

Michael Vey: The Prisoner of Cell 25 Study Guide

**Michael Vey: The Prisoner of Cell 25 by Richard Paul
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Plot Summary

Michael Vey is about to celebrate his fifteenth birthday. He lives in Idaho with his mother and has a very special power - the ability to shock. Michael's mother wants him to keep his power secret and Michael has done so with the exception of telling his best friend, Ostin Liss, who lives next door. But one day Michael is being beat up by three bullies, Mitchell, Wade, and Jack. The three caused Michael to be in detention just a few days earlier and he's angry when they attack him again. He shocks them but tells his mother he doesn't believe anyone will believe them, even if they do tell on him. However, another student also sees what happens - a cheerleader named Taylor Ridley. Taylor has similar powers and they are soon comparing notes. They form a club and include Ostin.

Taylor is adopted. She starts researching her birth with Ostin's help. They discover that she and Michael were born in the same hospital within days of each other but that the hospital records are missing. They also find that a medical company named Elegen had been testing a new magnetic imaging technology at that hospital at the time Taylor and Michael were born. Then Taylor and Michael are invited to attend an elite school, the Elgen Academy in Pasadena. Taylor and Mrs. Vey are kidnapped and Michael believes they are being held in Pasadena. He plans to go looking for them and convinces Jack and Wade to drive him there. Ostin insists on going along.

The Elgen Academy is actually just a ruse created by the designer of the magnetic imaging technology, Dr. C. James Hatch. There are thirteen surviving children with powers similar to those of Taylor and Michael. They are referred to as "Glows" because they all give off a faint glow. Hatch uses the children for elaborate blackmail schemes. At the time of Taylor's arrival, he has just had one of the children crash two plane, prompting several airlines to pay millions of dollars for an assurance it won't happen again.

Some of the children have been with Hatch since they were very young. Taylor discovers that she has a twin sister, Tara, who has lived at the academy almost constantly since she was six and that Hatch became her guardian after the death of Tara's adoptive parents. Taylor immediately suspects that Hatch killed Tara's parents in order to gain control of Tara. Tara will not consider that possibility.

Michael is able to free Taylor but Hatch leaves the compound before Michael can get to him. Michael learns that his mother is being held at another of the Elgen compounds and pledges to find her. Ostin, Taylor, Wade, and Jack insist that they'll go with Michael. They are joined by several of the Glows who have escaped Hatch's control.



Chapters 1 through 8

Chapters 1 through 8 Summary

As the story opens, two men are talking on the phone. One says locating two specific children is difficult. One of the men asks what he's supposed to tell the board. The second says to remind the board he's found fifteen of the seventeen children. One says that it's difficult to "turn" the children once they're this age and the second says he is aware, adding that Cell 25 is always available if necessary.

In chapter two, Michael Vey lives in Idaho. He says he isn't looking for trouble but that he always seems to be in trouble anyway. Michael has Tourette's Syndrome but he says it isn't like it is typically depicted on television. In his case, he has involuntary twitches with his eyes or gulps in high-stress situations. Other kids make fun of him because of it. In chapter three, Michael is called to the office of the Meridian High School principal, Mr. Dallstrom. He's in trouble because some boys led by Jack Vranes had "stuffed" Michael in his locker. He points out to Mr. Dallstrom that the boys were bigger and that he resisted but Mr. Dallstrom says no one can be put into a locker without their consent. He asks Michael for the names of his attacker but Michael refuses. Michael is assigned to detention. When he returns to class he sits by his best friend, Ostin Liss, who is one of the smartest kids in school. Taylor Ridley, a cheerleader who is very popular, smiles at Michael.

In chapter four, Michael does his time in detention and then heads home. He's attacked on the way by Jack and his friends, Mitchell and Wade. Michael doesn't really fight back and the attack becomes brutal. They are about to "pants" Michael - pull his pants down around his ankles - when Taylor yells out for the boys to stop. Michael is suddenly angrier than ever and he feels a surge of electricity just before it rushes out and zaps the three attackers. When he looks again, Taylor is still watching. In chapter five, Michael tells his mother about the attack. She asks if "it happened" and he confirms her suspicion. He says he just wants them to leave him alone.

In chapter six, Michael and his mother talk about the situation again the following morning. She asks if he thinks the boys will tell anyone. Michael says he doesn't think anyone would believe them. She then asks if anyone else saw and Michael reveals that Taylor was watching. In chapter seven, Taylor passes Michael a note during a science test, asking what he'd done to Jack and his friends. Michael feigns innocence and the teacher catches them passing the notes. He is about to punish Michael when Taylor interrupts, saying it's her fault. There's a pause and then the teacher seems confused. Taylor prompts him to remind students they have a limited amount of time to finish the test and he does, saying nothing else about the notes. Taylor invites Michael over that afternoon and he agrees. Michael confesses everything about his electric power, including that he's always been able to shock people Taylor admits she has the power to "reboot" people. She says she first realized when she was about seven years old that she had a faint "glow" when she was in a dark place. Michael has the same glow. Taylor



also reveals that she can read minds. They consider they might create a club and Michael suggests Ostin be included because of his high intellect and ability to figure out things that might be important to them both. They discover their birthdays are only one day apart. Michael says he moved to Idaho from Pasadena, California, and was born in the Pasadena General Hospital. Taylor is adopted and doesn't know where she was born.

In chapter eight, Ostin "snidely" asks if Michael had a good time with Taylor, obviously put out that he had been excluded. He gets over his anger quickly and the two boys go to Michael's house. Ostin has a multimeter and plans to check Michael's electrical output. He clips the connections to Michael's fingers though Michael complains the clamps cut into his skin. When Michael "surges," Ostin reports eight hundred and sixty-four volts and tells Michael that's more than a full grown electric eel. Just then, Michael's mother arrives. She realizes what the boys are up to and is angry. She reminds Michael that she gave up a lucrative career to move them far away from anyone who knew about Michael's powers. When Michael apologizes, saying he wasn't thinking, his mother is angrier. She points out that most people won't be tolerant of his "gift." That word sets Michael off. He tells her his life is miserable, that he's constantly picked on, that he has the power to fight back but doesn't dare, and that he's sick of being "a freak" because of his Tourette's. Mrs. Vey asks why he hadn't told her all this earlier and he says it's because she had given up so much to help keep him safe and he didn't want to burden her with more. He says Ostin is his only friend and that he's known about the electrical power for more than three years but hasn't told anyone. Mrs. Vey admits that makes Ostin a very good friend. He then says Taylor knows but that he's certain she has some sort of power as well. Mrs. Vey then takes Michael and Ostin out for ice cream.

Chapters 1 through 8 Analysis

Michael knows why his mother is so concerned after he shocks Jack, Wade, and Mitchell. He remembers a similar situation when he was younger. Several boys had put him in a barrel with the scraps from lunch and Michael "went off." He says he was unable to control the electric shocks when he was younger and one of the boys was seriously injured and had to be hospitalized. The school officials believed Michael had a weapon of some sort - perhaps a stun gun. He'd been searched but nothing was found. There had been many questions over that incident. It will soon be revealed that Michael and his mother have moved to Idaho in an effort to get away from those who knew about Michael's power. There will be other allegations later in the book - including that Michael killed his father. This book is the first of a series and the truth of this allegation is not revealed in this book.

When Michael reveals his theory that Taylor has the same anomaly because she glows, his mother says, "He said there might be others." She doesn't reveal who "he" is but it seems possible it's Dr. Hatch. Her relationship with Dr. Hatch, if there is any, is not revealed in this book and it's left to the reader to decide who "he" is and whether it's important.



Chapters 9 through 14

Chapters 9 through 14 Summary

In chapter nine, Michael tells Ostin about their club and asks him to come up with a name for it. Michael and Ostin are at lunch and Taylor joins them at their table. A short time later, several others - basketball players and cheerleaders - join them. Taylor tells them about a party planned for after the coming basketball game and invites Michael and Ostin to join them. That afternoon, Michael encounters Jack, Wade, and Mitchell. Jack asks if there's still a problem and Michael insists they get him out of detention. The three, still apparently afraid of being shocked again, agree. That Friday, Michael tells his mother he plans to go to the game and she agrees.

In chapter ten, the game is very close and with seconds left on the clock, the Meridian High player fouls a member of the opposing team who is known for his ability at the free throw line. The player hesitates before each shot and misses both, giving Meridian the game. Taylor later admits she had "rebooted" the opposing player and that she feels bad about it. Ostin comes up with the name "Electroclan" for their club. Taylor reveals that she was also born in Pasadena General Hospital. She says she did an online search for birth records from that hospital and that there are eleven days' worth of records missing around her date of birth.

In chapter eleven, Michael's mother gives him a watch that belonged to his father as his birthday gift. He says he realizes she's a great mom and that he should have told her so.

In chapter twelve, Ostin goes to Michael's house that Sunday and tests his electric output again. He says the meter reads up to a thousand volts but there's an error message when Michael surges. Ostin believes it means Michael is becoming more powerful. That evening, Mrs. Vey brings home a cake to celebrate Michael's birthday. Ostin is there and Taylor arrives. Taylor and Mrs. Vey hit it off immediately. Taylor gives Michael a sweatshirt for his birthday and he feels bad that he didn't get her something. Later, Mrs. Vey goes to her room and leaves the three alone in the living room. Ostin reveals that he's done some additional research. He says the hospital's records are only one place to find birth information and that he'd gone to other archives for information. He says there were fifty-nine babies born at Pasadena General Hospital during the eleven days the hospital's records are missing. Forty-two babies died within two days of birth. He compared those statistics with other periods and says the death rate is hundreds of times more than usual. Ostin says he plans to do additional research. Taylor's father, who is a police officer, picks her up.

In chapter thirteen, Ostin reveals an article from the Los Angeles Times. The article says Dr. C. James Hatch of Elgen Inc. had a piece of medical technology that would theoretically replace the magnetic resonant imaging technology - or MRI. Dr. Hatch's machine was based on magnetic electron induction - or MEI. The article indicated that



testing was slated to begin April 16, the date all the children died and of the first of the missing hospital records. Ostin says an article twelve days later indicated testing had been halted. The three believe the owners of that technology killed the children born during that time and that Taylor and Michael could be in danger if they're located. Ostin says any searches Taylor did for information could lead them back to her. Taylor then realizes the name of the company - Elgen Inc. She says a representative of Elgen Academy spoke to her parents, inviting her to their school on a free scholarship. Taylor agrees with Michael that she's going to have to tell her parents everything, including the truth about her power. They plan to meet that afternoon after cheerleading practice. Just then Michael is called to the principal's office.

In chapter fourteen, Michael learns that the Elgen Academy has contacted the school with information that both he and Taylor have been granted scholarships to the Elgen Academy. The school will receive two hundred thousand dollars if Michael and Taylor attend Elgen. The principal is urging Michael to accept the offer. That afternoon, Michael, Ostin, and Mrs. Vey arrive at the school to pick up Taylor but learn that she had a headache and left practice early.

Chapters 9 through 14 Analysis

Taylor has begun circulating the rumor that Michael is an expert in martial arts. While they are at the party following the ball game, many of the other students are talking about Michael's fight and the fact that he took down the three. A boy named Corky, who is a member of the wrestling team, makes a big deal out of fighting Michael who initially tries to get out of it. Taylor intervenes, making it a bet that includes the loser carrying books and wearing her skirt to school the following Monday. Taylor thinks Corky will drop the idea of the fight but he doesn't. Taylor instructs Michael to rush Corky when she counts to three, which he does. She reboots Corky and Michael pushes him down. Michael then realizes the situation he's in and plays the role of diplomat. He says that Corky could easily have beaten him and thanks Corky for "going easy."

Taylor, Michael and Ostin discuss the possible reasons that the birth records around Taylor's date of birth are missing. Michael's birth records from the hospital are also missing. They come to believe someone has hidden the records because there's something in them that would get someone in trouble. They'll later find out this isn't the case. Dr. Hatch is actually trying to find Michael and Taylor because he's studying the "electric children" in an effort to reproduce their powers.



Chapters 15 through 22

Chapters 15 through 22 Summary

In chapter fifteen, Ostin, Mrs. Vey, and Michael go on their planned outing without Taylor. They are somewhat subdued without her presence but believe she's simply gone home sick. They visit the aquarium first then go to PizzaMax for dinner. They have dinner and after eating Ostin goes to the restroom. Mrs. Vey asks Michael if there's something wrong. He tells her about the scholarship offer and says it's to a "very prestigious" school in California. She asks for the name and he tells her it's the Elgen Academy. Her mood immediately changes and she says they have to go home. They leave the restaurant but Ostin realizes he left his jacket inside and returns to get it as Mrs. Vey and Michael continue toward the car. Just as they reach the car, a man steps from the shadows with a gun. He first demands money then the keys to the car. Mrs. Vey drops the keys and Michael picks them up. When he hands them to the man, he sends out an electric shock, knocking the man to the ground. Michael looks toward his mother, ready to gauge her reaction to his act, just as he hears a man's voice say, "Well done, Michael." Michael turns and sees a man nearby. He's wearing sunglasses though it's dark out. The man also knows that Mrs. Vey's name is Sharon and he says he's an admirer of Michael's gift. The man introduces a young boy about Michael's age named Zeus, and a girl named Nichelle. Michael begins to feel dizzy and passes out.

In chapter sixteen, Michael wakes up in the hospital to discover his mother has been kidnapped. In chapter seventeen, Michael is allowed to go home with Ostin's family while officials search for his mother. The detectives involved in the case say the attacker was a man named Clyde Stuart. Michael learns that Clyde's gun wasn't loaded. Michael asks Ostin if he's heard from Taylor and he says he hasn't. Michael is relieved that Taylor wasn't with them and that she's safe.

Chapter seventeen is the first chapter in the second section of the book. In chapter eighteen, Taylor feels sick during cheerleader practice. She began having a headache that progresses until it is unbearable. She is told to go home but initially plans to wait for Michael and Ostin to pick her up. However, she notices a "scary looking girl" watching her and decides to head home instead. As she is crossing the parking lot, a van pulls up beside her and the scary girl - who turns out to be Nichelle - is inside. Taylor's headache intensifies and she hears a man cry out to "take it easy" before she's picked up and placed in the van. Her headache is so severe that she doesn't resist. She is blindfolded and strapped to the backseat of the van. Then they begin a long trip.

Taylor eventually recovers enough to try to reboot the driver. She knows it will likely cause a wreck but figures it will also attract attention so that she might be able to get away. Eventually, Nichelle removes her earbuds for a moment and informs Taylor that it's pointless to keep trying. Nichelle introduces herself as Taylor's "worst nightmare." Nichelle turns her attention back to Taylor and increases the pain until Taylor cries out. Taylor says she also feels sick and Nichelle says the scientists at Elgen believe it's



because her body is so accustomed to high levels of electricity that Nichelle's drain makes her physically ill. Nichelle informs Taylor that the electric children are called "Glows" and that it's been a long time since a new child has been added to the academy. She also tells Taylor that she's going to be dissected. Taylor isn't sure whether Nichelle is telling the truth but she's frightened and in pain.

In chapter nineteen, the van arrives at a compound that resembles a prison. Taylor is taken to the infirmary where she meets Dr. Parker. Dr. Parker says Nichelle will leave the room but makes Taylor promise to do everything asked of her. Taylor agrees. Dr. Parker conducts some tests and tells Taylor that her results are "identical" to those of her sister. Taylor says she doesn't have a sister and Dr. Parker doesn't respond. Dr. Parker then instructs Nichelle to take Taylor to "her cell."

In chapter twenty, Michael is released from the hospital. Ostin's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Liss, agree to take custody of him until his mother is found. They take Michael home and agree he can stay at his apartment for awhile. He isn't there long before Taylor's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ridley, arrive. They say Taylor is missing and that she'd recently sent a text asking them to tell Michael she'd see him soon. They ask where she is and don't seem to believe Michael when he says he doesn't know. Michael realizes the Elgen people have Taylor and he tells Ostin.

In chapter twenty-one, Taylor remains in a cell alone until Dr. Hatch arrives and introduces himself. She says her parents will be looking for her but he tells her they've sent texts, making the Riddleys believe Taylor has run away. He explains to her that he wears the special glasses because it allows him to see the glow from the electric children even at great distances. He then tells her his mission - to create other children like her. He calls them "superior beings" and says they're the key to ending hunger and wars in a world where every person has all their needs met. He then introduces Taylor to her twin sister, Tara. Hatch tells Taylor that her biological mother was a teenager named Gail Nash who gave up her twin daughters for adoption. Tara was adopted by a couple in a nearby city and was found by the Elgen group some nine years earlier. Taylor's adoption records were lost and they were unable to find her until she did the searches for her birth records. Hatch then says he wants Taylor to think of the Elgen Academy as her home. When she asks how long she's to stay, he says it will be for the rest of her life.

Chapters 15 through 22 Analysis

It's obvious from Mrs. Vey's response to Michael's announcement about the Elgen Academy that she knows who they are and that she's afraid of them. At this point, it's still unclear how much Mrs. Vey knows about the machine that was being tested at the time of Michael's death or what that means. The answers to those questions won't be revealed in this book.

There's no explanation at this point for why Michael became dizzy and passed out after the attack. It will later be revealed that Nichelle is something of a vampire of their kind.



She literally draws strength from the powers of others and has the ability to inflict horrific pain on the other electric children. What's interesting is that she has no power over normal people, making her inferior to Michael, Taylor and the others in that regard.

Chapter eighteen is the first chapter to change perspectives. Up to this point, the reader has been given only Michael's perspective of the story. In chapter eighteen, the point of view changes to Taylor. However, in an interesting twist, the author switches from first person to third person with this change of perspective. Some readers may find this disconcerting but it should not be difficult to follow.

Tara is obviously a fan of Dr. Hatch and it will soon be revealed why he has her loyalty. She's a spoiled child, eager to please and happy to live a life where she's doted on. There has been some discussion about the difficulty in bringing the children to the academy once they're older. Taylor and Michael are the last two to be located. At fifteen, they already have their basic morals in place. This will be a problem for those trying to break Michael and Taylor to the lifestyle and tasks they're expected to live. They aren't the only hold-outs and they'll meet others who have refused to give in to Hatch's demands.



Chapters 23 through 26

Chapters 23 through 26 Summary

In chapter twenty-two, Ostin suddenly realizes that they have been wrong in their assumption that someone was trying to hide the hospital records. He says they are trying to find the seventeen babies who survived. Michael agrees and knows that Taylor has been taken to the Elgen Academy. Michael wants to go to the police but Ostin says the story is so far-fetched that the police won't believe them. Michael says they have proof but Ostin says they have only some hunches based on some Internet searches. Michael admits he's right. Michael has talked to police who said their conversations with Clyde Stuart were a dead end. He believes he might be able to convince the police to let him talk to Clyde and that he might be able to get some information from him. Michael calls the officer working his mother's kidnapping and the officer agrees to let Michael talk to Clyde the following day.

In chapter twenty-three, Michael has breakfast with Ostin's parents and says he's going to the police station that day. Ostin's mother offers to go with him but he declines the offer. Michael is taken to the police station by an officer. He's shown an observation room and is assured that everything will be recorded. Michael uses his power to cause the recorder to fail. The officer decides to go ahead with Michael's interview of Clyde Stuart anyway. They enter the room where Clyde is handcuffed and seated. Michael tells the officer he might get more information if he's alone with Clyde and the officer, having hit a dead end with his own questioning of Clyde, agrees. Michael gets some information from Clyde, including that he was forced to pretend to attack Michael and his mother by a man named Hatch. Clyde says they have been searching for Michael for a long time. When Michael asks where they've taken his mother, Clyde says Michael will never find her. He cites the existence of hidden compounds but doesn't reveal where any of them are. Michael is somewhat worried about what the police overhear but they have already come to the conclusion that Clyde is crazy.

In chapter twenty-four, Michael tells Ostin he plans to go to California. He says he's going to get Jack to drive him there. Ostin says he's going along. Michael argues that it's dangerous but Ostin says being safe at home without his "best friend" is pointless.

In chapter twenty-five, Tara arrives at Taylor's room with a meal, including bananas. She says bananas are "good for us" and they can have all they want. Tara says they can also have just about anything they want and she assures Taylor she isn't a prisoner. Taylor says she wants to go home and Tara seems disappointed. She encourages Taylor to stay for a couple of weeks and see how she feels at the end of that time. Tara says they are free to come and go as they please and assures Taylor the extensive security is for their protection rather than attempts to keep them locked in.

Tara exhibits her power to control the moods of others. Taylor is suddenly awash with happiness and Tara says she is also able to create black moods. Tara says they are



encouraged to figure out how to "stretch" their powers. She says she gave up sodas and that created a greater stretch. She says one of the boys can "reach" airplanes. Taylor asks what he does and Tara says "nothing." Taylor asks if Tara can read minds. Tara says none of them can and that Dr. Hatch would be upset if someone could because of the potential power that person would have. She then asks Taylor if she can read minds and Taylor denies that as one of her powers.

In chapter twenty-six, Tara wakes Taylor the following day with news they're going shopping. Tara brings Taylor some of her clothing and Taylor notes the expensive brands, some still with their original tags attached. Tara and Taylor leave the compound with a man who identifies himself as Griffin as their driver. Taylor asks Tara if Griffin is their guard to make sure they don't run away but Taylor says his role is to carry their bags while they're shopping. They go to Rodeo Drive where Tara is well-known and knows her way around. Tara urges Taylor to purchase a great deal of very expensive clothing though Taylor worries about the money they're spending. Tara says they're expected to spend money on whatever they want. Tara, who obviously has a great many clothes already, buys three outfits that match Taylor's. They meet up with Dr. Hatch for lunch then go to the store of a famous jeweler, Henry Winston, where Hatch has three necklaces brought out for Taylor's consideration. Hatch calls it a gift to celebrate Taylor's homecoming. Taylor learns that one of the necklaces is priced at one hundred, sixty-eight thousand dollars. Taylor gets a glimpse of Hatch's thoughts which are so dark that she becomes nauseated. She pretends nothing's wrong. She asks Hatch if she can delay the purchase of the necklace. She points out that she's experienced a great deal over the course of a couple of days and that it's moving too quickly. Hatch seems to understand.

Chapters 23 through 26 Analysis

Tara seems to try to commiserate with Taylor on the morning after her arrival at the academy but she comes off as condescending. She says that Taylor probably feels as if she's fallen "down the rabbit hole," making a reference to the story of "Alice in Wonderland." Taylor becomes angry, saying she was kidnapped and tortured, and that's more than the little confusion Tara is trying to make it into.

Tara's motivations are seen very quickly. She says they can ask for almost anything and it's granted. The limits, as she sees them, are very vague and she says they probably wouldn't give her a jet if she asked, but that she gets just about anything else she wants. She touts a diamond bracelet she'd requested and that wish was granted. It's obvious that Tara is easily bribed and that the money and gifts are a large part of what keeps her loyal to Hatch. Taylor asks why they would be granted such expensive gifts and Tara says it's because they're special. The "Glows," as they're called, are a set of seventeen among "billions of people." Tara can't - or won't - voice the power that gives Hatch who controls the majority of the children. In several places, it's mentioned that there are seventeen surviving children. In fact, there were seventeen but it's later revealed that of those, four died at very young ages of cancer. There are thirteen



children remaining. Three of them are being held prisoner because they refuse to do what Hatch requires of them.

Tara is such a spoiled child she can't see that Taylor is homesick and frightened from the beginning. Tara believes that buying things for Taylor will ease her unhappiness - a technique she apparently employs on a regular basis. Tara mentions that she's happy that Taylor has come "home," and the way she refers to the academy as home frightens Taylor even more. Hatch does almost the same thing. He plans a special dinner on the evening of Taylor's first full day at the academy and says it's because, "The lost daughter has returned."



Chapters 27 through 34

Chapters 27 through 34 Summary

In chapter twenty-seven, Michael goes to Jack's house, which is about twelve blocks from Michael's apartment building in a poor neighborhood. There are several cars sitting around the house but most look like they won't run at all. Michael knocks and Jack comes to the door. Michael tells Jack he needs a ride to Pasadena. Jack hesitates, asking why Michael's father can't take him. Michael says his father is dead. Jack then asks why Michael's mother can't take him and Michael says his mother has been kidnapped and he believes she's in Pasadena. He offers to pay Jack three hundred dollars, which is all the money his mother had saved in an "emergency stash." Jack says Michael should call the police but Michael says the police can't help. Jack agrees, saying he's going to take Wade along to help drive. They set up a meeting place and agree to meet in an hour. Ostin, Jack, Michael, and Wade arrive on time and there's an instant of animosity between Ostin and Wade but Michael quells it and they set out.

In chapter twenty-eight, Jack offers Michael some of his beef jerky and Michael accepts. Jack then asks Michael if he knows how much the shocks hurt and Michael says he doesn't. He says he's never been shocked which catches Ostin's attention. When he's questioned, Michael says he chewed through a vacuum cord when he was four years old and that the machine shorted out but he simply remembers feeling good afterward. There's some discussion then of the possibility that having power enter his body could make Michael stronger and Ostin begins trying to think of a way to test that theory.

In chapter twenty-nine, Hatch is watching the news. A second airplane has crashed as it was leaving Heathrow Airport. The planes both belong to British Airways. Hatch receives a call and a "gravelly voice" offers congratulations. Hatch reports that another airline, Emirates, paid seventy-five million as soon as they heard about the two British jets. Hatch reveals that he is very close to having Michael in his custody. He says Michael has been living in near-poverty and will be easy to bring around.

In chapter thirty, Tara and Taylor return from shopping. The two girls are talking as they take their purchases in to be put away. Tara reveals that she's been attending the Elgen Academy when she was six. At first, she'd spend weekdays at the academy and weekends at home. Then there was a fire at her home and her parents were killed. She says she would likely have died as well if she'd been home. Hatch was listed as guardian in a will left by her parents and she's lived full-time at the academy ever since.

Tara and Taylor join the rest of the group for the dinner celebration in honor of Taylor's arrival. They are given champagne and when Taylor questions the fact that the children are also given champagne, Tara says all the children are treated "like adults." As they finish the meal, Hatch says they have front-row seats for the concert of a singer Taylor admires. As they arrive at the concert hall and make their way to their seats, Zeus gets into an altercation with a man and woman and shocks the man. Hatch immediately



sends him back to the car and promises they'll discuss the matter later. Hatch sits next to Taylor. He tells her that he wants to her "reboot" the singer when he tells her to. Taylor questions the reason. Hatch says he simply wants Taylor to exhibit her power and her loyalty. Taylor struggles with the order but when Hatch says it's time, she does it. The singer hesitates then has to begin the song again. Taylor earns Hatch's approval but feels embarrassed for the singer. Later, Taylor asks Tara if she's ever upset when Hatch asks her to do things and Tara says she sometimes was at first. She predicts that after a while Taylor will volunteer.

In chapter thirty-one, Jack reveals that he has two brothers - one serving in Iraq and one in prison. His mother has left and Jack says his parents fought constantly while she was there. Jack says Wade was taken from his abusive parents and that his grandmother now has custody, though she is mean.

In chapter thirty-two, Taylor is summoned to a "family meeting." Tara told Taylor they go on regular family vacations. Hatch says he wants to take Taylor on a trip and announces they'll be going to an "extreme game" exhibition. There are extreme motorcycle stunt riders performing. Dr. Hatch tells Taylor she's to "reboot" one of the riders during his stunt. Taylor points out that he could be killed but Dr. Hatch says that kind of action is what the crowd wants. Taylor refuses and Dr. Hatch says it isn't a request, but a command. She doesn't act but Tara does, causing the rider to wreck. Dr. Hatch is furious, both at Taylor's refusal and Tara's interference. They leave the event immediately. In chapter thirty-three, Nichelle is given free rein to torture Taylor.

Chapters 27 through 34 Analysis

Tara tells Taylor about the fire that killed her parents and recited the facts as if it were a story that had little effect on her. She says the cause of the fire was eventually ruled electrical. Taylor's suspicions are immediately raised and it's obvious that she suspects foul play. When Taylor hints at this, Tara dismisses the idea and Taylor doesn't press the issue. Tara's attitude seems overly trusting and naïve but it's actually understandable if taken in the context of her life. She has been raised by Hatch. She probably had little in the way of firmly developed morals before she began spending so much time with Hatch. It seems possible that she'd begun to do or say things that aroused the concern of her parents and that they'd objected to her spending time at Elgen, which prompted the fire that took their lives.

Tara makes a list of the children who live at the academy. Tara says there were seventeen of the electric children but there are only thirteen left. When Taylor questions that, Tara says she shouldn't worry about it. It's later revealed that the four died of cancer as young children. Zeus and Nichelle are among the remaining thirteen as are Taylor, Tara and Michael. Others include Quentin, Bryan, Kylee, Grace, and Tanner. The remaining three will not be introduced for some time. They are being held prisoner in the lower sections of the academy compound because of their refusal to participate in Hatch's plans.



Jack asks how Michael plans to get in to his mother and he says he's "making it up as he goes." This obviously captures Jack's interest and his respect. This is the first step toward earning Jack's loyalty and that will be seen later in the book.

Tara continues to tell Taylor she needs to trust Dr. Hatch but Taylor's natural tendencies are to reserve that trust. However, she thinks a couple of times that she should trust Dr. Hatch more. She makes this conscious decision but still finds herself holding back.



Chapters 35 through 41

Chapters 35 through 41 Summary

In chapter thirty-four, Taylor is moved to Level D where she meets three other people. They are electric children who also haven't obeyed Hatch. Ian is blind but is able to see the children. He explains that Hatch first tries to buy the children when they first arrive, then try to get them to do something that's wrong. If they do something wrong, he knows they'll likely do something else and that they'll soon be easier to control. The other two in the cell are McKenna and Abigail. Abi has the ability to take away pain through touch and she relieves Taylor's pain so that Taylor can sleep.

In chapter thirty-five, Jack, Ostin, Wade, and Michael arrive in Pasadena. They find the compound but note the security and know they can't get in. Then they see a food service truck and Jack has the idea to steal it in order to gain access. He is easily able to hotwire it and explains at the gate that they forgot to pick up some chicken that will be ruined and smelly by the following day. The ruse works and they're allowed in. In chapter thirty-six, Ian tells Taylor that another "Glow" has arrived in the compound.

In chapter thirty-seven, Ostin and Michael make it inside and Jack agrees to wait for them to return with Mrs. Vey and Taylor. They find Taylor relatively quickly. In chapter thirty-eight, Ian reveals that there are other prisoners in the building but none have arrived recently, meaning none of them are Mrs. Vey. Hatch then traps Michael and Nichelle tortures him. He quickly agrees to go with Hatch but says he belongs with his friends.

In chapter thirty-nine, Dr. Parker relates the findings of her tests on Michael. She tells Hatch he seems to "circulate" electricity through his body and that, unlike Nichelle who only absorbs energy from others, Michael has the ability to "capture" it. Hatch says Michael could be the model for the next generation of Glows.

In chapter forty, Michael admits that his cell is beautifully decorated but knows it's still a prison cell. Hatch tells Michael that the results of the MEI technology "invented superhumans." He says there were originally seventeen survivors but four died of cancer before the age of seven. Hatch says that it's possible all the electric children will die of cancer due to the excess of electricity in their bodies "unless we find a cure." Hatch then asks Michael why he and his mother left California. Michael is unsettled by the question. Hatch says that Michael's father, Carl Vey, died of cardiac arrest caused by an electric shock. Michael suddenly remembers sitting in his father's lap and his father's shocked look as he grasped his chest. Then there were sirens and his mother's crying. Michael realizes he did kill his father. Hatch says Michael can be reunited with his mother if he follows instructions. Hatch says if Michael shocks someone, his mother will be shocked twice, and that if Michael doesn't obey, Jack, Wade, Ostin, and Taylor will be killed. Michael comes to the conclusion that he'll remain with Hatch if Hatch will let his friends and his mother go.



In chapter forty-one, Ostin wonders why Hatch hasn't just killed Ian, McKenna, and Abi. They have resisted for a long time and obviously aren't going to be converted. He realizes Hatch still considers them valuable, for some reason. Based on that assumption, Ostin comes up with a plan.

Chapters 35 through 41 Analysis

Michael and Ostin find Taylor with relatively little trouble. On the way there, Michael uses an electric pulse on a door and apparently opens it. It seems too easy and Michael soon learns that the door was opened for them. The compound was built with the electric children in mind. It seems unreasonable that Hatch, who has thought of so many other important details, would have made it possible for them to bypass security systems using the electric pulses that are common to several of the children.

Hatch realizes that threatening people close to the children is one way to get them to cooperate with him. He tells Michael about another of the children, a boy named Tanner, who has the ability to cause an airplane to crash while he's standing on the ground. Hatch has made Tanner crash the airplanes in his recent blackmail scheme. Tanner initially refused but Hatch had Tanner's little brother tortured until Tanner gave in and did as Hatch asked.

It's not clear at this point whether Hatch is lying about Michael's father. It seems reasonable to believe that Michael, as a child who couldn't control his electrical impulses, might have accidentally shocked his father hard enough to kill him. However, Michael has shocked several other people, including a guard at the doorway of the compound, without killing them. It could have been a fluke or it might have been a false memory brought on by Hatch's words. The details are not revealed in this book.

Ostin's logic regarding the fact that Ian, McKenna, and Abi are valuable to Hatch seems to be flawed thinking. It could be that Hatch is hoping to break the three of them down over time.



Chapters 42 through 48

Chapters 42 through 48 Summary

In chapter forty-two, Taylor, Ostin, McKenna, and Ian begin arguing. When the argument becomes heated, the guards enter the cell. McKenna pulses a burst of light and they take down the guards who are momentarily blinded. They make it only a short distance before they're overwhelmed by the sheer number of guards and returned to their cells. Ian compliments Ostin, saying it's as near as anyone has ever gotten to escape. In chapter forty-two, Hatch reveals that he's planning to abandon the Pasadena facility, renovate the buildings, and lease the property.

In chapter forty-four, Michael agrees to remain with Hatch if he'll release the others. Hatch says Taylor knows too much but that he believes Michael can "bring her around." Hatch then orders Michael to show his loyalty by electrocuting Wade. Michael is told his mother will be tortured if he doesn't kill Wade. Michael says he believes his mother would rather die than to have Michael become a murderer. He tries to attack Hatch but Nichelle stops him with pain so intense he falls down. Hatch tells Nichelle to buy herself something for her quick reaction, then orders Michael taken to "Cell 25."

In chapter forty-five, Michael is soon filled with fear on levels that he can't understand. The cell is bare except a toilet and he soon realizes a pipe is glowing. When he touches it, he feels immediately better and he realizes he's getting help from another prisoner with the pipe as the conduit. He uses it whenever he is desperate but is always careful not to make a show of touching it, fearing they'll take the other person away.

In chapter forty-six, Michael is taken from the cell after twenty-six days. Hatch says Ostin has become a nuisance and that Taylor isn't of much use because they have Tara who is basically a carbon copy of Taylor. Michael, Taylor, and Ostin are left alone with Zeus. Michael begins baiting Zeus and when he tries to shock Michael, Michael becomes stronger and is able to communicate with Taylor without speaking aloud. Ostin's heart stops when there's a heavy electric pulse but Michael is able to revive him. Zeus fears that Michael will hurt him. Michael reveals that he can read Zeus's mind, gives him a demonstration, then says he won't be hurt if he doesn't hurt them.

Taylor checks Zeus's memories and discovers that he believes he killed his family in a swimming pool. However, she goes deeper into his mind and reports that she cannot find any actual memories of the pool incident and only the stories told to him by Hatch. She points out that's how Hatch operates and how he controls the children. Zeus apologizes for trying to hurt them and wonders what he should do next. He's invited to join Michael and agrees. He says there are at least three other compounds in other countries, that Hatch is the president of the company, and that Hatch answers to a board of directors. They make their way back down to where Ian, Abi, and McKenna are being held and manage to release them. They plan to return to release the other prisoners but learn they are all wearing collars that shock them if they speak and that



are controlled from a central command center. They decide to take control of the command center. They encounter Tara and Taylor tries to talk to her, telling her that Hatch killed her parents. Tara says they weren't really her parents anyway and Taylor is unable to convince her that Hatch is evil.

In chapter forty-seven, there's a lengthy fight that spans several floors of the compound. Only the guards are sent to fight and they realize the children are being protected while Hatch considers the guards expendable. From the command center they discover a way to release the prisoners, beginning with Wade and Jack. Ian reveals that Hatch, Nichelle, and another Glow named Bryan are on their way to the command center. In chapter forty-eight, Hatch is furious that Zeus is throwing in with Michael. He tells him his real name is Leonard Frank Smith and that he'll never again be "Zeus" unless he shows his loyalty by "taking out" Ian, Abi, and McKenna. Zeus refuses. Ostin comes up with a plan and cuts the end from an electric cord. He plugs it into an outlet and Michael takes the other end in his mouth, absorbing an incredible amount of power and surging at Nichelle until she cries out in pain. Hatch tells her she's of no use to him anymore and leaves her behind. Hatch, Tara, and the other Glows leave the compound aboard a helicopter. Michael thanks those who helped him but says he's going to find his mother. Taylor, Ostin, Zeus, Michael, Wade, Ian, Abi, and McKenna all agree to help him. They find another of the Glows, a girl named Grace, who managed to escape from Hatch as he was leaving the compound. Grace says she's "like a human flashdrive," absorbing data at an incredible rate. She offers to help.

Chapters 42 through 48 Analysis

The argument between Taylor, Ostin, McKenna, and Ian is funny. Ian tells Ostin he has a stupid idea and this is obviously meant to be a misdirection on the part of the author, considering that Ostin had just told Taylor he has a good idea but needs everyone on board with it. Ostin and Ian argue and Ian refers to Ostin as "chunky soup" and "doughboy." McKenna threatens Taylor when Ian begins screaming that she's "messing with my brain." Taylor calls McKenna "Day-Glo." The altercation becomes physical with Ostin pushing Ian and McKenna and Abi circling Taylor. It's this that brings the guards into the cell.

Hatch's plans to abandon the Pasadena compound seem like just another random step in his plans until he reveals that he's planning to move all the human experiment subjects and be careful that all records are destroyed. It's not clear what records they're referring to but it seems likely they're moving to the next step in their experimentation. They also may be trying to cover their tracks so that no one will be able to find any of the children. The story never reveals how or why all the children are in Hatch's custody. With the exception of Tara, it seems likely that most of the children would have someone looking for them. It could be that many of their parents have already been killed in order to keep anyone from questioning the whereabouts of the kids, but Abi later says she wants to go home, indicating her parents are still alive, or that she at least believes them to be.

It's obvious that Nichelle could never be trusted to join Michael's group in the next leg of their quest but there seems to be nothing else to do with her. However, Michael comes up with a solution and turns her out of the compound with no possessions. He says that her punishment will be to live out her life as a "nobody" in "the real world."



Characters

Michael Vey

Michael is a fifteen-year-old boy who has tried to hide the fact that he's able to produce and release electricity from his body. He is picked on but tries his best to keep a low profile. His mother realizes that Michael would be exploited or worse if his power was discovered. Michael tries to keep his power hidden from everyone around him. Michael is somewhat shy, probably at least partly because he's spent so much time keeping himself in check in order to keep his powers hidden. The breaking point comes when three classmates, led by Jack, continue to harass him. At one point, Michael is sent to detention because Jack and his friends put Michael in his locker. When Jack and his friends strike out at Michael yet again, he fights back, shocking them so they run away in fear. When his mother realizes that he's revealed himself, she's angry but realizes Michael has been struggling with his life. Michael isn't a coward; this becomes evident when he is confronted with his mother's kidnapping. Michael is faced with the decision to kill Wade, Jack's friend, or see his mother killed. He can't bring himself to kill Wade and believes his mother would rather die than for Michael to become a murderer. Michael's loyalty to friends pays off when they all plan to go with him in search of his mother.

Taylor Ridley

Taylor is another of the "electric children" and she also lives in Idaho. Taylor and Michael are the only two of the seventeen who are unaccounted for by the Elgen Corporation. She is a cheerleader and is very popular. She was adopted as a child and has worked to keep her powers secret. Taylor tries to help Michael by spreading the word that he holds a black belt in martial arts in an effort to explain his ability to beat up three larger classmates. She pulls Michael and Ostin into her group of friends and seems to be on the verge of including the two boys into her regular group of friends just when she's kidnapped. Taylor is a great deal more sensitive and caring than her twin, Tara. She is also much more grounded. When she's provided a great deal of money for a shopping excursion, she worries that she's overspending. When Hatch offers to buy her a very expensive necklace, Taylor delays her decision, saying the gift is too much, too soon. She seems to want to hold back in an effort to keep from feeling overly indebted to Hatch. When Hatch calls on her to "reboot" a famous singer, Taylor does so but feels guilty. Hatch calls it a sign of her loyalty but Taylor feels embarrassed for the singer. Later when Hatch calls on her to cause an accident at a motorcycle event, Taylor refuses.

Ostin Liss

Ostin is Michael's best friend and he is Ostin's only friend. Ostin is named for Austin, Texas, and the students who begin spending time with him call him Houston, Dallas, and Texas. Ostin is very smart and very shy. He has a perfect four-point grade average and knows the answers to any question posed by teachers. Ostin comes up with the name for the club and figures out how to manage the control consoles in the fortress when they are rescuing Taylor and the others.

Zeus

His real name is Leonard Frank Smith. He has lived with the Elgen corporation for many years and has forgotten his name or his life prior to that. Zeus smells bad because he is unable to bathe without shock. He is somewhat rebellious and puts his loyalty in with Michael's group after they break away from the compound.

Dr. C. James Hatch

This is the man who is the leader of the electric children. He is demanding and insists on total loyalty from the children. He is incredibly cruel in his efforts to keep control. He has masterminded the plan to use the children. He blackmails wealthy companies and even countries, threatening to wreak havoc unless his exorbitant demands are met.

Mrs. Vey

This is Michael's mother. She is protective of Michael. She fears what will happen if people find out about Michael's powers and moves them from California to Idaho in an effort to keep his power secret. She is initially upset when she learns he has revealed his powers to several people but become understanding when she realizes that his life hasn't been happy.

Jack

A student at Meridian High School, Jack is a bully. He repeatedly torments Michael and Ostin. When Jack stuffs Michael into a locker, Michael is the one who gets in trouble for it. After Michael shocks Jack and his friends, Jack promises to talk to the principal. Jack is the only person Michael feels he can turn to when he needs to go to California and Jack drives him there, then helps him break into the compound. Jack is captured as later pledges to go with Michael on his quest to find his mother.



Nichelle

An electric child, Nichelle doesn't really have power but she feeds off the power of others. She is able to inflict horrible pain and seems to enjoy doing so.

Tara

Taylor's twin sister, Tara has lived at the Elgen compound with Hatch as her guardian for many years. She's always known she has a twin sister and has waited for the day they'd be united. Tara is completely under Hatch's control. When Hatch calls on Taylor to "reboot" a motorcyclist during a stunt event, Taylor refuses, citing the fact that the rider could be hurt or killed. Tara steps in and causes the wreck.

Wade

One of Jack's best friends, Wade is one of the three children who bullies Ostin and Michael early in the story. Wade was taken from his abusive parents and his grandmother was given custody. He is captured by Hatch and believes Michael will kill him, but Michael doesn't.



Objects/Places

Idaho

This is where Michael and Taylor live.

Tourette's Syndrome

This is a disease that Michael has. It makes him blink and twitch uncontrollably in stressful situations.

Meridian High School

This is where Michael, Taylor, Ostin and Jack attend school.

Pasadena, California

This is the city where Michael, Taylor, and the other electric children are born.

Pasadena General Hospital

This is the facility where Michael, Taylor, and the other electric children are born.

Electroclan

This is the name Ostin comes up with for the club in which he, Michael and Taylor are the only members.

The Elgen Academy of Pasadena

This is the name given for the compound where the electric children live.

Cell 25

This is the cell in the compound owned by the Elgen Corporation where prisoners are tortured in an effort to make them give in to Hatch's demands.

Glow

This is the name given the electric children because they all have a very faint glow.

The Los Angeles Times

This is the name of the newspaper that has the article about Dr. Hatch's MEI machine.



Themes

The Power of Friendship

The power of friendship is a recurring theme seen throughout the story from an array of perspectives. One of the most important is the friendship that emerges between Michael, Taylor, and Ostin. Michael and Ostin keep to themselves and seldom spend time with other students. They apparently have no friends except each other. In Ostin's case, it seems to be an inability to form friendships simply because he's become known as the geeky kid who is easy to pick on. In Michael's case, it's more likely that his efforts to avoid bringing attention to himself has made him also become an easy target for the bullies. Taylor is very popular and brings Michael and Ostin into her circle of friends without any problems. The friendship is important to all three of them for various reasons. Taylor has never told anyone about her ability to "reboot" people or that she glows. She finally has a confidante in Michael and that extends quickly to Ostin. Another important example of this theme is seen in Wade and Jack. Though Wade and Jack are apparently friends with each other, they have few others they can call "friend." They have developed a method of ruling by sheer tyranny and seem to accept that. However, Michael shows them genuine friendship and the two are immediately caught up in that. When Michael announces that he's going to go after his mother, Wade and Jack insist they'll go along.

The Need to Belong

Dr. Hatch manipulates many of the children who feel a need to belong. There are several important examples of this theme, including Tara, Zeus, and Nichelle. Tara has no family and seems content in her life at Elgen. It's noted that she was among the earliest arrivals and she seems to have an unlimited devotion to Dr. Hatch and to the group as a whole. She refers to it as her family and seems to think nothing of the unusual living arrangements. This is very similar to Nichelle's attitude. Nichelle seems happy to inflict pain on others but she also seems to seek the approval of Hatch, an obvious indication of her need to belong to him. Nichelle is somewhat separate from the group. None of the other children like or trust her because of her ability - and willingness - to inflict pain. Hatch however rewards her for doing so, especially on the occasion when Michael is out of control. Zeus has a difficult time with the group. He smells because he is unable to bathe and that may be one reason he is something of an outcast. He wants to belong to a family unit and the fact that Michael and Taylor are so willing to accept him as he is probably accounts for his willingness to become part of their group. Another example of this theme is seen when Michael explains to his mother the reason why he'd shown his powers to several people at school. Michael tells his mother that he's tired of being the kid everyone can pick on and wants to be liked. Taylor's ability to bring her into her crowd of friends makes him very happy.

Greed

The children are exposed to the new medical imaging machine because a group of scientists sought to create a better piece of technology. There was a definite money-making opportunity there and it seems certain some people would have become wealthy from that discovery, but there is no definite aspect of greed until the machine malfunctions. When Dr. Hatch realizes what the children are capable of, his greed takes hold. There seems to be no doubt that he's a brilliant mind but he puts all that aside in order to take advantage of the powers of the electric children. His plots are simple in that they utilize the powers of the children in ways wealthy targets can't oppose. One example is seen as the story opens. One of the children is in another country where he has caused two airplanes to crash. Hatch then demands money from the major airlines - payoffs that will ensure he doesn't do the same to their planes. These multi-million-dollar payoffs enable Hatch to buy so many expensive things for the children. Those bribes play an important role in keeping the children in line to do whatever Hatch asks of them. In that sense, the greed of the children is also an example of this theme though some of them seem to find guilt a more important motivating factor.



Style

Point of View

The story has two points of view: the first person from a limited perspective and third person from a limited perspective. Some sections of the story are presented from Michael's point of view and are limited only to what he knows. This is seen clearly when Michael tells Ostin that he's relieved to know Taylor is safe. By that time, Taylor has already been kidnapped by Hatch and is being tortured by Nichelle. The chapters that are presented from Michael's limited perspective are not limited by time. He is apparently telling the story in past tense, relating events that have already happened. With that knowledge comes foreshadowing. This is seen in chapter eleven. As the chapter comes to a close, Michael points out that he had the perfect opportunity to tell his mother she was "the best mother in the world" after she gave him his father's watch, but that he hadn't taken that opportunity. He says that he should have, which indicates something will make it impossible for him to tell her that in the near future. This turns out to be the case because she's kidnapped and they become separated. The chapters that are presented from Taylor's perspective are apparently limited to Taylor's point of view, though they are presented in third person. There are points revealed during those chapters that indicate an intimate knowledge of Taylor's emotions. For example, Taylor comes to realize the Elgen group found her and Michael because of her search on the Internet. In that chapter, it's noted that Taylor "felt sick." That's something that only Taylor would have known but her perspective is not presented in first person.

Setting

There are several settings within the book. The first is a town in Idaho where Michael and Taylor live with their families. In Idaho, there are several specific settings, including Michael's apartment, Ostin's apartment, Taylor's house, the high school, and the home of a friend named Maddie. Other specific settings in Idaho include a pizza place, a hospital, and an aquarium. The most important of the settings is the Elgen Academy in Pasadena, California. The academy, which is more like a prison compound in many ways, is home to the majority of the thirteen electric children. The setting is described in detail with most of these details being presented through action rather than descriptive narrative. For example, as the book is nearing the end, there's an incredible fire fight between Michael's supporters and the defenders of the compound. The characters move around the compound during this fight and their movement provides a great deal of description. There are some narrative descriptions. For example, chapter twenty-one begins with an extensive description of the cell where Taylor is taken soon after her arrival at the compound. This description includes a note that the bed is equipped with restraints and the walls, ceiling, and floor are "lined in a soft, pinkish rubber coating that resembled the material that pencil erasers are made of." Some of the descriptions are obviously intended to create a sinister air, as is the case with the bed quipped with restraints.



Language and Meaning

The story is presented in straightforward language. There are a few words that are specific to the book, such as "Electroclan" which is the name given to the club Ostin, Michael, and Taylor form, and "Glows" referring to the children with electrical powers. These words are not pervasive and each is explained in sufficient detail. There are few words in the book that a reader with average vocabulary skills will find unfamiliar. The action moves very slowly and the author sometimes seems caught up in the need to fill pages. For example, some thirty pages near the end of the book are dedicated to the fight in which Michael, Taylor, and Ostin lead the charge to capture Hatch and rescue Michael's mother. The fight seems to go on much longer than necessary with the characters moving around the compound and dealing with new situations. The dialogue is specific to the characters. In the case of the young people, most of the dialogue is very informal. In the case of Hatch, the author apparently seeks to make him seem as formal as possible, and this effort is furthered by the dialogue. The overall tone of the book is one of hope and determination though mystery and danger also present important undertones.

Structure

The book is divided into four sections. The first part includes the first seventeen chapters of the book. This section covers the introduction of the various characters and the realization of Michael and Taylor that they are part of a dangerous plot. Part two is very brief. It begins with chapter eighteen and goes through chapter twenty-one for a total of twenty pages. It begins with Taylor's kidnapping and goes on through her arrival at Elgen and Hatch's statement that she is to consider Elgen her home from now on. Part three begins with chapter twenty-two. As the chapter opens, Michael is trying to figure out how the Elgen group even found him and Ostin comes up with the idea they want Michael and Taylor for their powers. The section ends with Michael's arrival at Elgen. The fourth section begins with chapter thirty-nine in which Hatch receives information about Michael's evaluation. He learns that Michael probably is becoming more powerful electrically and that he seems to have the power to absorb energy. This section goes on through the end of the book with Michael and his group taking over the compound and making a plan for their next move as they try to rescue Michael's mother. Individual chapters are identified by number and title. Titles are very brief and indicate some detail to be revealed in that chapter. Chapter titles include The Multimeter, Gone, Kidnapped, A Talk, and The Attempt. There are a few chapters that have lengthier titles such as The Man Who Wore Sunglasses at Night. The book is the first of a series. While it can stand alone, the story doesn't come to a conclusion. Readers who want to know how and if Michael is able to rescue his mother will have to read the rest of the series.



Quotes

"They're two children among a billion - finding them is like finding a lost chopstick in China." (Chapter 1, p. 3).

"Electricity flashed and Jack and his posse screamed out as they all fell to their backs and flopped about on the grass like fish on land." (Chapter 4, p. 18).

"It's just another reminder that I'm a freak." (Chapter 8, p. 50).

"Ostin looked as out of place as a Twinkie on a salad bar." (Chapter 9, p. 62).

"They are at the top of the food chain, which means they have no natural predators. In fact, even a baby electric eel can paralyze and alligator with its shock." (Chapter 15, p. 105).

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"As he spoke, his thoughts coursed through Taylor's mind. A chill rose up her spine and the depth of the darkness filled her with such terror she was suddenly nauseous." (Chapter 26, p. 177).

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"Maybe I was losing my mind, but if holding on to a toilet pipe could make me feel good, I was going to hold on to that pipe." (Chapter 45, p. 278).

"Of course prisoners aren't usually given a room with a plasma TV, surround-sound audio, and Monet prints on the wall. My room seemed more like a luxury suite than a prison cell, but if there's no doorknob on the inside, you're still a prisoner." (Chapter 40, p. 247).

"Save the world or shake pom-poms. How shallow do you think I am?" (Chapter 48, p. 324).

"'Hatch never forgives and he never forgets,' Zeus said. 'He's like an elephant with anger management issues.'" (Chapter 48, p. 325).



Topics for Discussion

Who is Michael Vey? What is his life like? What are his personal strengths and weaknesses? Is he a likeable character? Why or why not?

Who is Ostin Liss? Describe his relationship with Michael? What kind of person is he? What are his strengths and weaknesses? Is he a likeable character? Why or why not?

Who is Taylor Ridley? What is her life like prior to becoming friends with Michael and Ostin? Why does she become friends with them? What are her strengths and weaknesses? What kind of person is she prior to the kidnapping? Does she change?

Who are Jack and Wade? How do they change after spending time with Ostin and Michael? Why do they change? What are their home lives like? Does this impact their willingness to help Michael during his initial request for a ride to Pasadena? Does it impact their desire to go with him as he searches for his mother?

Describe the "Glows." What led to the powers of these children? There were originally seventeen survivors but Hatch reveals that something happened to four of them while they were very young. What was that? List at least eight of the thirteen survivors. What are the powers of each?

Who is Dr. Hatch? What kind of person is he? What is his purpose in taking control of the Glows? What are some of the things he does in order to gain control?

Describe the lives of the Glows who live in the compound. Don't forget to include Ian, Abi, and McKenna. What are some of the positive aspects of their lives? What are some of the negatives?