwartz carry out their plans. Since the Navajo Nation is considered a separate government, there is no way to identify John Sani from the usual public records. Along with the fact that John is mentally deficient make John the perfect experiment case for Lucas' new software as he will presumably not be missed. The Navajo Nation also has

something that is independent from other sources. The Window Rock Computational Facility is a part of their land. The only thing it is being used for is smaller companies, although Medichord, an Accelerant company has an office there. Very few people are employed there and the building is considered a loss. At the end of the novel, Chris proposes a deal between his father and the Navajo Nation. Their intent is to create a new Agora like space that is not privatized like what will happen to the Agora once the purchase by Accelerant is finalized. This venture will help to keep the Navajo Nation independent by creating jobs for the people and will satisfy the Hadens' need to have their own independent space.

The final, and most central part, of the Independence theme is the need for Haden independence. With the Abrams-Kettering bill going into effect, the ability for many Hadens to live a peaceful and normal life will be taken away as they will not have affordable access to the products and services that they need. With this fear in mind, they plan a protest march in hopes that their voices will be heard. At the head of this campaign is Cassandra Bell, a Haden who is considered to be a radical activist. It is her firm belief that Hadens are the next step in human evolution and that they should be treated equally. She wants Hadens to embrace their way of life not as a negative, but something to take pride in. Lucas Hubbard's main goal is to assassinate Cassandra as the Hadens will be without a leader and there will be chaos. He is unsuccessful in his plans as he is caught manipulating Nicholas Bell into stabbing a decoy. This enables Cassandra to continue with her efforts to protest for the Haden way of life, but it also gives her a new opportunity. Since the Agora has been bought by Accelerant and will be privatized, Marcus Shane and the Navajo Nation have struck a deal that will continue to give Hadens their own space as a new online area will be created that will be accessible to all Hadens. In this way, the Hadens will be able to enjoy the independence they seek and will hopefully open up other opportunities as well.

# Styles

## Point of View

The novel is told in the first person omniscient point of view. It is narrated by Chris Shane, the novel's protagonist. This point of view is extremely helpful for the reader to understand the complexities of Haden's syndrome. This view allows the reader to get a more in-depth observation of the methods Chris uses to investigate the murder. Furthermore, this provides an examination of Chris' struggle to seek his independence and to forge a new life outside of the fame that he once had as a poster child for the Haden acceptance campaigns. With this point of view, Chris' emotions and inner thoughts are on display, allowing the reader to be fully immersed in Chris' ordeals, both professionally and personally.

## Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is not overly complicated in terms of settings or actions, while maintaining simplicity there is still a certain complexity to the novel as a whole. New terminology exclusive to Haden's syndrome is prevalent in terms of devices used to make the disease's victims' lives much simpler. Some of these terms include "threep," or "personal transport," and some of the other slang terms for them, as well as the condition of being "locked in" for some of the most severe cases of Haden's syndrome, and "Integrators" who are the people who have recovered from the disease but have the ability to have their bodies be used by "locked in" patients. The prologue gives the reader an explanation of these terms as well as how the disease changed the world as a whole. As this is also a murder mystery encompassing the political and business world, there is a lot of jargon included to incorporate these two elements into the novel, particularly in the dialogues. Occasional use of expletives can be found throughout the novel, but they are also mainly kept to dialogues. Because of the complexity of the plot, this novel is more suited for collegiate or adult reading.

## Structure

The novel is divided into 25 chapters that take the course over a few weeks of time in the novel. The first five chapters introduce the reader to the first major crime of the novel and establishes the identity of the original victim involved. The second five chapters encompasses another crime that is closely linked to the initial murder. The third set of five chapters are heavily engrossed with the investigation as it spreads across the country. The fourth section includes more about the sub plot of political upheaval that is occurring due to the Abrams-Kettering bill, which has previously been interspersed through the previous chapters. The final five chapters deal with the resolution and details how the crimes are linked together as the investigation comes to a close with the main suspects apprehended. Overall, the novel flows seamlessly

between chapters, with many of the chapters ending on a cliffhanger and the next chapter starting within a short time later.



## Quotes

It's always an interesting test to see what people do when they meet me, both because of who I am and because I'm Haden. One or the other usually gets commented on.

-- Chris (chapter 1 paragraph 9)

**Importance:** This is an interesting thought made by Chris when he meets his new partner, Agent Leslie Vann. Most people know that he as a youth he was the poster boy for the Haden Acceptance movement, featuring prominently in a variety of marketing material for this campaign. He is also the son of a retired professional basketball player who has turned successful entrepreneur and aspiring politician. This has led Chris to a lifetime of being well known, an image he is trying to cast off as he begins his job with the FBI.

We've got a murder that probably isn't, of a man we haven't ID'd, who had a meeting with an Integrator who may have already been integrated, who says he can't remember things he should. That's a mess right there."

-- Chris (chapter 4 paragraph 111)

**Importance:** This shows the reader the complexity of the murder case at the beginning of the investigation. The two FBI agents are made aware of the fact that the case is no longer just an open and shut instance and that more in depth investigating will be required, which helps the main plot advance.

We know as a group Hadens are contributing more to the national economy than they take out of it. But Abrams-Kettering did pass, for better or worse, and now it's time to see how we make this new environment work for us.

-- Marcus Shane (chapter 7 paragraph 63)

**Importance:** This quote highlights the main cause of the political turmoil that is felt throughout the novel. The Abrams-Kettering bill is taking away viable resources for the Haden community, leaving many companies without funding for research and new technology for Hadens and it also takes away assistance for Hadens themselves. This is also a foreshadowing statement as later in the novel it is learned that Lucas Bell used John Sani in his experiments for use of personal transports and integration for non-Hadens.

You don't just take five million people sucking on the government's teat and punt them out into the street and expect them to go without a fight.

-- Jim Buchold (chapter 8 paragraph 104)

**Importance:** Jim is upset at the bombing of his corporation, Loudon Pharma. He feels that he knew this was going to happen in retaliation for the Abrams-Kettering bill, which would take away millions of dollars of public assistance to Hadens. This also exposes how the politics theme ties into the crime theme of the novel.



If the two of you are working on something big, the last thing you're going to need is her falling apart. When she goes down you don't want her to take you with her.

-- Detective Trinh (chapter 11 paragraph 104)

**Importance:** Detective Trinh has an obvious dislike of Agent Vann and it is on display here as she warns Chris about her when Detective Trinh shows up after the assault on Tayla Givens. Detective Trinh is trying to tell Chris that Vann will eventually fail him in some way, but does not give any sort of concrete clues. Detective Trinh is worried that when Vann eventually fails, then it could prove disastrous for Chris as well.

Explaining how the Agora works to someone who is not a Haden is like trying to explain the color green to someone who is colorblind."

-- Chris (chapter 12 paragraph 6)

**Importance:** The Agora is such a complex space filled with various ways of making Haden life more like a normal human being's, but there has been no real way to describe the space itself. This exemplifies how complex the Agora is and how there really is no comparable explanation for how it works.

I'm inconsistent. Or maybe I'm a coward. Or just someone who wants to bank as much money as he can now because he expects things to dry up. I see the wisdom of the walkout. I don't see it as something I can do right now.

-- Tony (chapter 13 paragraph 78)

**Importance:** Tony is showing how the Abrams-Kettering bill will affect him. He is trying to do as much work as he can before the bill takes place because companies may totally shut down their software support or use lesser quality. Tony wants to be a part of the protests that are going on as he sees that the bill is unfair, but trying to keep himself financially stable is of a higher priority.

I'm no big fan of Abrams-Kettering, but one thing they weren't wrong about was that Haden's funding became a long trough a bunch of piggies are feeding from.

-- Tony (chapter 16 paragraph 90)

**Importance:** Tony's statement makes an interesting point about Haden's funding being equally accessed by any company with even a small part to play in Haden's related items. This greed caused a great expenditure, which in turn caused the necessity for the bill to pass as it was becoming too expensive for the government to handle. Because of this bill, those same companies are being forced to reevaluate their priorities but it will also mean less care and services for Hadens who depend on that funding.

I'm making this so that if you find out that I've done something bad, you'll know it wasn't really me. You know I wouldn't do that. I don't know if I can stop them from using me to do something bad. But I promise you if I can I will.

-- John Sani (chapter 17 paragraph 48)

**Importance:** This is the end of John Sani's message to his sister and his grandmother.



John knows that something is not right with the secretive work he has been doing, as he has no memory up to days at a time due to a new neural network. It is important to John that his family realize that if something happens to him or if he is looked at for doing something bad that it was not actually him, it is whoever is controlling him during these blackouts. He is also showing that he is determined to figure out what is truly going on and to stop it in any way possible, even at the cost of his own life.

This is someone taking away the Integrator's choice. It's locking them into their own body and making them do things they wouldn't do. That they would never do. And then throwing them away.

-- Vann (chapter 20 paragraph 88)

**Importance:** This highlight's what has gone on with John Sani, Bruce Skow, and Brenda Rees as they have all been integrated and forced to do things that ended up costing them their lives. This also is a passionate statement from Vann as she is angry that there is someone who is uncaring enough to do this to others. Her passion comes from her own experiences and almost fatal integration with a psychotic Haden who wanted Vann to commit suicide for the thrill of it.

He's not looking at the shrinking Haden market. He's looking at the market that's coming after that. The market he's going to make. The market he's locking in right now.

-- Tony (chapter 21 paragraph 157)

**Importance:** As Tony explains the coding in the neural network of Brenda Rees and how this connected to Lucas Hubbard, this quote provides the main motivation for Lucas' actions. With the Abrams-Kettering bill going into effect, Lucas is already buying companies that are failing due to the impending lack of funding for Haden research and equipment. Lucas also believes that if there is chaos in the Haden community, more companies of these companies will want to get out of the Haden market. Once Lucas has these, he can turn the Haden research and products into things that anyone can use, therefore it will expand into a new market where Lucas has a newly established monopoly.

And I don't want that life anymore. There's a reason I'm an FBI agent, Vann. I want to be useful for something else other than a poster child.

-- Chris (chapter 25 paragraph 13)

**Importance:** This quote sums up Chris' desire for personal independence. Chris spent much of his childhood being the poster child for Haden acceptance and as the son of a successful former NBA player, but he is desperate to get away from this kind of life. During the protest march, his father is with Cassandra Bell and the leaders of the Navajo Nation as they introduce a new Agora type space. Vann thinks that Chris should be standing with them to continue his role as a Haden role model, but Chris has finally found the independence and place in life that he has wanted.