

Partials Study Guide

Partials by Dan Wells

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Plot Summary

In "Partials", Kira Walker is a sixteen-year-old medic as the story opens. She lives in a world in which there are only a few thousand humans left following a revolution in which a genetically-altered race of people left many humans dead and a plague killed millions more. In Kira's world, human babies are not able to survive more than a few hours before the plague kills them. The immunity the few remaining humans have is not passed on to their children and the humans have spent the years since the plague trying to find a cure. Kira believes she can figure out a cure and signs up to work in the maternity ward for that reason. However, she comes to realize no one is doing anything that will actually bring them closer to a cure.

There are few biological families remaining. Kira lives with an adopted "mother" named Nandita and several adopted "sisters." Kira remembers a man she believes is her father but has no memories of a mother before Nandita. She was only about five when the plague hit and knows most of what she accepts as fact from the teachings of the older survivors. She has been taught that the United States was in a war against China and a company called ParaGen created a genetically-altered race of humans as soldiers. They are known as the "Partials." Kira has also been taught that the Partials released the plague after they revolted against the humans.

Years have passed since the plague and Kira comes to believe the Partials may be able to provide the answers needed to create a cure so that infants can survive. Without a cure, the human race will soon die off altogether. Kira's desire to find a cure is increased when her adopted sister becomes pregnant. When she is denied official permission to travel into the Partials' territory in search of the data she needs, Kira sets out with a group of friends. There is a skirmish during the mission but Kira and the other survivors of the trip capture a Partial named Samm. Kira begins her experiments, this time with official sanction, and seems to be on the verge of a discovery when her laboratory is destroyed.

Kira uncovers a government plot that culminated in the destruction of the lab and plans to escape with Samm. This time she is captured by the Partial and discovers they have a medical emergency of their own. The Partials were engineered with a gene that causes them to die after about twenty years. She also discovers the Partials have a cure for the plague and that they weren't the ones who released the virus, but that it was created by ParaGen. Finally, Kira learns that she is something other than human herself, though she has lived among the humans for as long as she can remember and has aged alongside the humans, unlike the other Partials.

Kira returns with the cure in time to save her adopted niece's life. The government is shaken by this turn of events and Kira knows she'll have to leave the city in order to find answers about herself. When she returns home, she discovers that Nandita is gone but there is a photo in Kira's room of a child with an adult couple. The woman in the photo is Nandita and Kira is the child. They are standing in front of a building with the words "ParaGen" on the front.



Chapters 1 through 4

Chapters 1 through 4 Summary

As the story opens, Kira Walker is working in the maternity ward on June 30, 2076. She and the other nurses are recording information about an infant who just died. Kira says all babies die and that they have stopped naming them. Instead, the infants are assigned a number. As the nurses provide the various pieces of information they were in charge of monitoring, Kira realizes she can't continue to be part of this team. She is sixteen and joined the maternity team in the hope that she'd become part of the search for a cure. Since the release of a virus called RM more eleven years earlier, no babies have survived more than a few days. Though only part of the team a short time, Kira realizes the current plan - to keep the remaining population producing as many babies as possible - isn't ever going to work. The virus wiped out most of the population and many people believe someone will eventually pass their immunity to their child. So far, that hasn't happened.

When Kira leaves the hospital after her shift, she meets her boyfriend, Marcus Valencio. She tells she doesn't believe the current system will ever produce a surviving child, and Marcus says no one has been able to solve the problem in the decade of research, and that she shouldn't feel bad. They are headed to the coliseum for a meeting of the government. On the way, they encounter Kira's adopted sister, Madison, and her husband Haru. Haru is much more serious than Kira and most of her other friends, including Madison. As they walk, they discuss the possible reason for the meeting. Haru believes they will be closing the schools because the youngest students are now fourteen years old. The youngest living human is Saladin and he, along with the others still in school, are beginning trade programs.

The meeting is called to order by Senator Hobb, one of the twenty rulers of the government. Senator Hobb talks about the events that led to this point. He talks about the creation of the race known as the Partials, their revolt, and the release of the RM virus. He says a dissident group called the Voice has been causing problems and reminds those present that the few remaining humans cannot afford to fight each other because they have to continue to be vigilant against the Partials. He then reveals that the Voice has attacked a section of East Meadow the previous night. He says the group objects to the Hope Act, a law by which all young women age eighteen and over are required to attempt to become pregnant as soon and as often as possible.

In chapter two, Kira arrives at the departure site for a salvage run. As a medic, her job will be to test equipment and gather any medical supplies that might be of use to the community. They are going outside the perimeter of East Meadow and are accompanied by heavily armed military, including Madison's brother, Jayden. Kira learns they are going to Asharoken to a veterinary clinic. The "grunt salvage" team went through a few days earlier. This is a group of military who simply find supplies that might be usable.



Jayden teases Kira about the "bunny run," meaning there are civilians involved with the effort.

One of the passengers is a woman named Gianna. When the group sees a man and two teenage boys outside East Meadow, someone says the three should move into the community where everything is provided for them. Gianna says the man would be giving up "mobility, anonymity, and freedom." Others question her comment, obviously not happy that she would criticize the community and the government. Kira says she's heard these arguments before and she tunes them out.

In chapter three, they arrive at the veterinary clinic and Kira notices that the dust has been disturbed in the medicine cabinet. Kira and Marcus, who is also a medic, begin to sort through the items to see what can be salvaged. Meanwhile, two others go to another location where computers have been found. While Kira and Marcus work, Marcus says he's heard rumors the mandatory pregnancy age may be reduced from eighteen to sixteen. Marcus says he and Kira should get married but Kira says she isn't ready. She goes outside to get a breath of fresh air and sees an explosion in the distance.

In chapter four, Kira and the others arrive at the site of the computers. She helps Gianna out of the rubble but the man who was with her is dead. Jayden and Kira discuss their options and believe they were attacked by the Voice.

Chapters 1 through 4 Analysis

The definition of family has greatly changed since the event known as the "Break." Kira lives in an adopted family situation with a woman named Nandita Merchant who serves as the mother figure. She also has adopted sisters. There seem to be no biological families remaining other than Madison and her biological brother, Jayden. The fact that these siblings survived has prompted the belief that immunity can be inherited.

Kira has only vague memories of her life before the Break. She recalls a father but not a mother, and wonders if that means she didn't have one. She will later discover that Nandita was probably a part of her life long before the Break. That could explain why she has no memories of a mother. If Nandita was Kira's mother figure, Kira might not be able to distinguish between her memories of Nandita prior to the Break and the memories after the Break.

The term "Break" refers to the release of the virus and the revolt of the Partials, a genetically-engineered race created to be soldiers. The two events wiped out the majority of the population, leaving only a few thousand humans. The majority of the people live in the neighborhood known as East Meadow. There are other communities on the outskirts who choose not to live under the rule of the East Meadow government. Kira has been taught that the Partials revolted for no reason and that the Partials released the RM virus that now causes the death of every newborn. She will later learn the Partials revolted because they were being oppressed by their creators, forced into



menial jobs with no rights. It's important for the reader to realize that the Partials look and act like humans. The details of their creation are never revealed but they have emotions and can be killed. They are, for all intents, a race of people who are discarded once they've served their purpose.



Chapters 5 through 8

Chapters 5 through 8 Summary

In chapter five, one of the soldiers is injured and he makes a stretcher to carry him home. The group traveled to the site in a wagon that was destroyed in the blast, meaning they'll have to walk. They don't have a map but Gianna suggests they go to a nearby farming community rather than heading for East Meadow. They begin the slow trip on foot and Kira is surprised when Jayden leads the group into a wooded area along the road. They reach a house and Kira catches a glimpse of a flash of light, indicating someone is there. Just then a voice calls out a warning. The man is initially skeptical of their identity but eventually invites them inside.

In chapter six, the man's name is Owen Tovar and he has a pet camel named Dolly. Owen says he found Dolly years earlier, apparently an escapee from the zoo. Owen says he's a "salesman" and he has almost earned the trust of the group when they discover he has access to explosives. There is a tense moment as it seems the soldiers might shoot him, believing he had something to do with the attack near the veterinary clinic. Kira doesn't believe that's true and helps diffuse the situation. Jayden agrees to Kira's suggestion that they take Owen with them to East Meadow rather than killing him.

In chapter seven, Kira thinks about Owen's conversation earlier in the evening. He seems to believe the Voice is more organized and powerful than Kira had believed, and she wonders if he's right in his assessment that there will be another war. They begin their trip again the following day and meet a patrol coming to pick them up. They arrive at a station on the border of the city, a place called Dogwood. There, Kira is put into a room alone and she hears the door lock when the guards leave her. A man named Mkele arrives and says he's "head of intelligence" for the entire city and that his job is to ensure the few humans left alive remain alive. He reveals a concern that Partials may be planning another attack. Kira says Mkele is overly paranoid and he says that's his job. Kira is released after talking to Mkele a little more.

In chapter eight, Marcus and Kira are provided a ride home in a wagon, the transportation used most of the time in this new world order. Marcus plans to return to Kira's house for the upcoming Rebuilding Day party. Marcus asks Kira to remind Nandita they'll need rosemary from her herb garden for the event. Another of Kira's adopted sisters is Isolde, who works with the government. Xochi Kessler is another of Kira's housemates. She was raised by one of the Senators but her relationship with her mother is rocky at best and she has lived with Kira's group since Madison moved out to marry Haru. Xochi loves music and has a huge stockpile of digital recordings. The limited power available to the family is used first and foremost to power the music.

Kira joins the others for the Rebuilding Day party to find Haru and Marcus involved in an argument. Marcus says a government that provides too many laws creates a tyranny. During the conversation that follows, Kira learns that the woman named Gianna has



been labeled a member of the Voice, and that she disappeared after returning to Dogwood station. Kira is upset by the news and says that if Gianna was a member of the Voice, it means that anyone in the city could also be. She says if Gianna wasn't and the government has simply eliminated her as a possible dissident, the government isn't trustworthy.

Madison and Kira find a private moment alone and Madison reveals that she's pregnant. She's excited but Kira is dismayed. Madison says she is destined to be a mother. Kira knows the baby will die but over dinner, makes a pledge to herself that she will, somehow, save Madison's baby.

Chapters 5 through 8 Analysis

Owen Tovar is not a major character in the overall plot of the story but he is an important source of information. He says he lived in Macon, Georgia, prior to the release of the virus. This means there were survivors in other parts of the country, and that there might be more survivors than those who have gathered in New York. Owen doesn't offer any information on that topic. However, he tells the group that he'd played hockey as a young man and several of Kira's group are instantly suspicious. Someone says they know Georgia was in the south and that the weather wouldn't have created ice rinks for the sport. This indicates that the group is learning some very basic geography as a part of their education. Owen goes on to explain that rinks were artificially cooled. Several of the young people in Kira's group don't believe Owen's story. Owen goes on to say that even with dozens of people adding their body heat to the building, the rink stayed frozen. This prompts disbelief but not because the group doesn't believe the technology exists to create that environment. Instead, they don't believe anyone would be so wasteful as to expend that much power just to create an ice rink. It's a statement of the difference between having plenty of power available - as is the case in the modern world - and having such limited resources as Kira and her generation face as a matter of course.

Mkele begins to question Kira about her experience at the veterinary clinic and the hours after that. He is interested in her observation that the dust had been disturbed and asks if she can guess what might have been taken. Kira wondered who might have disturbed the medicines but it's obvious Mkele thinks it might have been Partials.

The plot involves basic factions: The humans and the Partials. Within the humans are two distinct groups. Each is suspicious of the others and each has reasons they believe their cause is the correct one. The humans are all but extinct and the leaders in East Meadow seem to be trying desperately to save the human race. However, there is corruption and they are also seeking complete control of those in East Meadow. That corruption has led to the creation of the rebel group, the Voice. These people don't believe the government should have the right to dictate their actions to the degree the government is in control. The Partials are also divided about their own situation, their roles in the lives of humans, and how to survive as a race themselves.



Kira pitches in to help Nandita with some chores and they talk about the events of the trip. Nandita has already heard there was an explosion and was obviously concerned about Kira. Kira expresses discontent at the way her life is going and Nandita reminds her that no one has the right to make choices for her. She urges Kira to remember that. The conversation seems like a typical "mother-daughter talk" in some ways but there's more to it than that, once the reader learns that Kira herself is something other than human and that Nandita has been involved in her life longer than the eleven years since the Break. Later, when Kira has a cure for RM and is being prevented from delivering it, Nandita's words will seem prophetic and Kira will have to decide how to fight back.



Chapters 9 through 12

Chapters 9 through 12 Summary

In chapter nine, Kira asks Marcus for a sample of his blood and says she plans to find a cure for RM. Marcus is skeptical, saying that others have worked for more than a decade on the subject and he can't imagine how she's going to do more than they have. She admits his words make sense but remains focused on the goal. Isolde arrives from her workday at the Senate and says the government is implementing border checks for everyone coming and going. Kira says it will be impossible to monitor the entire border, but Marcus agrees they should try. Isolde says the belief is that the Voice is trying to cause unrest with the citizens in order to bring down the government. Just then soldiers arrive and question Nandita about her trips out of the city. Nandita says she frequently goes into the forests in search for herbs to sell in the market.

In chapter ten, Kira draws blood from Marcus. She uses the equipment at the hospital to screen Marcus's blood. She quickly discovers his parents had "scrubbed" him for congenital diseases before birth. Kira also quickly realizes Marcus has the RM virus in his body as does every other human. The babies have the virus when they're born which is why they die so quickly, regardless of what the hospital does to prevent their deaths. Kira looks through the data that's been collected over the years, noting the number of studies that include every possible scenario except the study of a Partial. She quickly comes to believe that study would provide the answer.

In chapter eleven, Kira goes to the doctor in control of the hospital and is granted permission to transfer to the research department. She then says she believes the key lies in the study of a Partial but is denied the opportunity to go into the field to conduct her research or to bring a Partial into East Meadow. The doctor says crossing into Partial territory could cause another war.

In chapter twelve, Kira believes the older survivors, including the senators, remember too clearly the war that almost ended humanity altogether. Kira says the difference is that she remember the survivors pulling together to continue to survive. She says that's why the older people don't want to take risks to find the cure for RM and that it's up to her generation - a generation known as Plague Babies.

When Kira and the others are gathered together one evening, Kira asks her friends to help her sneak into Partial territory to do field testing on a Partial. Haru is immediately supportive. Jayden says there are safe routes that can be used for the trip. Marcus says he doesn't believe there is a future for the human race and doesn't want Kira to go. He refuses to be a part of the mission but promises Kira that he won't tell on them. They decide that Isolde will remain at work with the Senate, helping clear the way in any way she can. Xochi will remain with Madison but Haru will go with them.



Chapters 9 through 12 Analysis

Kira is furious that Nandita is being questioned by the soldiers. She stands up for Nandita, arguing that Nandita has a right to go where she wants. The soldiers also question the reason Nandita lives in this neighborhood which is largely inhabited by young couples who have recently chosen their homes. He insinuates that Nandita wanted to be away from the center of town but Nandita says she and the girls moved when water destroyed the foundation of her former home. After the soldiers are gone, Kira is still angry though some of the others say they were only doing their jobs. Later, Nandita says everyone is willing to believe the worst about everyone else. She points out the soldiers are willing to believe that Nandita is some sort of dissident but that Kira is equally willing to believe the soldiers were corrupt and abusing their authority.

The characters each react in different ways when Kira suggests they go into Partial territory and do testing on one of the Partials in an effort to find a cure. Haru is fully in support of the illegal action, probably at least partly because the life of his child is at stake. Jayden's sister is pregnant and, even though he is a military man who would naturally be inclined to obey orders, he's immediately in support of the plan. Marcus's reaction seems strange on the surface. Ironically, Marcus is happy simply surviving. He doesn't really want to do anything that will threaten the life he has planned. He wants to marry Kira and live out their lives together. Marcus and Kira see the ideal life in very different ways. Marcus wants to stay safely within the confines of what's acceptable and puts him in the least amount of danger. Kira, on the other hand, wants desperately to save humans as a race.



Chapters 13 through 16

Chapters 13 through 16 Summary

In chapter thirteen, Jayden completes the paperwork for a trip to an abandoned high school. Haru is accompanying the party, ostensibly to ensure the building is sound, and Kira is to search for usable medications from the nurse's office. Officials approve the effort and the border patrol waves them through without a second glance. When they are well out of the city, Jayden marks off the route he plans to take. He discusses the fact that the JFK Airport lies in their path and that it's used mostly by dissidents, including the Voice. There are two soldiers along that Kira nicknames "Skinny" and "Scruffy." Another soldier, a big man named Gabe, is also part of the patrol. Kira thinks about Marcus and the fact that he's willing to simply wait for the human race to come to an end. She knows she could never be content in that role and doesn't understand why he is.

In chapter fourteen, they encounter a makeshift barrier made of old cars that block a bridge. They use the horses to clear a path and continue their journey. When they reach Manhattan, Kira is amazed at the skyline. She had believed the East Meadow Hospital was probably the tallest building in the world but now knows that is not the case. They reach a place where they have to pass close by a watch tower and have to wait for the guards to be preoccupied in order to cross the final bridge that leads into Manhattan, which is Partial territory. They soon discover smoke coming from a chimney in the city and decide someone must be living there. They begin working their way in that direction. The groups split up. Jayden and the soldiers Kira calls Scruffy and Skinny communicate by radio as they near the house. There is then a sudden conflict with one of the guards saying the information provided by the other was untrue, making Haru and Jayden realize the Partials have captured one of the two, though they can't be sure which. Both of the soldiers used the code words and Kira considers that one of them might have been tortured and forced to give up that information, but knows there hasn't been enough time for that to happen. That leads Jayden to believe that one of the two was a Partial, living in their midst all this time. Jayden then questions Haru, who vouched for both Scruffy and Skinny. Gabe is still at the doorway when there's a shot and he falls to the floor. They are quickly in a full-blown attack.

In chapter fifteen, the Partials move into the building and there is a large explosion. Kira kills one of the Partials and then finds another of their group, a young woman named Yoon. They find another who has been knocked out and Kira administers a drug to keep the Partial knocked out. Jayden carries the Partial and they run from the area, well aware that one of their own soldiers is a Partial and still knows where they are, and that other Partials are probably nearby. They continue to run but the situation quickly becomes more dangerous. They near the watchtower and contact the soldiers there. They are instructed to take cover behind a "big red delivery truck." As Kira and the others of her group reach safety, the soldiers blow up the bridge, putting an end to the Partial pursuit.



In chapter sixteen, Kira and the others are questioned by Mkele. Kira says she felt having access to a Partial was her best chance at curing RM but Mkele isn't sympathetic to her cause. There is some discussion about killing the Partial on the spot but word arrives that the Senate wants the Partial taken to East Meadow. Kira knows Isolde is responsible for that. Mkele reluctantly agrees to transport the Partial.

Chapters 13 through 16 Analysis

The situation involving Scruffy and Skinny, the two soldiers who were with Kira's group, is a summation of the situation the humans face. The Partials look entirely human. Kira notes that specifically when she drugs the Partial they take back to East Meadow for study. She and Yoon are amazed at the fact that this Partial could be walking among them and they wouldn't be able to pick him out as anything other than human. That makes it entirely possible that Scruffy or Skinny were Partials. When it becomes evident that one of them is a Partial, Jayden suspects Haru of either covering up the fact or maybe even being one of them as well. This is an example of how humans can turn against each other because of suspicions and prejudice. Though the Partials are apparently truly dangerous, the attitudes of humans seem very much like any other human prejudice. The true level of the prejudice is seen when Scruffy runs back in to join the group. He apparently kills a Partial sniper just before he rejoins the group but Haru shoots him as soon as he's in range. When Kira is upset, Haru says the two soldiers had been almost interchangeable with regard to skills and abilities. In Haru's mind, that made it impossible to tell which of them was actually a Partial. Ironically, a blood test would reveal who among the humans is a Partial and it seems the government officials would have mandated that test by now, but they haven't.



Chapters 17 through 19

Chapters 17 through 19 Summary

In chapter seventeen, a hearing takes place at the Senate with the Partial on display. There are only a few people present and the Senators say they are going to keep the Partial a secret. Jayden and the other military personnel are charged with disobeying orders. Jayden, as the commander, is dishonorably discharged and the others are chastised. Kira is quizzed by one of the officials named Senator Weist who asks Kira why she went looking for a Partial and what she expects to learn. She says she'd been desperate to find a cure for RM because of Madison's pregnancy, and that she'd been denied permission to go looking for a Partial. The Senators are divided on the question but eventually agree to allow Kira the opportunity to conduct some experiments with the Partial. She's given only five days and will have to conduct her experiments on the living Partial.

One question that arises is why the Partial was in Manhattan. The humans are concerned because this is nearer their own territory than normal and they worry that the Partials might be planning another attack on the humans.

In chapter eighteen, Kira's friends discuss the situation and wonder why the senators made that decision. There is also some discussion as to why Kira was chosen to be the one conducting the research. Xochi believes it might be so Kira will be blamed if the venture is a failure. Kira doesn't want to think this is the reason but considers it a possibility. Xochi poses the idea that the Senate may have ulterior motives that they haven't even guessed yet. She points out that might indicate there are other secrets the Senate is keeping. At this point, someone comes up with the idea that the attacks that are supposedly waged by the Voice may actually be government actions.

Kira arrives at the lab to begin her work on the Partial. She's afraid of being locked in the lab with a Partial but has a gun and there are soldiers posted at the door. She immediately notices a new camera mounted on the wall, indicating she's being watched. As Kira tries to face down her fear, she reminds herself that she went into a war zone to get a tissue sample from a Partial, and that she can certainly take a blood sample from a Partial tied up in the lab.

Kira notes that the Partial has bruises and asks if the soldiers beat him. He doesn't answer but she soon realizes the soldier - who resembles an eighteen-year-old human - is scared, just as she is. Kira says she understands that the soldier doesn't want to talk and rattles on for several more sentences before the soldier interrupts, saying Kira talks too much. She learns his name is Samm. He agrees to cooperate as she takes a blood sample and she quickly realizes the soldier's blood clots too quickly for her to take a full sample. She wonders about it and considers looking into that aspect of his physiology, but knows that isn't what will help cure RM. When she finishes running her initial tests she has an important piece of information. The Partial's blood has no sign of RM.



Samm figures out that Kira is trying to cure RM because the babies don't live. He says Partials can't reproduce at all but he'd noticed there were no children in the humans' territory. Kira is confused. She has been taught that Partials released the RM and this Partial should know about the infant mortality rate if he was part of the race that created the RM. This is her first inkling that the Partials might not be behind the virus at all. A short time later, Samm says the Partials were winning the war against the humans and had no need of a virus. He says outright that the Partials didn't engineer the RM virus. He also points out that had they simply gone on to win, they would have taken over the government without losing the electricity and other infrastructure that was in place, but that had withered away without human input and maintenance. While Samm is talking, Kira asks why he was so near the human territory. He says he can't tell because he would be executed.

Kira begins to examine the RM process and identifies several distinct stages. In chapter nineteen, Kira leaves the lab that evening and goes for a walk. She realizes that she's been subconsciously walking toward Marcus's house. He lives alone and Kira stops in front of his house where she sees a candle in the window. Marcus sees her and rushes to her, hugging her when they meet. He apologizes for not going with her, saying he now knows his place was beside her. Marcus reveals that there has been another attack on the city. He says Saladin - the youngest living human - was apparently kidnapped by the Voice and that all the city's tracking dogs are also gone. The attackers left a message in graffiti that reads, "Repeal the Hope Act."

When Kira arrives at the lab the following morning, she discovers that Samm has been brutally beaten. Kira is appalled at the treatment but doesn't know what to do about it and continues her research. Kira comes up with the idea about the virus and Samm agrees to inflate a glove to help her with this new theory. She's surprised by what she discovers. She goes to the window and looks outside. She hears gunshots and suddenly realizes the city is under attack.

Chapters 17 through 19 Analysis

There is an argument during the hearing over whether those who participated should be treated as adults. Senator Hobb begins by saying Haru is the only adult in the group but Haru says the Senator shouldn't "patronize" the others. He points out that the new law requires that all women age sixteen and older try to become pregnant in keeping with the Hope Act. He says the government that demands such a sacrifice can't then turn around and treat the same women as children. Kira is immediately pleased by Haru's comments, saying that should catch the attention of the senators. However, Isolde points out that Haru's argument means all those who participated will be equally culpable for the actions of the group. Isolde seems to believe that Haru made this comment in an effort to save himself from being held mainly responsible for the journey. Kira doesn't believe Haru would try to be less responsible but then Senator Hobb asks Kira if she wants to be tried as an adult and Kira realizes Isolde was correct. This says a lot about Haru's personality. Much later in the story, Haru is standing by his newborn



daughter when Kira returns with the cure for the RM virus and he initially refuses to allow Kira to administer the cure.

At one point, Isolde points out that Samm is handsome. Kira says it's "gross" to think of the Partial in that way but that becomes a complex idea as the truth about the situation comes out. Kira herself is not human though she might not be a full Partial like Samm.

Samm is quickly figuring out what's going on with the humans and realizes fairly quickly that they are struggling with issues other than just the deaths of all the infants. Samm says that if Kira discovers a cure for RM, the humans will still be faced with some serious problems. He knows the humans are also facing social and political unrest. Seemingly out of the blue, he asks how far she's willing to go to cure RM. She tries to quiz him about it but he refuses to say anything more and she continues to try to figure out what he's talking about.



Chapters 20 through 24

Chapters 20 through 24 Summary

In chapter twenty, Kira is in a meeting with senators and other officials where she learns the attack on the city was focused on the building usually occupied by the senators. While they are discussing possible motives, one of the senators suggests the members of the Voice are trying to create enough unrest to create a situation in which they can take over the government. There is some discussion of killing the Partial and ending the research. Kira is called on for an update on her research and she reveals there is an inert version of the virus in the Partial's breath. With this piece of information, Kira is granted more time to do her research and she says she needs the blood of a newborn for the next phase of her research.

In chapter twenty-one, Kira learns Samm has a complex system of pheromones. Samm refuses to tell her anything about it. Kira retrieves the glove Samm had inflated earlier and discovers that he becomes immediately relaxed when she releases the air into his face, forcing him to breathe it in. Kira equates the reaction to that of a yawn, which causes another person to yawn. Samm explains that it's a "link" between Partials by which they convey emotions. They can also warn each other of danger or excitement. The system was meant to help them be more efficient soldiers.

Samm then gives the true history of the Partials. He says the Partials were created to win the Isolation War against Chna and were then put to work at manual labor jobs. He says the Partials as a race were not allowed to earn a decent wage, purchase goods, or live a better life. He says the Partials hated humans when they rebelled but that no one wanted to kill off the race. Kira points out that her parents were killed. Samm says the humans were also the parents of each of the Partials and that the Partials have guilt stacked on top of their grief. Samm says he's telling her this because she has to understand the bigger problem, including the prejudices between the races.

When Kira tries to share her findings and ideas with Marcus, he grows angry. He says Kira is becoming attached to the Partial and that it will tear her apart when the Partial is killed. They argue and he asks her to marry him immediately. She says she can't and he seems to have expected that answer.

In chapter twenty-two, Kira is struggling to deal with all the data she's collecting. That night, Madison arrives. She's in pain and is put on strict bed rest pending the birth of her baby. Kira feels even more compelled to find the cure in time to save Madison's baby. Xochi tells Kira that Isolde is certain the senators will lower the age of the Hope Act to sixteen during a public meeting set for the next day.

In chapter twenty-three, Kira, Xochi, and Isolde are talking about the senators' decision to lower the age of the Hope Act. It's clear the girls are split on their opinions. While Kira doesn't like the idea, Xochi is furious, equating the law to "institutionalized rape." Isolde



believes the survival of the human species is more important than the rights of any woman or of women as a whole.

In chapter twenty-four, Kira returns to the lab and discovers Samm has been beaten again. As she continues her research, she considers the possibility that Partials and RM were made by the same people. A company named Para-Genetics was responsible for the creation of the Partials. Samm again says the only hope for both races is to live in peace together but won't explain. Though Kira wants peace, she is also wary, unsure what Samm's motives might be.

A soldier named Shaylon arrives with a vial of newborn blood and Kira quickly sets up tests and realizes there is what appears to be a mutated form of the virus in the baby's blood. As she's puzzling over this information, Shaylon yells for her to duck and the room explodes. Kira is uncertain what's happening but she's trapped beside an electrical device that's shocking her every few minutes. Samm rushes to her rescue and pulls her away before the shocks can kill her.

Chapters 20 through 24 Analysis

When Kira is discussing the situation with the senators at the beginning of chapter twenty, they demand a report on a progress. She is referring to the Partial and says, "He has an advanced platelet system." Dr. Skousen, the physician who is in charge of the hospital, reminds her that Samm is not "he," but "it." Kira's attitude does not reveal the level of prejudice exhibited by the vast majority of humans. This prejudice is an important theme throughout the book and may make it impossible for Kira to remain with the humans after she discovers she isn't fully human.

During the meeting in chapter twenty, the senators' conversation turns to what they'll do when the five days are up and they are ready to destroy the Partial. Senator Hobb says they will have to have a plan because there will have to be a way for the senators to "appear blameless" in the situation. According to Hobb, that's the only way to "maintain control." Kira hates their words, saying the senators should not be seeking to control the people, but to lead. Senator Delarosa says the people cannot maintain peace and that it's up to the government to get the situation back under control. Kira responds that the senators are "squeezing too hard." She says there are some people who believe the Hope Act is an infringement on basic human rights. There is no doubt that the government is exerting a great deal of control but at least some of them are doing what they believe has a chance of saving the human race. It's been stated that there are some forty-thousand people remaining alive in New York City. That seems like a lot until the reader remembers that no babies are surviving and that the population prior to the war was more than a million.

Senator Hobb points out that Kira is just beginning to understand the problems facing the human race as a whole and the "city" of East Meadow in particular. He says one of the senators created the market system that provides food for the forty-thousand people still alive in the city. Hobb is right to a degree and the sentiments of both sides are very



similar to those of the American people in the modern day. There are always people who believe they know how to run the government and how to make the best choices, but those who govern know the theories don't always work in real practice.

Senator Delarosa says she was a zoologist prior to the near-extinction of humans. Her focus in her field was on helping endangered species survive. She points this out to Kira when Kira accuses the senators of trying to exert too much control over the human population. Delarosa seems to be comparing her work before the Break to her work now. She is, essentially, trying to ensure the survival of humans which can be somewhat similar to the survival of any other near-extinct species.

The officials are serious about the Hope Act. The law says every woman who can become pregnant must do so beginning at age eighteen. Then officials lower the age to sixteen, which makes Kira furious. There are also laws in place to protect the unborn child. One evening Kira, Isolde, and Xochi are having a drink of liquor and someone reminds the others they won't be able to drink once they are pregnant. A pregnant woman who consumes alcohol is jailed and monitored around the clock to prevent damage to the baby.



Chapters 25 through 27

Chapters 25 through 27 Summary

In chapter twenty-five, Kira wakes in a hospital room. She has a serious injury to her leg and tries to figure out why Samm would have saved her. Madison confides in Kira that she's chosen a name for her baby - Arwen. Madison is given something to help her go back to sleep because the doctor is trying to postpone her labor. Kira tells a nurse she needs to see Mkele and he arrives soon after. Kira is in the room with the young soldier, Shaylon, and is helpless to stop Mkele when he gives Shaylon a drug through his IV, killing him. Mkele says the soldier had "seen too much" and that he had to be stopped before he told someone what he saw. Kira asks why he isn't killing her as well and Mkele says she's "an asset." He leaves the room. Kira is virtually unable to move and by the time she reaches Shaylon, he's in distress and dies a few minutes later.

In chapter twenty-six, Kira's burn hurts badly but she knows the senators are meeting in the hospital and manages to find out where, then goes to that room. She manages to bluff her way into the meeting. She's told Samm is to be destroyed immediately. Samm speaks up, finally revealing why he and others in his group want peace. He says the Partials were engineered with a "expiration date." He says that when a Partial has been alive for twenty years, they simply rot and die within a few days or weeks.

The senators tell Kira the people are desperate for a purpose, and that they intend to provide that. Through the ensuing conversation, Kira realizes the senators set the bomb that destroyed her lab and almost killed her and that they are blaming it on the Voice. They now plan to use that as a catalyst to reunite the government of East Meadow with the Voice. They believe that humans fighting a common enemy - the Partials - will be a cause that will reunite the Voice with the government. Kira says she won't try to stop the government's plan to execute Samm and blame the bombing on the Voice though she wills Samm to understand she has a plan.

In chapter twenty-seven, Kira takes Marcus to the MRI room where she knows Mkele's surveillance equipment won't work so they can talk without being heard. She tells of the government's plan to kill Samm. Kira then relates the story of how Samm saved her after the explosion and says she intends to now save Samm. Marcus says he'll help.

When Kira arrives home, she finds Nandita absent and it bothers her. They find a bug in the house and Marcus destroys it. They explain the situation to Xochi who is anxious to help. Kira says she is certain the Partials hold the key to curing RM and that her only hope of accomplishing that now is to continue her research outside East Meadow where the Partials actually live. Isolde says she'll help but that she won't go with them because she's pregnant and fears for the baby. They begin to make plans for a diversion to get most of the soldiers out of the way.



Chapters 25 through 27 Analysis

The babies are no longer named because they don't live more than a few days before succumbing to the virus. When Madison announces to Kira that she's chosen a name for her baby, it's an indication that she's become bonded despite the odds. This is just another catalyst spurring Kira toward finding a cure.

Mkele doesn't explain what he means when he says Shaylon saw too much and had to be stopped. If the reader looks back at the scene in which the lab is attacked, Shaylon tells Kira to duck a split second before the explosion. That means he must have seen the attack coming. What Kira will learn only much later is that the senators staged the attack, making it appear that the Voice was behind it. The reasons are somewhat obscure until much later in the story but the basis is their greed for power. The political intrigue seems completely out of place considering the dire situation of the human race.



Chapters 28 through 30

Chapters 28 through 30 Summary

In chapter twenty-eight, Isolde does her part, spreading rumors about a new strain of the virus which creates unrest among the people. Kira plans to break Samm out of the hospital in the ensuing riot. Kira's group encounters Haru in the hospital and he initially refuses to allow them to take Samm away. Kira says allowing Samm to be executed is wrong and that the only hope for the unborn child of Haru and Madison. They eventually force Haru and the soldiers to put down their weapons and Samm says he didn't expect Kira to save him. She responds that he didn't have to save her in the lab. They manage to get out of the hospital.

In chapter twenty-nine, four hours have passed and it is nearly midnight by the time they have put some distance between themselves and East Meadow. Samm says the humans in New York are the only ones left. He also reveals that the Partials are no longer a unified body. They make their way to the coast where there are mansions and begin to search for a boat. Suddenly they are caught in the beam of a flashlight but Kira then hears Yoon call out to the other soldiers that it's "clear." Once they're in a boat, Samm says they have escaped the humans but now must face the Partials.

In chapter thirty, they arrive on the opposite shore about twelve miles from Greenwich where Samm's company is living. They are worried about traveling on land because they might encounter other groups of Partials. They take another boat a distance from the shoreline and move on toward Greenwich. A storm batters them and they wind up losing their boat. Kira and Samm wind up separated from the others. They all take cover but are unable to immediately reconnect because of the Partials in the area. Samm wants to find more of his group and then return to rescue Marcus and the others, but Kira refuses to leave them behind. Samm says there are Partials nearby and Kira concocts a plan to knock one out. Samm agrees but when the Partial gets close, Kira realizes it's a woman and that she calls Samm by name. Kira is captured herself and realizes that Samm has betrayed her. She asks Samm if there was ever a chance of a truce and one of the Partials, a woman named Heron, says Samm might have a "future in espionage." She's then given a shot in her neck and knows she's probably going to die.

Chapters 28 through 30 Analysis

Samm reveals that the Partials have a nuclear reactor as a power source. Samm says once the Partials discovered so many of the humans were dying from the RM virus, the Partials shut down most of the nuclear reactors to ensure there wasn't a meltdown.

The plot becomes convoluted as the Kira breaks Samm out of the hospital and heads into Partial territory. It's hinted that she wants to try to negotiate peace but she is also



apparently still hoping to conduct enough research to find a cure for the RM virus. As chapter thirty comes to a close, it seems apparent that Samm is a traitor but he will again prove himself loyal to Kira.

The link that connects the Partials is an interesting aspect of their makeup that creates a twist to the story in chapter thirty. Samm hasn't been able to fully explain this link except to say that other Partials know the general situation of any other Partial. That link doesn't give them a complete understanding of what's happening but rather focuses on a level of emotional well-being. For example, if one Partial is in pain from an injury, the other will know about that pain. The purpose was to help them respond as a group on the battlefield.

Kira notes that Heron seems to be Chinese and has only a moment to wonder about that situation. The United States created the Partials to fight against the Chinese and Kira has time to think that it doesn't seem a good idea to create a super soldier who could be mistaken for the enemy. However, with the link shared by the Partials the other Partials would immediately recognize her as one of their own. The story of Heron's role in the war is not revealed in this book but in another book of this series, the author tells the story of Heron acting as a spy for the United States and serving a vital role undercover.



Chapters 31 through 35

Chapters 31 through 35 Summary

In chapter thirty-one, Kira wakes in a lab, strapped to a table and surrounded by medical equipment. Samm says Kira came with him willingly but one of the Partials says Samm's job wasn't to bring a "volunteer." Kira says she's begun research on the Partials but Heron says the medical technology of humans is old and refuses to believe there might be a way for the humans to help the Partials.

In chapter thirty-two, Kira listens to the Partials talking and realizes they are about to inject her with something, though she isn't certain what that is. One of the Partials, Dr. Morgan, says Kira will likely become sick very quickly. The minutes tick by and Kira shows no reaction. Kira talks to Dr. Morgan while they wait. Dr. Moran says she's isolated each of the pheromones in the bodies of the Partials and has identified the purpose for all of them except one. She says she believes that one is associated with the deaths of the Partials. As she talks, Kira realizes the answer to the humans dying because of the RM virus has been answered by the Partials' research, though the Partials don't know what they have created.

Kira doesn't become ill as predicted and the Partials continue their tests, soon realizing that Kira doesn't have the virus in her system, meaning she isn't immune to the virus, meaning she's a Partial herself. They immediately begin questioning Kira, asking what her mission was among the humans, then realize that Kira herself hadn't known the truth. Before the situation can be discussed further, the building is under attack.

In chapter thirty-three, Samm says it doesn't make sense that Kira is a Partial because she doesn't like. Dr. Moragan says ParaGen made the soldiers link for military purposes, but that other Partials were created for other purposes. Kira tries to come to terms with the information. She says she grew up among humans and wonders if this explains why she has no memory of a mother. Marcus and Jayden arrive, urging Kira to run with them. Samm fires at Dr. Morgan, buying Kira's group a little time, and they run out together. Kira grabs up the syringe of what she believes will be a cure for the RM if administered to a baby.

In chapter thirty-five, Samm is driving the group away from the Partial compound. Kira seems to have only minor injuries and neither she nor Samm mention the findings in the lab. When they reach the coast, the others rush to look for a boat, giving Samm and Kira a moment alone together. They discuss what this all means and Kira accepts that ParaGen must have created and released the virus. Samm says he'll stay behind. He says he believes peace is the only real option available to them and Kira says she agrees. As Kira is about to leave, Samm says Heron is nearby and he doesn't know why she hasn't attacked him already.



In chapter thirty-five, the motor on their boat quits and they have to row the rest of the way to shore. They make their way to a house that seems oddly familiar and discover Owen Tovar hiding inside with a group who are all members of the Voice. Owen reveals that the government is in chaos and is blaming everything on the Voice. Kira and the others realize it's merely a means for the few who seek power to truly take over. Owen says there were several people killed but Kira says she has the cure for RM, meaning those deaths were not in vain.

Chapters 31 through 35 Analysis

When Kira finds herself in the lab belonging to the Partials, she quickly realizes she is in the same position as Samm had been earlier. Kira has done a great deal of research about the RM virus in a very short period of time. What's strange about this is that she has never done any experimentation on her own blood. She collected blood from Marcus to do one of the experiments but she didn't ever experiment on her own. Then she experiments on Samm's breath but doesn't compare that to her own. If she had done any of these things, she might have already figured out that she was not human.

This twist in which Kira learns that she is not fully human is heart wrenching for her but she doesn't have time to figure out what it really means or how it can be true. This aspect of the story is not explored in this book but is apparently left for a future book of the series.



Chapters 36 through 39

Chapters 36 through 39 Summary

In chapter thirty-six, the group comes up with a plan. Kira divides the cure into three doses so the entire cure won't be lost if Kira is killed. Their plan is to get Kira to the hospital, sneak her into the back door. There is discussion about the dangers, but Kira points out that a child who grows past the first days of life is worth the risk. They arrive at the outskirts to discover the city has been barricaded. In chapter thirty-seven, they have to sneak through and Kira is shot. It seems impossible to get them inside but Kira comes up with a plan. She tells the others to take her captive, go to the front door of the hospital, and announce she's been caught, then get her inside. They all think it's risky but don't have a better idea. In chapter thirty-eight, the group arrives at the hospital entrance. Kira twists and screams, hoping to keep the attention focused on her so the guards won't realize the "soldiers" holding her are Marcus, Jayden, and Xochi - all who are also wanted by the senate. They make it to the door but are denied entrance. That's when Kira announces she has the cure. One soldier stands sideways to Kira, giving her a free access to his weapon, and seems to wait to see if she's serious about her mission. She grabs the gun and the group makes it inside. Kira arrives in the room where Madison and Haru are waiting for their baby to die. Haru initially refuses to allow them to touch Arwyn, but relents. Jayden is killed in the process.

In chapter thirty-nine, days have passed and the senate acknowledges the cure for RM. Senator Hobbs glosses over the situation, making it seem the government was behind the effort to find a cure all along. He also announces the Hope Act has been repealed. Kira and Marcus walk home together after the meeting. Kira tells Marcus the only way to get the cure is from a living Partial, that they haven't the technology to recreate it. Marcus asks Kira to marry him but she says she can't. She leaves him, going to her own home that still feels empty because Nandita hasn't returned. When she reaches her bedroom, she finds a framed photograph on her bed with a note that says, "Find the Trust." The photo is of Kira as a youngster. On one side of her is a man who she remembers as her father. Standing on Kira's other side is Nandita. They are in front of a building with the name "ParaGen" on its front.

Chapters 36 through 39 Analysis

There's no real explanation for why Haru objects to Kira giving his baby the cure. It's natural to believe that he's protective of the baby and he may just be protecting her from what he perceives as a danger. However, it must be evident to both Haru and Madison by this point that their daughter is about to die. It seems Haru would grasp at any possible cure.

Senator Hobbs' comments on the stage after the arrival of the cure are evidence of the government's quest for power and control. Hobbs doesn't exactly lie about anything but

he implies that the government was supportive of the plan to conduct the research on the Partial.

The book doesn't have a tidy ending but leaves the reader with a great many questions. The questions that arise with the realization that Kira is apparently not human are only one aspect of the story left for another book in the series. Kira is also left with a clue about her past in the photo she finds in her room. Kira has memories of her father but not her mother. She has believed, until that point, that her mother might have died early in her life. However, it could be that Kira hasn't been able to separate the memories she has of Nandita prior to the Break and Nandita after the break.



Characters

Kira Walker

Kira is a sixteen-year-old medic as the story opens. She works in a hospital and chose the maternity ward because she believes she can help find a cure for RM, a virus that has killed every baby born since its release more than a decade earlier. Kira is a selfless person, and believes that her role in maternity will be of some value to the human race. She initially seems to think the key is to continue providing information about the newborns who die in the hope that some piece of that data will provide the key to the cure. She comes to realize the data is repetitive and isn't ever going to help find the cure. With that realization, Kira might have simply waited for someone else to work on the research but she takes matters into her own hands. When her adopted sister Madison becomes pregnant, Kira knows that Madison's daughter will die, just as all the other newborns have died. When Kira sees Madison's devotion to her child, even before that child is born, Kira becomes even more determined to find a cure on her own. Kira's empathy is a key part of her character and one that may be a clue about her own history. While she is searching for a cure, she studies a Partial named Samm. Though she's tempted to conduct experiments just to learn about Samm, she restricts herself to the experiments that might lead her to the cure.

Marcus

Kira's boyfriend who is also a medic. Marcus believes he and Kira will have a future together, and says he is in love with Kira. When Kira is headed to find a Partial, Marcus believes the endeavor is dangerous and refuses to go with her. He later says he regrets that decision, and when Kira goes again into the outer territories in search of a cure, he accompanies her. Marcus is clearly devoted to Kira and is hurt when Kira breaks off their relationship. An important part of Marcus's makeup is his desire to remain safe. This is the reason he refuses to go with Kira on her first expedition. Kira doesn't understand why Marcus is so willing to stand by and let the human race die without fighting. Marcus, however, is willing to do just that because he wants to live a normal life. In another time and situation, he might have become a professional of some sort with a typical middle-class lifestyle. Marcus doesn't seem to be afraid in dangerous situations so his lack of support for Kira doesn't seem to be cowardice. He knows Kira well and at one point, tells her that she's become too emotionally involved in her job in the maternity ward at the hospital. He says she has seen babies die and has taken on the task of saving them because of her emotional connection. When he and Kira are talking on the second day of her work with Samm, Marcus sees that same kind of involvement. He predicts that Kira will become so emotionally attached to Samm that she'll try to save him.



Samm

A member of the Partials, a genetically-engineered race created to fight a war for the United States. Samm is the one who reveals the truth about the history of the Partials and humans. Through Samm, Kira learns that the Partials were oppressed after their usefulness in the war ended and that oppression prompted the revolt. Samm is honest with Kira when he tells her the future of his race depends on humans, and he is willing to help her as she searches for a cure for RM.

Nandita Merchant

Kira's adoptive mother, she plays a small role in this story, appearing in only a few scenes. However, it's discovered as the book comes to a close that Nandita is actually somehow involved in ParaGen and has known Kira since she was a child.

Mkele

The man who is in charge of security while Kira is looking for a cure for RM. Mkele is something of a short-sighted person who believes protecting the few remaining humans is the most important task.

Haru

Kira's adopted sister, she is a little older than Kira and is already married to a man named Haru. Madison and her brother, Jayden, are the only biological siblings alive and some believe they are proof that immunity to RM could be inherited. Madison becomes pregnant and that prompts Kira to become more focused on her goal to find a cure.

Jayden

Madison's biological sister, the two are believed to be the only surviving biological siblings and are the reason some people believe immunity to the RM virus could be passed from parents to child. Jayden is a soldier and is dedicated to his role. However, when Madison becomes pregnant and Kira believes she might be able to find a cure for the RM virus, Jayden risks everything to support her. He is killed just as they arrive at the hospital room and doesn't live to see Madison's baby survive.

Xochi

Kira's adopted sister and the adopted daughter of a senator, Xochi is independent and unwilling to allow social dictates to rule her. She is outspoken, perhaps partly because she was raised by the senator who was also outspoken. Xochi loves music and has a huge collection of digital players.

Haru

Madison's husband, he is very stiff and formal compared to most of the other characters, including Madison and Kira. Haru shoots a soldier who he believes might be a member of the Partials without giving that soldier a chance to prove himself.

Owen Tovar

Owen is an older man from Macon, Georgia, who is hiding out in a house near the site of an explosion that kills several people. Owen is an arms dealer of sorts and is part of the group that revolts later in the story.



Objects/Places

Partials

A genetically-engineered race of intelligent beings who revolted against human oppression, almost wiping out the human race in the process.

The Hope Act

A law that requires women age eighteen and older to become pregnant as early and as often as possible.

East Meadow

The name given to the community where Kira and a few thousand other humans live. East Meadow is in New York.

Plague Babies

The name given the last generation of children born to humans before the plague made it impossible for human infants to survive more than a few days.

The Voice

A group of dissidents who want to overthrow the government, which they say is corrupt.

RM

The virus that wiped out most of the humans and that continues to kill every baby born until Kira finds a cure.

Manhattan

The territory controlled by the Partials where Kira and the others encounter Samm for the first time.

Dolly

The camel that travels with Owen, apparently an escapee from a zoo.

Bunny Run

The name given to a salvage run in which soldiers take civilians along for some reason.

The Senate

The governing body that sets rules such as the Hope Act for East Meadow.



Themes

Survival of the race

More than a decade has passed since the release of the RM virus that wiped out the majority of the human race. In that time, not one single baby has survived more than a few days. The human race is effectively dying off, and it seems there is little hope that a cure will be found. While doctors have conducted research and continued to search for a clue to helping a baby survive, the government has enacted the Hope Act - a law that requires women age eighteen and older to become pregnant as early and as often as possible. The hope is that someone among the immune humans will give birth to a baby who is also immune. As the years rock on without a surviving baby, the government lowers the age to sixteen. Kira sees the current medical research as a waste of time and believes there has to be a better way to find a cure. She believes the answer lies in the physiology of a Partial and sets out to find one. While some believe their human rights are being violated by the Hope Act and Kira knows she'll be punished for going after a Partial without government approval, almost everyone is doing whatever they feel might lead to the survival of the human race as a whole. Meanwhile, the Partials have discovered they are also dying off as the result of a genetic code implanted into their entire race. They believe the answer lies in the human physiology and when they capture Kira, they begin experimenting on her with the hope of finding a cure themselves.

Prejudice

The story revolves around the world as it stands following a revolution and the release of a virus that leaves two major races of people - humans and Partials. The two have developed deep prejudices for each other based on an array of factors including history, false information, fear, and the prejudices of others. The Partials were created to serve as a race of super soldiers against an enemy of the United States. They served that purpose but the United States humans were then faced with the question of what to do with this new race. They put them in inferior jobs and inferior living conditions - facts that prompted the Partials' hatred of the humans, which in turn prompted a revolt. The situation left the Partials believing all humans were prejudiced against the Partials and in East Meadow, most still hold to that prejudice. In turn, the humans remember that the Partials rose up against the humans and the humans hate the Partials because of this. Added to that is the false information that the Partials released the RM virus which wiped out almost all humans, increasing the human prejudice against the Partials. Another aspect of this theme is that the Partials have begun to die off as they reach their "expiration date" of twenty years. Knowing that the humans engineered them to die and that only humans will be able to change that has increased the Partials' hatred of the humans. A twist to this theme is that humans no longer seem prejudiced against other races of humans. Kira has a girl she considers an adoptive sister who is of Asian descent.



Coming of age`

The coming of age theme applies to this story but with several twists. Kira ages chronologically over the course of the book and has memories of her life as a youngster. She also matures over the course of the story. However, in Kira's case the true coming of age process only begins as the story is nearing its end. Kira is apparently not fully human and she begins to think back on her life, putting together clues that had not coalesced in her mind before she becomes the object of Partial experiments. Kira realizes that she's never been seriously ill and that a burn she experiences when the lab explodes heals much more quickly than it's reasonable to expect. Kira's coming-of-age also includes the realization that she can't marry Marcus though Marcus has always expected that would happen. Finally, Kira comes to understand that she has a duty to the human race in general and to her adoptive sister in particular to do everything she can to cure the RM virus. While many people have worked toward that goal, Kira is the first with a workable plan and the willingness to take risks to make it happen. An equally important example of the coming-of-age theme is seen in the Partials' realization that they were engineered with an "expiration date." As it's explained in the book, a gene within that Partial that has prevented aging over the course of the Partial's life changes after twenty years so the Partial quickly rots away, decaying in a matter of days or weeks. For the Partials, this is a huge piece of information to deal with because until the race begins dying off, they'd believed themselves incapable of dying.

Style

Point of View

"Partials" is written in first person from the perspective of Kira. The point of view is limited to the things Kira knows, and the author obviously used this as a means of increasing the level of suspense. The main twist of the story - that Kira is not fully human herself - is an option open to the author only because of the limited perspective. There are other twists that are revealed through this limited perspective. Kira learned in school about the war between humans and the Partials - a race of genetically-altered super humans who were created by Americans to win a war against China. In her classes, Kira learned that the Partials almost killed off the entire human race in an unprovoked revolt, and that the Partials are responsible for the virus that kills every baby born to the humans. The reader learns these things aren't true only when Kira makes the discoveries. Even then, the reader is left to wonder if Kira was taught incorrect information in school or if the Partials are feeding her incorrect information to further their own cause.

The reader is only certain of these facts when Kira finds proof and is also certain. Another important detail the reader discovers only when Kira learns about it is the Partial's "expiration date." The humans might not be nearly so worried about another attack from the Partials if they knew the race was engineered so they died after 20 years. There are aspects of the story that are never revealed because Kira never learns about them. For example, the reader never knows what Marcus is thinking when Kira breaks up with him because Kira doesn't have that knowledge. Another important detail not included in the book is the whereabouts of Kira's adopted mother. She is missing for the days Kira is gone in search of a cure from the Partials, and she has not returned when Kira gets home from that mission. It's only then that Kira sees the photo of herself with Nana and a man she doesn't recognize in front of ParaGen, the company that manufactured the Partials. Though Kira comes to realize she isn't fully human, there is no explanation for the fact that she ages like a human and that she has lived among the humans for as long as she can remember. Those questions remain a mystery in Kira's mind and, therefore, are unanswered for the reader.

The limited first-person perspective is appropriate for the story.

Setting

"Partials" is divided into thirty-nine chapters. The chapters are titled by number, only which gives the reader no clue as to the events that are coming in that chapter. The book is further divided into three "parts." Part one includes the introduction to the various characters with the exception of Samm and the introduction of some of the major aspects of the plot. Part one ends with chapter twelve in which Kira and her small group plan to go into Partial territory to do field tests on a live subject in the hope of



finding a cure. Marcus declines to go with them and the chapter ends with Kira eliciting a promise from Marcus that he won't try to stop them. Part two is titled "Three Months Later" and picks up in three months when the group is leaving on their mission. Part two ends with chapter twenty-eight in which Kira, Jaden, Marcus, and Samm leave the city in search of more answers in Partial territory. Part three is titled "Four Hours Later" and picks up in four hours, when the group has moved some distance away from the main city. The story is written in an informal voice and is divided between dialogue and narrative. The dialogue seems reasonable for the characters and the setting. The action of the story moves fairly quickly though there are some instances in which the author becomes bogged down in details or scene. This is especially true of the fight scenes.

Language and Meaning

The overall tone of the story is one of hope and optimism though the story has dark undertones of corruption and hopelessness. The language of the story is appropriate for the setting and the characters. There are several terms the author created for this story and some readers may initially be unsure of the meanings of these terms. For example, the initial crews that find items that might be of use are called "grunt salvage" patrols. When the military takes members of the medical or technical teams back to those places to see what can be salvaged, the soldiers refer to their "bunny runs." The author has attempted to make it clear that Kira and the others of her generation don't fully understand how the world was prior to the revolution of the Partials and the plague. An example of that is seen in their conversations about the digital recordings. Kira doesn't know what kind of music they listen to but describes it by the emotions it evokes in her. There is some attention paid to the role of the government and the lengths to which this government is willing to go in order to retain control of the people. This thirst for power leads to corruption and, as is often the case, a group who opposes the rule are labeled rebels. The author begins the book by dedicating the story to those who are sometimes willing to "bite the hand that feeds them."

Structure

The story is set in New York in 2076. The physical setting and time setting are each specified in the story in various ways. The majority of the action occurs in a city called East Meadow in the book though it is actually a part of New York City. The setting is described in great detail with the author using real landmarks in the story. For example, Jayden mentions heading toward "JFK Airport." In another scene, Kira talks about the clothes available to those who now live on Long Island. They cross the bridge to the mainland and it seems a reasonable description of the current bridge. The author also mentions Manhattan and other boroughs of the city. The time setting is specified in the first sentence of the book in which the death of yet another infant is being catalogued. The date and time of the baby's death is recited as a matter of record. That sentence sets both the time of the story and introduces an integral part of the story's plot. There are several specific settings within the overall setting of the story. These include the hospital where Kira works in the maternity ward and where she later searches for a cure

and then administers the cure to Madison's baby. Another setting is the home Kira shares with her adopted family. Kira and the others travel several times and an important scene is set in a lab operated by the Partials. It's in this setting that Kira learns there is a cure for RM and that the Partials have already perfected it.



Quotes

"Newborn #485GA18M died on June 30, 2076, at 6:07 in the morning. She was three days old." Chapter 1

"War, see, is when two sides fight, maybe not evenly, but at least they both get a few swings in. What we call the Partial War was mankind getting' mugged in an alley." Chapter 6

"The last to fall were the buildings, distant and solemn, the gravestones for an entire world. Then they disappeared, and there was nothing left but nothing." From Kira's dream, Chapter 14

"A hand rose up from the rubble in front of her, clad in the dark gray uniform and body armor she recognized from countless war-era photographs. It was a Partial." Chapter 15

"There are forty thousand people on Long Island," he said. "There used to be millions." Chapter 18

"We couldn't move out of our government-assigned slum because our wages were barely livable, and nobody would sell to us anyway. Who wants to live next door to the artificial people?" Chapter 21

"The girl in her simply thought of the Hope Act and wondered if a law like that could ever pass if a voter knew it would be forced upon his own daughter." Chapter 24

"At twenty years, the process that halts our aging reverses, and we shrivel and die within weeks, sometimes days. It's not accelerated aging. It's decay." Chapter 26

"The last time Partials and humans tried to work together, it didn't work out so well," said the woman. "I think we'll take our chances on our own." Chapter 31

"You're a Partial!" Dr. Morgan shouted." Chapter 31

"More than anything else, I don't remember being a Partial - I grew up in a human house, I have a human father." Chapter 33

"A living, breathing child that lives for a week, a month, a year; a child that laughs and crawls and learns to talk.' Her voice cracked. 'I would die for that in a heartbeat.'" Chapter 36

"If this cure works, humanity has a future that's the only thing we ever wanted." Chapter 37



Topics for Discussion

Describe Kira Walker. What kind of character is she? Do you like her? Why or why not? Is she a believable character considering the story line? What is it that Kira learns about herself? How does she make this discovery?

Who is Samm? Who is Marcus? Compare the two characters. Do they have any similarities? What are the main differences? How is each connected to Kira? Compare Marcus's situation at the end of the book to that of Samm.

What is "the Break"? What is "RM"? What are "Partials"? How does each of these impact Kira's life and the lives of all humans?

Describe Kira's adoptive family. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each of her adopted sisters? Who serves as the parent of the group? What is the secret Kira learns as the story comes to a close? What do you believe it means?

Describe the overall setting. Does it make the story any more believable that the author chose to set the story in a real place? Describe at least three specific settings in the story. Do the settings seem real? Why or why not? Could the story have been set somewhere else? Give an example of an alternative setting.

Describe the crises facing humans. What are the plans presented by the government to combat these crises? Is it working? Will it ever work? What is Kira's attitude about the government? Who is the first to point out to Kira that the RM virus is only one of the problems facing humans? What is Kira's reaction?

Who is Haru? Senator Hobb? Dr. Skousen? Saladin? Jayden? Yoon? What is the role of each in the story? Which of these is a likeable character? Why? Which is more believable? Why?

Who are Scruffy and Skinny? What are their fates? In many ways, they are an important look at the prejudice felt by humans. Give at least one more example of this prejudice.