

Starters Study Guide

Starters by Lissa Price

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Plot Summary

Starters by Lissa Price is a fictional story that examines both the heavy cost of war, and our pursuit of youth at any cost. A world war is the catalyst that creates a gulf in the ages of its survivors. A war waged using the smallest of spores kills all of the middle aged population, leaving only the children and their grandparents behind. A law passed earlier forbids minors from employment and this law will make their survival a challenge at best. Children without the benefit of grandparents are rounded up by Marshals and placed in homes or work camps, while those who escape the Marshal's clutches live hand to mouth, sleeping in abandoned buildings and doing whatever is necessary to survive.

Callie and her younger brother Tyler are two such children. When their mother first becomes sick, they take her to an infirmary where she dies just two days later. The Marshals come for their father shortly thereafter, and when he realizes that they won't release him, he sends his children a coded message to run, saving them from incarceration. Tyler becomes sick, and with no access to health care, and poor diet, he gets steadily worse. Another refugee of the war, their friend Michael, offers to look after Tyler while Callie investigates the one opportunity she has to make enough money to help her brother. She walks for hours to get to Prime Destinations where she is received graciously. The program is outlined for her, and a substantial stipend offered for what seems like a very short investment of time. She takes the contract back to Michael, intending to think it through carefully like her father taught her, but when Marshals invade the building where they are living and put them out on the street again, Callie realizes she has no choice. She returns to Prime. For just three rentals, she will have enough money to get herself, Tyler and Michael a real home. She signs, and is immediately put through their treatment program - washed, disinfected, hair cut and styled, manicured, scars and blemishes removed, make up added and new clothes issued. When she is presentable, she hardly recognizes the beautiful girl who looks back at her. A night in a real bed follows, and she wakes the next morning to be taken for the procedure that will install a chip in her head. This chip will allow an Ender, one of the senior population, to enter and control her consciousness and body as though it were her own. Meanwhile, Callie's consciousness sleeps comfortably in Prime, she is told. Most of the hype is true, and Callie comes through the first two rentals with ease. She is immediately asked to go on to the third which is a month in duration. She makes a deal to see her brother and Michael first, taking them food and explaining her absence. Tyler misses her, and she promises it will all be worth it. The third rental changes everything. Shortly after relinquishing control of her body, she returns to it, finding herself in a place called Club Rune, where the music is loud and the crowd is young and beautiful. Something has allowed her and the renter named Helena to communicate and Helena opens Callie's eyes to the truth. Prime is taking children off the street and indenturing them into service. At first, Callie doesn't want to believe what her renter is telling her. Helena insists that she is seeking her granddaughter Emma, and she is not alone. She introduces her to others who believe Prime has taken their family members as well. In the quest for youth, the renters never even question the



identity or cost of rental to the donor. Callie is really rattled when she discovers that Prime is preparing a new program in which a renter can become an owner of their youthful rental. The donor would, of course, cease to exist in any meaningful way. Callie joins and spearheads the crusade to end Prime Destinations once and for all, but in a twist she can't anticipate, she meets Blake Harrison - Senator Harrison's grandson. They date, Callie swallowing the guilt she feels for her deception, and she falls for him. It is her first date, her first crush, and her first heartbreak, all rolled into one. How can she possibly stop Prime, help her brother and Michael, and avenge the deaths of so many who precede her? Starters is a gripping tale with carrots and consequences that is hard to put down.



Chapters One and Two

Chapters One and Two Summary

Starters by Lissa Price is a fictional story that examines both the heavy cost of war, and our pursuit of youth at any cost. A world war is the catalyst that creates a gulf in the ages of its survivors. A war waged using the smallest of spores kills all of the middle aged population, leaving only the children and their grandparents behind. A law passed earlier forbids minors from employment and this law will make their survival a challenge at best. Children without the benefit of grandparents are rounded up by Marshals and placed in homes or work camps, while those who escape the Marshal's clutches live hand to mouth, sleeping in abandoned buildings and doing whatever is necessary to survive.

Callie Woodland walks to Prime Destinations, and is greeted by Mr. Tinnenbaum who explains the procedure to her, and assures her the chip placed in her head will be removed after three rentals. She is promised nothing will damage or alter her body during the rental, and a contract is put in front of her. Callie tells Mr. Tinnenbaum it is a decision she has to sleep on. Nearing home, she is jumped by two renegades but manages to get away. She calls out to Tyler and gets no answer but before panic sets in, Michael reveals himself, telling her that the roof over their area is leaking, so he moved them over to his room. Callie tucks Tyler into his blankets and then goes over to Michael's shelter. He asks her about Prime Destinations, revealing how worried he'd been that she wouldn't come back. He is surprised by the amount of money Prime Destinations is willing to pay, and that she turned them down. Callie returns to her own bed, and has little trouble getting to sleep after her trek. She wakes to the sound of smoke detectors. They are outside before they realize they've been duped. A sign posted on the door now reads 'No trespassing.' The Ender in charge won't even allow them to retrieve their few remaining belongings including the only photo of their parents. Sirens announce the approach of the Marshals, and they run for their lives.

They huddle in shrubbery until the Marshals stop looking for them and leave. One had almost found them, but another called out a catch, and he goes to assist him. They remain hidden, trying to block out the captive's screams, knowing there is nothing they can do for him. When the Marshals leave, Michael says he knows of another place they can go. Callie asks him to draw her a map, telling him she'll be gone for couple of days. Michael isn't thrilled with the idea, but Callie will do whatever she has to in order to help her brother, Tyler. At only seven years of age, he is sick and the lack of medicine and proper food is taking its toll. When Callie returns to the body bank, she is given a series of tests to prove her qualifications, including a short trip to the rifle range, and finding her acceptable, her transformation begins. She is disinfected, deloused, bathed, styled, and repaired from one end to the other, eventually emerging like a butterfly from a cocoon. She hardly recognizes herself. Then she is given a meal of all her favorite foods, and a bedroom to sleep in. She feels a momentary twinge of guilt, thinking about Tyler and Michael, hoping they are safe and warm. In the morning she is taken into



surgery to have her neurochip installed, followed by a large breakfast. Then she is ready for her first rental - a single day in length.

Chapters One and Two Analysis

Callie Woodland finally makes it to Prime Destinations, exhausted and soaked to the skin. Mr. Tinnenbaum takes her to his office where he shows her photos of other 'starters' who have rented themselves out to Enders for a week at a time - all for a generous stipend of course. Callie reminds herself not to rush into this decision and tells Tinnenbaum she wants to sleep on it, much to his dismay. He warns her that the value of the contract may change if she waits, but Callie isn't swayed. On the way back to the shelter she and Tyler share, she is attacked by renegades and loses one of the Supertruffles from the dish Mr. Tinnenbaum offered, but gets inside with the other two. Once safely inside, she gives Tyler the remaining two truffles, and he returns one, insisting that she and Michael share it. They make a production out of eating the rare treat, and then Callie tucks Tyler into his blanket. When he is asleep, she and Michael talk about her visit to Prime Destinations, and then Callie returns to her own shelter, exhausted from her long trek. She is asleep in moments and wakes to the shriek of the fire alarm. Smoke fills the room and Michael helps Callie and Tyler to get outside safely. Once there, they discover they've been duped. The property they'd been using as a temporary home has been sold, and they'd just been evicted. The Ender in charge is oblivious to Callie's pleas to retrieve the only photograph they have of their parents, and Callie is devastated. Tyler comforts her, telling her that they won't forget and can remember them without the pictures. Sirens herald the approach of Marshals, and they run, leaving everything they'd collected in the last year behind.

Having scouted the area earlier, they manage to hide quickly in nearby shrubbery. The Marshals search, and one comes close to discovering their hiding place but is called away to help another Marshal who'd managed to catch one of the runners. Callie, Michael and Tyler continue to crouch in the bushes, listening to the screams and cries of the friendly who'd been caught, but there is nothing they can do to help. When the Marshals leave, Callie looks at Tyler's pale face, and listens to him coughing. The smoke has made his lungs even worse, and in that moment Callie makes a decision. She will go back to Prime Destinations and do what she has to in order to get Tyler the help he needs. She asks Michael for directions, and tells Tyler she'll be gone for a couple of days, promising him better conditions when she returns. He goes with Michael while Callie takes the long walk back to Prime Destinations. The doorman greets her with a smirk, and she catches a glimpse of a man talking to Mr. Tinnenbaum. She later learns that he is the 'Old Man' - the one responsible for the entire program. Callie is tested and then transformed, the end result surprising even her. She'd forgotten in one short year how it felt to be clean, brushed, and presentable. She is brought a selection of her favorite foods, eating it with some degree of guilt as she wonders what Michael and Tyler are doing. She hopes he manages to replace the blankets they'd lost. Before long, the comfortable bed has her sound asleep. In the morning, the neurochip is implanted and she is given breakfast. Then, at last, they take her for her first rental.



Chapters Three and Four

Chapters Three and Four Summary

Before long, Callie is dreaming of a house by a lake, and Tyler looking healthy with a fishing pole. The next thing she is aware of is Doris waking her, telling her the first rental was a huge success. Callie asks for a break so that she can return to Tyler and Michael briefly, but Doris reminds her that if something happens to the work invested in her so far, she will not be paid. Another renter is waiting, this time for a three day rental, and Callie reluctantly agrees. This rental, like the first, is over in a blink, but she returns to consciousness to find a large gash in one arm. Afterward Callie is taken to the office where Doris informs her that the next rental is for an entire month. Callie wants to see Tyler first and they decide to allow it, providing she returns in exactly the same condition as she is now. Callie showers, puts on clean clothes she is given. Rodney takes her to the building Michael and Tyler are at and they sit around a crate and talk about the future while Tyler and Michael eat the food Doris provided. As Callie is getting ready to leave, another friendly arrives, and Michael introduces her as Florina. Michael hugs Callie and tells her he'll miss her. She gets back just in time, and she dreams - this time strange dreams that include Florina and Michael together.

The next time Callie opens her eyes, she is assaulted by loud music and sickly sweet smells. Lasers add to the percussion as Callie watches a pair of heels approach and ask her if she is okay. She helps Callie up and tells her she is in Club Rune and her clothing is comparable only to what she had seen in magazines before. Madison introduces herself. She tells Callie that she knows she is a 'PD client', having recognized the signs. When Madison goes to the bar for a drink, a new problem emerges. A voice in Callie's head says hello to her but the noise level is so high that she can't hear. A young male approaches and asks her if she is okay. He helps her to clean herself up, and asks her to dance, and she declines, claiming to be woozy still, and tells him she plans to leave soon. He is obviously disappointed. Madison returns with a coffee for Callie and says hello to Blake, remembering him from earlier. He says goodnight to them and leaves just as the voice in her head starts up again, telling her to listen. The voice warns her not to return to Prime Destinations.

Chapters Three and Four Analysis

Doris gives Callie a charm bracelet that sets off a holo-projection whenever a charm is touched, revealing the sport or activity represented. The simple gift is nothing to Doris, but to Callie it is a much larger deal, bringing tears to her eyes briefly. The first two rentals are over quickly. The first is just for a single day, and the second is for three days. Callie has already been gone for longer than she thought she would be, and when she learns that she will be gone for a month on the third and final rental, she insists that she have an opportunity to see Tyler and Michael first. Doris calls Tinnenbaum, and he reluctantly agrees to let her go, providing of course that she is escorted by a bodyguard,



and that she return before the next rental that night. She and Rodney pull out, and Callie discovers extra food on the seat beside her packed by Doris for Michael and Tyler. When they get there, Rodney escorts her upstairs, and then stands discretely outside the room while Callie talks to Tyler. Tyler is angry with her at first because she has been gone for an entire week. His demeanor doesn't improve when he discovers that she is only back briefly, and will be gone an entire month the next time. Callie explains that they'll have a real home when she is done, and Tyler brightens at the idea. She includes Michael in her plans, but he insists that he would never be able to mooch that way. On the way back, Rodney is silent and Callie thinks about the past, and hopes for the future. She returns just in time to change and without so much as a meal first, is put under again.

The next thing Callie is aware of is loud, throbbing music, and a sickly smell. Madison walks over and introduces herself, helping her up off the floor. Callie is disoriented, and so fearful that at first she won't even let Madison leave her side to go and get herself a drink. Madison laughs, thinking Callie is really drunk, and starts talking to her about Prime Destinations. She says she can spot a renter a mile away, and gives Callie some quick pointers. Renters have no piercings or tattoos, have excellent manners, and are flawlessly beautiful. They also know more about history, having already lived it, she adds laughing. Callie has to keep reminding herself that Madison is really a hundred years old or more and not the stunning teen in front of her and that she thinks Callie is as well. When she leaves Callie to get a drink, another voice speaks to her, but this time in her mind only. She tries to concentrate on the words, but the noise level is so high that she can't make it all out. Then Callie looks up to see a handsome, but slightly scarred young man. A scar near his chin points him out as a client of P.D. He tells her that he talked to Madison earlier, finding her strange and oddly interested in the past. He claims it was obvious that he failed her test almost immediately, and laughs. When Madison returns, Blake leaves but it is clear that he had hoped to spend more time with Callie. The voice in her head tells her not to return to Prime Destinations.



Chapters Five and Six

Chapters Five and Six Summary

When Blake walks away, Madison reminds her about the rules where boys are concerned while Blake watches her from across the room. Madison gives Callie her card, and suggests that she send her a Zing sometime. She walks outside with her, and waits until she is gone before giving the valet the ticket from her purse. As she inches away, a voice says goodbye and she sees Blake in her rear view mirror. She pulls over after a few blocks to pull herself together. A quick check of her identification reveals that she is Callie Winterhill now. The voice in her head is quiet now, and Callie wonders if there is a problem with her chip. She sees that she has already been rented for a week, and is considering the three remaining weeks when renegades take a run at her. Five of them approach, one hopping onto the back end of the convertible. She finds drive and slams the car into gear, toppling him as she accelerates. She reaches Bel Air thirty minutes later and 'home' appears to be a mansion. She manages to get the car in the garage safely and enters the house. An Ender greets her, obviously opposed to the whole situation.

The Ender offers her a snack, and Callie dismisses her, telling her she isn't needed anymore, and after giving Callie a phone message, she heads to her room. Callie assumes her bedroom is upstairs and heads off in search of it. Three doors later, she finds the master bedroom and a computer, which she checks for power outages that might explain her loss of connection to her renter, or the voice in her head, but there is nothing. She searches for her parents, finding a photograph of them at a party, and drinks in the sight of them. A photo nearby reveals an image of Mrs. Winterhill, and she learns her first name is Helena. She slips into bed and is sound asleep in moments. In the morning she showers and finding a closet full of clothes in her size, gets dressed in jeans and a knit top. Transferring the money and identification to a less dressy handbag, Callie decides she'll keep track of her expenses and pay Mrs. Winterhill back after she's been paid. The cell phone buzzes and she reads the Zing sent to her. The message warns her not to 'do it', and Callie wonders if it is a reflection on the rental itself. She takes the phone and goes downstairs, reluctantly allowing the housekeeper to fuss over her breakfast and morning vitamins. The doorbell rings as Callie is trying to figure out which door leads to the garage, and the housekeeper returns to tell her a boy is asking for her, insisting he has a date with her.

Chapters Five and Six Analysis

The voice in Callie's head tells her not to say anything to Madison who is busy reminding Callie that one of the biggest rules of P.D. renters is the ban on sex of any kind. Callie feigns indifference to Madison's amusement, and notices Blake watching them from the other side of the room. She leaves with Madison. The idea of driving scares her, and when the valet returns with a yellow sports car, she tries to look



nonchalant as she gets in, but has to ask the valet where she is - unsure even what city she is in. He points to her navigation system, and she slowly pulls out, headed for home by way of its instructions. She stops a few blocks away to get her bearings and is attacked by a group of renegades. She manages to drive away unharmed, and headed for the residence in the navigation system, she passes about twenty Starters who are working on the road. She feels guilty, knowing her appearance is deceiving and underneath it all, she is still one of them. The address called home in the navigation system takes her to a mansion and she manages to figure out how to open the gate remotely and get herself and her renter's car into the garage. Inside the house, she is approached by an Ender who greets her with obvious distaste at the length of time she's been out and in what condition.

The Ender reveals herself to be an employee, offering her fresh baked cookies which Callie declines, telling her she can go to bed. Callie manages to find the master bedroom, grateful that there doesn't appear to be a Mr. Winterhill in the picture. Photographs of Mrs. Winterhill reveal her first name as Helena, and Callie wonders where she is now. She is asleep in moments after climbing into bed, and wakes feeling like a fairy princess. Elegance surrounds her as she luxuriates in the shower, feeling momentarily guilty about even this little pleasure. She dresses in clothes selected from a closet that contains only things in her size, and selects a bag and jewelry to match. Intending to escape unchallenged, she heads downstairs only to be intercepted by the housekeeper once again. She tries to decline breakfast, but this is something so out of Helena's character that the housekeeper almost rings for a doctor. Reluctantly, she sits down and eats before announcing she is going out. The doorbell rings, and while the housekeeper leaves to answer it, Callie manages to find the door to the garage. The housekeeper returns, pale and unsettled as she announces that a young boy is at the door claiming to have a date with her.



Chapters Seven and Eight

Chapters Seven and Eight Summary

Blake asks Callie how she is feeling and realizing she has no idea they had a lunch date, he offers to reschedule. Callie decides it won't hurt to go, and Blake might even be able to help her to get a message to Michael and Tyler. Blake takes her to a ranch where they ride horses together until they are both tired and hungry. Blake walks them around a bend where a table under a large oak tree is covered with food of all kinds. Enjoying her surprise, Blake pulls her to him backwards, taking his phone out and snapping a photo of her in his arms. Callie realizes they are on his family's ranch. After lunch, he tells her he has to stop at his grandmothers house. She greets Callie warmly and through her Callie learns that Blake's grandfather is actually Senator Clifford C. Harrison. As Blake is taking her home, she finally asks him if he will take some money to Michael. He promises to do so, and relieved, she relaxes. Something washes over her, beginning with a numbness in her hands. She feels like Alice falling into a deep, deep hole.

The next time she wakes standing in Helena's bedroom it is with a Glock 85 complete with silencer in her hand. A wave of pain overwhelms her. She puts the gun back in the floor safe. Helena has been in control for the last eighteen hours. Callie decides to return to Prime, but the voice in her head begs her not to, insisting it is too dangerous. Callie searches Helena's computer and finds a granddaughter named Emma with a funeral announcement dated two months earlier. Searching Emma's room, she finds the same charm bracelet Doris gave her before her first rental and knows there is only one way Emma would have one. Later Callie returns to Club Rune. A girl walks over and holds up her cell with Helena's name in flashing hearts. She pulls out her own phone and sees the name Lauren. Known as Reece now, it is obvious she and Helena are Ender friends. As Lauren talks, it sounds as though Helena is planning something both dangerous and controversial involving Prime. Lauren talks about the body bank as the enemy and Callie needs to know more, asking Lauren to meet her somewhere quieter. She leaves and Callie looks for a seat in the lounge. The only one available is with a woman and two men who are obviously renters as well. They peg her easily as a renter and after some conversation, Callie, Briona, and Raj get into Lee's convertible to go joyriding. They get to a bridge where a group of people is band-bouncing. Lee joins them, jumping off the bridge. Callie asks Briona if she knows Emma, but she doesn't recognize the photo.

Chapters Seven and Eight Analysis

Callie can't believe that Blake is at the door, wondering how he knew where she lived. She guesses that Blake must have talked to Helena before she became part of the mix at Club Rune and decides to honor their lunch date, but with ulterior motives. On the way, Callie suffers an attack of conscience, knowing that everything she presented to



Blake was a sham and that he could just as well have been taking a hundred year old woman out without knowing. Officially, this is her first real date, and she decides to enjoy it. Afterward, as he is taking her home, he asks her if she enjoyed herself and she has to stop herself from gushing. There were so many reasons that things between Callie and Blake wouldn't work, but for the time being, she is content just to enjoy the ride, despite occasional guilt twinges. Blake even agrees to take some money to Michael for her, even offering to take her there as well, but Callie worries that Prime can track her with the chip in her head, so declines. Relaxing, she feels a wave wash over her and before she can do anything, she feels as though she is falling a long way down.

When she comes to again with a gun in her hand, she is both scared and unnerved. She decides to return to Prime but when she gets ready to leave, the voice in her head becomes frantic, begging her not to go to Prime. Callie relents, sensing the urgency of the voice, and digs through Helena's computer for more information. She finds Helena's daughter, and a reference to her death two months earlier. In Emma's room, she finds a duplicate bracelet to the one Doris gave her and nothing makes sense to her anymore. At Club Rune that night, she has the opportunity to meet Helena's friend Lauren, also in a rental known as Reece, and three other renters who seem oblivious to the way they are treating the rentals they are in. The contract and rules mean nothing to these rich Enders. Callie tries to find out more about Emma, but even showing up dressed like her at the Club doesn't provoke anything concrete.



Chapters Nine and Ten

Chapters Nine and Ten Summary

Lee returns Callie to Club Rune, and Briona exchanges phone numbers with her. Callie discovers a wad of cash in her purse - exactly the same amount that she gave to Blake. The next morning she leaves the house and parks a few blocks away. She calls Blake and leaves a message. Later, she meets Lauren for lunch who asks if she still plans to carry out her plan. Not knowing what she is talking about, Callie simply says she doesn't know. Lauren begins to reveal more, telling Callie that murder is wrong and that she still hopes that Kevin is alive somewhere. During lunch, she learns that Helena had planned to use her body to kill someone from Prime, but Lauren presses her for details making it clear she doesn't know who. Lauren reminds her that whoever it is, once Helena executes them, it is likely the young girl she is wearing - Callie - will be shot on sight. She leaves the restaurant, and finds a zing from Blake. She calls and meeting him in the park, she learns that Helena had taken the money back, and told him not to contact her again. Callie apologizes, telling him she'd appreciate a chance to have a 'do over'. Blake relents and again agrees to take the money to Michael.

Callie drives back to Helena's house, retrieves the gun and throws it and the case into a garbage can at a local megamarket. Then she drives out and onto the freeway where she suffers her next blackout. The next time she becomes aware of herself, she is standing in a building lobby that she doesn't recognize. Standing there, her phone rings with a caller ID that says Memo Return. She presses the button and hears the voice that has been in her head, explaining the glitch briefly, asking her not to wear Emma's clothing, and telling her that if she continues with her plans, she will ensure that there is a substantial bonus at the end. Of course, Helena doesn't know that Callie has talked to Lauren. She turns back to the directory, scanning the names to see who is there, and to her surprise she finds Senator Clifford C. Harrison - Blake's grandfather.

Chapters Nine and Ten Analysis

Callie is faced with one surprise after another. After Lee drops her back at Club Rune, and she says goodbye to Briona who tells her to call anytime she is doing anything fun, telling her she feels as though they are already old friends. The next morning Callie leaves a message for Blake, trying to find out why she has the exact amount of money in her purse that she had given to him the day before. She has her suspicions and yet is still disappointed that he hasn't called her since their date. She meets Lauren/Reece for lunch, and the news doesn't improve. She learns that Helena plans to use her time in Callie's body to kill someone from Prime, and it is likely that Callie will be shot dead at that time. Callie leaves feeling panicked, and discovers Blake had zinged her while she was with Lauren and she calls him back, asking him to meet her. When he does, he confirms her suspicions that Helena had taken the money back moments after Callie had given it to him, and made it clear that she never wanted to see him again. It is also



clear that Blake hadn't liked or understood that change. Callie apologizes, insisting she'd just had a bad day, and wasn't herself. She asks him for another chance, again pressing the money into his hand and his expression softens as he admits that everyone can have a bad day.

Callie rids Helena of her gun, throwing it away in the hopes that it will at the very least slow her down some. Afterward, she gets on the freeway, feeling more and more comfortable behind the wheel. When she begins to black out again, she knows what is happening, but is unable to stop it, despite driving at freeway speed. When she comes to in the lobby of a strange building, she discovers a memo on her phone from her renter, and the voice matches the one she'd been hearing in her head. Helena begs her to stay the course, promising her a substantial bonus if she does, and obviously unaware that Callie has spoken with Lauren. One name from the directory jumps out at her. Blake's grandfather - Senator Clifford C. Harrison.



Chapters Eleven and Twelve

Chapters Eleven and Twelve Summary

A guard approaches insisting Callie sign in before going up to Harrison's floor. Pretending to be doing a story for school, she asks for an appointment just as an Ender comes out of the first office and threatens to call the Marshals. Callie realizes Helena had been there as her already. As the Ender is dialing, Callie sprints for the exit. She goes back to Helena's and looks through her computer for answers, finding an event where Senator Harrison is to be the guest of honor which coincides with Helena's notation. Worried, Callie calls Blake and meets him at the lookout point on Mulholland Drive. He confirms that he gave Michael the money she'd given him, telling her that according to Michael 'everyone' is fine. He asks her if she is hiding the fact that she is sick, and she pulls his hand down from her head before he reaches the chip, asking him not to push her for details. She asks about his father, whom he claims not to be very close to, and tells him that she'd love to meet the Senator. Blake tells her that he is going with his grandfather to meet the President after his appearance at the Youth League Awards. With her theory confirmed, she tells Blake she has to go. He tells her that he feels connected to her somehow, and gently kisses her.

Callie returns to Helena's. In her desk she finds tickets to the Youth League Awards and shreds them, flushing the pieces down the toilet. She calls Madison/Rhiannon. When they meet the next morning at a super-blading rink, she asks Madison if they can have a sleepover the next night. Madison is eager to agree. Callie heads to a drive-thru for a quick bite and dizziness comes over her again. The next time she is aware, she has an assault rifle against her cheek. Callie is removing the cartridge when Helena's voice begs her not to. Harrison arrives as she and Helena argue. Callie runs from the room but Helena warns her not to since she has just had surgery on her chip. Helena had found a surgeon to alter it and remove the stop-kill switch. Callie finds a valet ticket, and leaves despite Helena's pleas. As Callie drives, Helena tells her what she knows about the Senator. Callie heads for Prime, hoping she can negotiate a partial payment by telling them everything, but Helena becomes anxious, and begs her not to, telling her if she goes back to Prime they are both dead.

Chapters Eleven and Twelve Analysis

Callie tries to make an appointment to see Senator Harrison, but an angry Ender comes out of the first office, telling her that she had warned her the Marshals would be called this time. Callie realizes Helena has already been her in her body, and wonders what other messes she's gotten Callie into already. Callie decides to run, and easily leaves the Enders behind. Back at Helena's house, she searches the computer for any signs of the identity of her target. When she sees that Harrison is due to speak at an event that coincides exactly with the time in her planner, Callie thinks she may be onto something. She calls Blake, who meets her at Lookout Point. Blake had seen Michael and given



him the money, taking some of the stress from Callie. Then he asks her what her secret is. Taking a guess, he asks her if she is sick. She deflects his concern and asks about his grandfather, managing to glean that he is Helena's likeliest target. She tells Blake she has to go, but he stops her, telling her that for some reason, he feels connected to her, and tentatively kisses her.

Callie goes back to Helena's, drawn to Blake just as he said he is to her. She wishes his grandfather weren't mixed up in it all. Searching through Helena's things, she finds tickets to the Youth League Awards confirming her suspicions. She does what she can to derail Helena's plans and then calls Madison trying to stay away from the house. Madison is happy to have Callie stay the night, sure that they will be the best of friends for life. Callie heads to a drive through for a bite to eat, and once again loses control to Helena. The next time she returns to her body, she is in a hotel room, sitting at a window with a rifle at her cheek. She checks for bullets, and finds it fully loaded. She begins to unload, and Helena begs her not to, insisting the Senator needs to die, or thousands of children will. Angry, Callie leaves the hotel, and decides to return to Prime but before she gets there, a very frightened Helena pleads with her one last time, assuring her that if she returns to Prime, they will both be dead.



Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen

Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen Summary

Callie doesn't return to Prime but tells Helena that she needs more proof before she can fully believe Helena's claims about Senator Harrison. The following day, Callie visits Madison. Each room of her home is different - allowing Madison to use theme rooms when she is renting. Her games room is something right out of Hollywood and Callie is amazed. Blake calls and asks Callie if she wants to go to the Youth League Awards that evening to meet his grandfather. Callie wants to, but explains that she'd made plans for the night. After she hangs up, she has a change of heart. At least if she goes to the awards, she might have a chance to warn the Senator. Blake is thrilled when she calls back. He picks her up, taking her to a penthouse suite his family uses before operas or receptions. A close moment has Callie admitting that she recently had surgery, but she doesn't want to tell him what kind. He gives her access to his sister's closet full of clothes and jewelry, complete with a whale clipped to each shoe. He puts an antique bracelet on the wrist that does not contain the one Doris gave her, and tells her she looks amazing.

Once at the Music Center plaza, Blake leaves Callie at the buffet table to find his grandfather. While he is gone, she hears Helena's voice, who tells Callie the Senator needs to die - that he is deeply involved with the Old Man and Prime Destinations. As Helena tries to assure Callie a gun is available, Blake returns with the Senator who seems less than welcoming, and is obviously unhappy with the fact that Callie is wearing some of the family heirlooms. An aide tells them it is time, and Blake arranges to meet with her after the awards. As soon as he is gone, Helena begins talking, having stayed silent while the introductions occurred. Helena tells her where the gun is, and though Callie balks, Helena reminds her that her prints are on it. She retrieves it, putting the safety on before entering the theater. The Senator begins his speech as Helena keeps up a running commentary in Callie's head. Afterward, the Senator finds her, and tells her he knows what she is. He orders her to stay away from Blake, asking if Tinnenbaum sent her. She tries to explain, but then the woman from his office recognizes her. Before she causes a scene, Blake's other grandmother shows up and steers him away. Someone else begins pulling her away, and she turns to find Briona, Lee and Raj. They tell her that the Senator called her out, and knows she is a renter. He is headed for security, and Callie knows that at least the jewelry has to be returned. She takes it off and Lee promises to return it for her. In the rush to get her out, she leaves a shoe behind as she is hustled into their SUV. She sees Blake and begins to lower the window but Briona stops her from even saying goodbye, leaving him standing there, holding her missing shoe.



Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen Analysis

Callie wants more information but Helena is uncharacteristically silent. She tries pressing the chip in an effort to reconnect, but only hurts herself. Callie goes to Madison's as planned. She wants to be able to talk to Madison about the whole thing, but knows that once Madison discovers she is a real teen, she would no longer trust her or want to be around her. Madison's home is like a playground for adults of all ages. Each room is a tribute to an age or theme, and Madison uses them according to who she is at the time. She takes Callie to the games room which is rigged with the latest and most up to date software and games imaginable. When Callie comments on the scope of her playthings, Madison admits to having worked in the field and assembled most of the items at cost or below. She even has a floating Invisascreen that allows the operator and others to become part of the game or movie they are watching, interacting directly with the characters. Madison loads a popular holo and steps into the space where she can interact with them, inviting Callie to do the same. The effect is spoiled when Callie's phone rings, and she steps out to talk to Blake who invites her to the Youth League Awards. She begs off at first, explaining that she had already made plans. Then, she thinks about how long it has been since she heard Helena's voice, and wonders if she has already left Prime to handle the execution of the Senator herself. In that light, Callie is sorry she turned Blake down. She goes to the bathroom and calls him back. Happily, he picks her up and takes her to his family's penthouse suite near the Music Center. There, he gives her access to his sister's clothing and accessories, changing into a tux himself. Callie can hardly believe the amount of clothing and accessories that his sister has - everything computer coordinated.

When they get to the event, Blake goes in search of the Senator, leaving Callie by the buffet table. Helena's voice is becoming more insistent, trying to convince Callie that the Senator must die or she is consigning thousands of children to death. Callie is still having a hard time believing her. The Senator approaches with Blake and introductions are made. Before they can talk, an aide arrives to tell them it is time and Blake promises to find her afterward. They leave and Helena begins again. She tells Callie where a gun can be found and reminds her that since her fingerprints are on it, she has to retrieve it. Callie does so, but puts the safety on before going back in. After the presentations, the Senator approaches her without Blake. He hisses at her that he knows what she is, and grabbing her arm roughly, insists she tell him who sent her. Blake's other grandmother intervenes, leading the Senator away before he makes a scene, and someone grabs Callie's arm, pulling her back. Briona, Raj and Lee are there, and Briona warns her that the Senator is talking to security, and her cover is blown. They hustle her out of the building and like Cinderella, she loses a shoe on the way. Pushed into an SUV with the other three, they speed off, ignoring Blake who is standing there holding one shoe, and keep Callie from opening the window and calling out to him.



Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen

Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen Summary

Callie watches Blake until he is little more than a spot. They make it to the freeway, and begin to breathe easier. Helena hounds Callie to ask them about Emma. She does, and Helena thanks her for trying although all three assure Callie they don't know Emma. They drive around for a while before dropping Callie off at Madison's where Helena's car is. She drives away without speaking to Madison, and at Helena's, she thinks about her circumstances wondering if Blake could ever forgive her deception. Helena asks her why she joined Prime and Callie tells her about Tyler. Helena tells her about a stash of cash and tells her to get her brother into a hotel for now. She even tells Callie where to go and who to talk to in order to get around the fact that minors are not allowed to rent rooms. Then she gives Callie a pendant that interrupts the tracking signal Prime has implanted for a brief time. They talk about Callie's mother, and about Emma until Callie finally sleeps.

It has been two weeks since Callie has last seen Tyler or Michael. Florina is with Tyler and Michael is no where to be seen. It is soon clear that Florina has been looking after him for a while. Florina tells her that she and Michael had fought and he'd stormed out the night before. Callie tells Florina to leave word for Michael, and then takes them to a hotel. Tyler enjoys a bubble bath and is tucked into a real bed for the first time in many months. It is difficult for her to leave again, but as soon as she does, Helena is back in her head and planning their next move. Helena wants her to go to Institution 37 to search for Sara who might know where Emma is under the guise that she is there to donate clothing. She assures her that properly groomed, she will be treated with the respect that Callie Winterhill deserves.

Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen Analysis

Callie sees Blake receding in the distance, still holding the shoe she lost in her desperate run for the vehicle, looking like a confused Prince Charming. She feels anything like Cinderella at the moment. When they finally reach the anonymity of the freeway, they all breathe a sigh of relief. Helena is relentless, pushing Callie to ask about Emma, and since Callie had so badly ruined her plans at the Center, she figured she owed her that much, but again, no one in the vehicle knew the name. Later they drop her just down from Madison's house. Callie isn't ready to face Madison, having left earlier without even saying goodbye so she gets into the car and returns to Helena's. She can't stop thinking about Blake. She knows he is on his way to Washington now with the Senator who is likely telling him all about who she is. Callie wonders if he'll ever understand that though she lied, she isn't an Ender - just a Starter on the streets living hand to mouth with her little brother. She isn't rich, and doesn't live in the house she pretended. It's a lot to ask anyone to forgive, she realizes. She remembers how the Senator had angrily asked if Tinnenbaum had sent her and wonders why he would ask



that if he were in cahoots with them. Helena asks Callie about her involvement with Prime and when Callie explains the circumstances that drove her there, Helena's demeanor toward her softens. She directs Callie to a hiding place and an envelope of money, and can help her get Tyler into a hotel with her contacts. She even has a way to block the tracking device in her head. They talk until Callie falls asleep.

Callie can hardly wait to see Tyler and Michael. She parks as close as she can, wearing the pendant that temporarily interrupts Prime's ability to see where she is. When she finds Tyler, Florina is looking after him instead of Michael and she has no idea where Michael is. At first Callie is angry, but when she realizes that Florina has been looking after Tyler for her, her attitude towards her changes. A drawing of Florina is displayed, and tugs at her heart a little, but she sets all of that aside to concentrate on the task at hand. She gathers their things and takes both of them to the hotel room that Helena helped her to set up, leaving a note for Michael to join them. Tyler is astounded by the sheer luxury of the place. It has been so long since their lives have been normal that this simple luxury feels like Disneyland to him. Callie is shocked when Tyler disrobes for a bath and she sees how skinny he's become, determined that she will change things for the better. Clean, and tucked into a warm, soft bed, Tyler is safe and warm and Callie is relieved. Leaving is much more difficult than she would have believed, but she knows she has to. The valet brings the car and Helena gives Callie their next destination — Institution 37. The idea of going anywhere near the place is terrifying, but Helena assures her that if she dresses the part, and shows up with prearranged clothing donations, she will be welcomed and released. Helena needs to know if Emma is alive, and a young girl named Sara is supposed to know something. Callie really doesn't want to go.



Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen

Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen Summary

Callie, following Helena's instructions, goes to Institute 37 with a bag of clothes to donate. Once inside, she follows Helena's directions and finds Sara almost immediately. They talk for a few minutes while Callie gives her a sweater, and asks about Emma. Sara claims to have seen her twice. Once she came to the Institute to give the girls a beauty make over, and the second time on the streets in Beverly Hills, but that time Emma hadn't seemed to recognize her. Sara asks Callie if she thinks she's pretty, telling her that a special man is coming to take some of them away for make overs and then important jobs. Her face changes and Callie turns to see an Ender with a ZipTaser. Mrs. Beatty, the head of security, is not pleased that Callie didn't take the clothing directly to the headmistress. She makes Sara remove the sweater and Helena warns her not to stay. When Mrs. Beatty suggests they go to the headmistress together, Helena warns her not to. When they get to the entrance to the main building, Helena tells her to walk away and simply go left, so she does despite Mrs. Beatty's insistence that she stay. Callie holds her head up and strides out the main entrance. Helena is relieved that Callie finally understands.

Madison had called and left a message for Callie to come and get her things. When Callie shows up, Madison is understandably upset. When she tries to explain, Madison tells her Blake and his father are on television now. She tells Callie that she knows she'll want to see the interview. Harrison is at the microphone, and announces that a select group of sanctioned companies - Prime Destinations is the first - will now be permitted to 'hire' unclaimed minors beginning with those who are institutionalized. Then Callie notices that Blake is wearing the whale pin from her shoe as a tie clip. A flashing blue light on the screen tells Madison that a special privatecast has been sent and the code corresponds to Prime. She turns it on, and they listen as Tinnenbaum and Doris announce The Old Man who tells them that Titanium Premium members will soon be given the option of becoming owners. At first, Madison is all for it, but when Callie explains the consequences to the person she is 'purchasing', her demeanor changes. She tells Callie it sounds like kidnapping, but Callie corrects her, telling her it is more like murder.

Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen Analysis

Callie does as Helena asks, dressing herself up and taking a bag of clothing for donation to Institute 37. She stands across the street from the gate, too terrified to move until she gets a prod from Helena. At the gate, a guard lets her in and she follows the directions Helena gives her, finding Sara almost immediately. Callie asks her about Emma, discouraged by how thin and malnourished she looks, and Sara tells her that she had seen Emma, but that was some time ago. She had also seen her on the street once, but when she called out, Emma didn't answer. Sara thinks that Emma likely didn't



want to acknowledge that she knew her in public, but Callie knows better. Sara tells her about an opportunity she has to leave Institute 37. A man is coming, and if she is pretty enough, she may be selected to work and earn her own money. Before she is able to get too much information, the head of security arrives. Sara shrinks back, obviously fearful, and Callie follows the head of security out, but at Helena's urging, rather than accompany her to the headmistress, Callie turns and leaves the compound. Now Callie has first hand knowledge of how bad it can be.

A message on her phone from Madison asks her to come and get her things, and though Madison is clearly still somewhat angry with the way Callie left, she manages to forgive her. In fact, Madison called Callie for more than just to pick up her things. She tells her that Senator Harrison and Blake are on television, and she thinks Callie would like to see it. Callie and Helena are both interested, and when Callie sees Blake, she searches his face for some sign of his demeanor. Then she notices that he is using the whale clip from her missing shoe as a tie clip, and she knows that he is sending her a message. She listens as Harrison extols the virtues of the President for allowing youth to participate in a new work program with select companies, beginning with Prime Destinations. Horrified, Callie realizes that Helena was telling her the truth. As they are watching, a special message is sent to Madison as a platinum member of Prime. A short introduction by Doris and Tinnenbaum bring the Old Man onto the screen where he informs his special members that soon they will be able to permanently buy the rentals they are enjoying - for a fee of course. Madison is thrilled until Callie, sickened, points out that they would have to take the lives of the teens they are buying. Madison finally sees it as kidnapping of a sort, while Callie again corrects her, telling her that actually, it would be murder.



Chapters Nineteen and Twenty

Chapters Nineteen and Twenty Summary

Callie is beyond angry when she leaves Madison's house, and as she is talking to Helena, she realizes that Emma might not be dead. She explains that Emma may have been taken over as a prototype permanent. Helena is mid sentence when she stops for a moment, and her terrified voice says 'Please... don't'..... and then 'Callie, run!'. It is the last thing Callie hears from her. Deep down, Callie knows she is dead. Someone from an SUV takes a shot at her and then comes around to hit her with the vehicle. She manages to elude them, and goes back to Helena's for her gun. Callie tells Eugenia not to open the door for anyone, telling her to be careful. Back in the car, she searches through the navigation history and finds a familiar name - Redmond - telling the vehicle it is her destination. When she gets there, she asks Redmond to remove the chip, explaining that Helena is dead, but Redmond refuses. He tells her that the chip is embedded in a pattern of webbing that would self destruct if removed. A fail safe, it is likely part of every chip. Redmond affixes a cover plate over her chip, but warns her the sealant will only hold for a week or so. She asks him about the Old Man, but Redmond warns her not to pursue him. Before she leaves, Redmond shows her a box with Helena's name on it, telling her to retrieve it if anything happens to him. It contains the data explaining how Redmond altered her chip - much like a birth certificate.

Redmond gives Callie a new phone so that Prime can't track her. She calls Lauren and leaves a message just as a call comes through on Helena's phone from Blake. He Zings her the address of a restaurant called the Drive-In where Callie finally tells him as much of the truth as she can, including her real name and how she came to be involved with Prime. She doesn't tell him about Helena's plan to shoot his grandfather, and after some thought, Blake decides that it would be best if Callie talked to his grandfather herself and invites her to lunch the following day. They say goodbye, and Callie naps in Helena's car until the morning. She takes a pain killer Redmond gave her, and returns a call from Lauren who is still in Reece's body, hoping Helena has news about Kevin. Callie decides to clear up the confusion right away, and tells her who she is. She tells Lauren that Helena is dead, and that she believes Lauren's grandson is still alive. Angry and full of grief, Lauren walks away, and Callie leaves the gated community. Across the street, she sees Michael.

Chapters Nineteen and Twenty Analysis

When Callie leaves Madison's, she is livid and now believes everything. She tells Helena that some Enders are using their rentals as a way to go joyriding, pushing their rentals to their extremes. Callie speculates that Emma might already be a permanent - a test subject. When Helena stops mid sentence, Callie hears her sound terrified for the first time. She hears Helena beg, and then feels a drain as Helena whispers at her to run. Callie can tell that Helena is gone for good. The navigator takes her to Redmond



where Callie explains that Helena is no longer with them. The news saddens Redmond as he recalls how they met in college at least a hundred years previously. Though Callie holds him at gunpoint, Redmond refuses to even try to remove her chip. His concern is that they incorporated a drop-dead command, but since Callie's chip had already been altered, Redmond theorizes that perhaps they would be interested in studying her as opposed to simply taking her out of the way. Discouraged, Callie realizes that she will never be the same again. Redmond blocks the chip's transmission ability by affixing a magnetic plate over it. Callie is comfortable with Redmond, seeing him as a young soul in an old body. In fact, she feels so comfortable, and safe, that she doesn't want to leave. He does such a nice job that her hair covers all signs of it, and afterward he shows her where to find the blueprints that go with the work he did on her chip, calling them her birth certificate.

Since Prime couldn't track her anymore, they would soon realize that she had defeated her chip, so Redmond supplied her with a new phone to keep them from tracking her through theirs. She calls Lauren, and leaves a message. Then she returns a call from Blake, her heart in her throat. She has to struggle to keep herself from crying. He Zings her the address of a restaurant, and when they meet up there she finally tells him the truth. The only part she leaves out is the part where Helena planned to kill his grandfather, since it no longer seems relevant. He is still wearing the whale clip, and his kiss is soft and gentle, sending thrills and chills through her body. He touches her as though he is touching a woman for the very first time. Blake decides the best course of action is to have Callie talk directly to his grandfather, so he invites her to lunch the following day. She sleeps in Helena's car in the restaurant's parking lot, and in the morning she goes to see Lauren. Her honesty continues as she reveals all to Lauren next. Lauren doesn't take the news as well as Redmond had, and leaves Callie standing there. She leaves the gated community again, and across the street she spies Michael.



Chapters Twenty One and Twenty Two

Chapters Twenty One and Twenty Two Summary

She runs to catch up to Michael, and he asks her what her name is. She looks him over, realizing he is a renter, having only just acquired Michael's body. Announcing he plans to use his new body with abandon, he leans in and licks her from jaw to eye giving Callie the creeps, before hustling off. She stands there replaying the conversation, and realizes that he hadn't said he was a 'renter', but that the new body was his. She chases him to confirm her fears, but loses him in the crowd. Disoriented, she looks around and sees Briona, Raj and Lee. They sit for a moment, and Briona asks if Callie's heard the news regarding permanent purchases. Something about Lee's mannerisms triggers a memory in Callie, but she can't place it. Briona talks about the advantages of renting over purchasing and Callie inwardly cringes. Briona drums her nails on the table, and again Callie has the feeling she's seen it before. Lee sees her looking at Briona's hands and suddenly Callie realizes who they are. Raj pulls up in an SUV and they try to convince Callie to get in, but she pulls a gun and tells Briona/Doris she isn't coming then pushes her into Lee and runs.

Now that she knows who Lee and Briona are - Tinnenbaum and Doris - she can only guess at Raj's real identity and wonders how long they've been watching her. She calls Florina at the hotel to tell her about Michael to discover they'd checked out that morning with no word as to how to reach them. Realizing that Prime may have them already, she heads to Blake's family ranch. The Senator isn't thrilled to see her, but Blake insists he invited her. She asks him if he is aware that he is committing murder and he responds by calling her an old biddy. She pulls out her gun and informs him she is the donor, insisting he take her to the Old Man, but he claims he can't. Blake adds his support to Callie, but his grandfather balks until Callie is forced to shoot him. Blake moves at the same instant, pushing him and the bullet only hits the Senator's arm. She continues to insist he take her to the Old Man, and on the way she explains her desperation. The Senator promises if she stops now, he won't report her, but she refuses, so the Senator purposely crashes the car, deploying the airbags. The Senator pulls Blake out while Callie tries to clear her head, blood coming from the side of it. Blake tries to turn back, but the Senator pulls him onward. She manages to open the door, vaguely aware that shapes are approaching. The last thing she sees before blacking out is a Marshal.

Chapters Twenty One and Twenty Two Analysis

When Callie realizes Michael is a renter, she warns him to take care of the body he has. He puts his arm around her, suggesting perhaps he got a bonus with this rental. She shrugs him off angrily and he leaves her, claiming to have a life to live. As he leaves, she replays the conversation in her head, and then chases him down again, wanting to know if he'd purchased the body or merely rented it from Prime, but loses him in the crowded street. She turns to find Briona, Raj and Lee who tell her they've just come



from Prime and noticed her phone number come up on theirs. Callie is surprised, as she had purposely turned it off, but when she opens her purse she sees that the Prime phone is on. She turns it off, but not before Briona sees the second phone. Callie covers, saying it belongs to her donor. Briona leads her to a seat and sends Raj for lattes. They talk about the new opportunity being offered, weighing the benefits of rentals over permanence. Callie is quietly horrified, and something about Briona and Lee's mannerisms triggers elusive memories that she can't quite grasp. It only takes a few moments before it comes to her. Briona is actually Doris and Lee is obviously Tinnenbaum! They try to force her into an SUV that Raj has brought around, but Callie eludes them and runs.

Thoughts tumble around in her head, and she wonders how long the surveillance has been going on and if they knew about Helena's plan from the beginning. When she calls the hotel to tell Florina about Michael, she learns they left that morning, and feels sick inside. She isn't sure where they are, but is certain that something is very wrong. The manager claims to have seen them get into a car with Florina's grandfather. Callie stifles the urge to go to Prime with gun in hand and demand the return of her brother and Florina and heads to Blake's family farm instead. Blake lets her in, but the Senator is livid. She insists the Senator take her to see the Old Man, and he refuses, even when she pulls her gun and insists she'll shoot him. Calling her bluff, he leaves her with no choice but to fire, and she does but Blake intervenes and her shot merely hits the Senator in the arm. His face is pale as he drives one handed toward downtown. He tries to convince her to let them go, and when she refuses, he crashes the car and pulls Blake out. While Callie tries to regain her senses and get untangled from the airbag, she loses precious moments, and the last thing that registers on her consciousness is the sight of an approaching Marshal.



Chapters Twenty Three and Twenty Four

Chapters Twenty Three and Twenty Four Summary

Callie wakes, lying on her back with an IV in her arm. She can hear, but not see them. They ask and she admits she is an unclaimed minor. They question the plate in her head, and when she asks, they tell her she is in the infirmary at the institution and again question the plate. Callie recognizes Mrs. Beatty, and tries to remind her of her previous visit with donations as Callie Winterhill, but they've found her gun in the car with her prints and DNA matching the ballistics of the gun that shot the Senator. The doctor adds something to her IV as Beatty leans over and hisses 'I hate liars' into her ear. Then she straightens and welcomes her to the incarceration ward.

Callie wakes in a prison uniform in a cell that smells of urine. Horrified, she is reminded of the day her mother was infected, and the sequence of events that followed which changed their lives forever. Mrs. Beatty arrives and tells her she will be incarcerated until her nineteenth birthday at which time she'll be assigned a lawyer to defend her against the attempted murder charges. She asks where Tyler is, and talks about finding him, adding that she will discover the reason for the plate in her head. After she leaves, Callie notices a single button on the wall and when she presses it, a pipe comes out with water that is chemical and metallic in taste, but wet nonetheless. It lasts only three seconds before turning off, and pressing it again does nothing. The next morning Callie wakes and is led into the yard for twenty minutes of exercise. Sara sees her and Callie asks her if her brother Tyler is there. Sara asks if she has a boyfriend, but Callie has no idea what to tell her about Blake. Sara tells her that the man from Prime Destinations is coming soon, and Callie asks where the best place to hide is. Sara tells her the laundry room and Callie tries to convince Sara to hide when Prime comes. Sara gives her the Supertruffle that days earlier Callie had given to her and hugs her. Callie only has twenty minutes and has to go, but Sara tells her that she is glad to see her, as selfish as it sounds. The next day at exercise time, Callie finds Sara again, and Sara reveals that the Old Man is there. Horrified, Callie does the only thing she can when Sara refuses to hide. She hits her in the face hard, twice to be sure. Another girl approaches and hits Callie in return using something metal on her hand. When Mrs. Beatty separates them, she reminds them that their visitor is here, and they shouldn't be fighting.

Chapters Twenty Three and Twenty Four Analysis

When Callie regains consciousness, she wakes to find she is in her worst nightmare. Once the fog clears slightly, she is face to face with Mrs. Beatty who welcomes her to the incarceration ward. Since Callie has already admitted to being an unclaimed minor, her attempt to remind Beatty of her visit as Callie Winterhill is no help. Beatty calls her a liar, and tells her they already have the gun with her fingerprints. The doctor gives her a shot.



When she wakes next, it is in a cell and she is in prison garb. She wonders if this is the kind of quarantine to which her father had been sent and the memories of the day her mother was infected come flooding back. A single spore had landed on her arm, and within a week she was dead. The Marshals took her father the next day, despite his lack of symptoms, and he Zinged them daily from wherever they held him. Then one day he sent the code telling her it was time for her and Tyler to run. Mrs. Beatty enjoys torturing Callie just a little bit with comments that include she will see if she can find Tyler so he can join her, and the fact that Callie won't even qualify for a trial on the attempted murder of the Senator until she is of age. When they let her out for her twenty minutes of exercise, she finds Sara who is happy to see a familiar face. Though Callie only has twenty minutes, she looks forward to them like a lifeline. The next day, Sara tells her that the Old Man has arrived, and Callie is unable to convince her to hide until he is gone. Seeing no alternative, she apologizes first, and then hits Sara hard in the face twice. Another girl joins the fracas, donning a metal hand wrap of sorts before hitting Callie. Callie sees stars as Mrs. Beatty arrives, pulling them apart and chastising them for fighting when they have a visitor.



Chapters Twenty Five and Twenty Six

Chapters Twenty Five and Twenty Six Summary

Sara and Callie are taken to the infirmary. Mrs. Beatty returns in an hour and asks the doctor to finish with Callie so she can be taken to the gym. Once there, a number is taped to her chest. When the Old Man finishes his examination of both boys and girls, an Ender reads out the numbers of those chosen. Callie's number is chosen and she realizes she should try to escape. A guard threatens to use a ZipTaser on her but she gambles he won't dare damage the merchandise. Pretending to be the relief worker scheduled she hides in a laundry basket in the dark. Sara joins her there and helps Callie disguise herself as a gardener. While those chosen are loaded into a transport, Callie positions herself safely underneath, tucking up her feet. Sara sees the wrong guard is at the gate, so to distract the one on duty, she runs for the fence, climbing to the top. The transport leaves the compound and once outside, Callie can hold on no longer. She falls and rolls to the side of the road, hiding behind a tree where she can see Sara hanging onto the top of the fence. She touches her heart in a salute and tries to pull herself up onto the wall when the guard behind her fires his ZipTaser, hitting her in the neck and face. With a look of surprise, her eyes glaze over and close. The guard checks for a pulse and finds none.

Callie walks until her slippers fall apart, and finally arrives at Madison's who isn't home. When she returns an hour later, Callie brings her up to speed. A telephone call brings Lauren over in her true persona - a gracious and elegant woman of about one hundred and fifty years of age, along with her attorney. She tells Callie that she and her attorney will claim that Lauren had been in the process of adopting Callie when she was taken to the institution and thereby wasn't an unclaimed minor when she was picked up. Then, with some electronic wrangling and help from a team of audio/visual experts, they use Doris and Tinnenbaum's likenesses to create a message of their own to all the Prime clients. They also make a copy of the original privatecast offering members permanency, and send it to Senator Bohn. Together with an assortment of grandparents still trying to find their grandchildren, they coordinate a plan of attack. Then Lauren and Callie head to Redmond's where they immediately see trouble. Smoke is billowing and an Ender tells them that some kid bombed the place. Callie knows better. She runs inside, and to her relief, Redmond isn't in there. Then she finds the compartment where Redmond hid her 'birth certificate' and slips it into her pocket, wondering if Prime has him.

Chapters Twenty Five and Twenty Six Analysis

Sara hopes the doctor can make her beautiful again. She insists he work on her first so that she can still go down and try her luck at being chosen to go to Prime Destinations. Mrs. Beatty comes down to get Callie instead and Sara can't believe it. Callie is given a number. The boys are lined up opposite the girls and Callie uses the opportunity to



search for Tyler but he isn't in the group she can see. The Old Man does his rounds, wearing a mask of a metallic fabric that effectively hides his identity. When Callie is one of those selected, she comes out of her stupor and attempts an escape. She hides in the laundry room where still a bit angry, Sara find and asks Callie why she hit her, threatening to turn her in. Callie tries to explain how dangerous Prime is, and Sara's anger dissipates. She helps Callie to escape but the plan goes sour when the guard who never looks under the vehicles isn't the one on duty. To distract this guard from seeing Callie under the transport, Sara races for the wall. She climbs quickly, with a guard on her tail. Callie makes it out of the compound and can hold on no longer. She drops and rolls off the road, hiding behind a tree. There, she can clearly see Sara, who touches her heart in a solemn salute before the guard fires his ZipTazer at her. Callie knows immediately that he is too close. She sees the look of surprise on her face and the burn that is left behind as Sara's eyes glaze over. Callie watches as the guard checks her pulse and shakes his head, bringing her lifeless body down.

Callie can't believe that Sara is actually dead. She walks all the way to Madison's in a fog of pain, regret and guilt. Madison isn't home when Callie arrives, but returns just before dark, and helps Callie inside, full of questions. Callie begins with an admission that she is the donor, explaining everything. Then Lauren is called, who shows up shortly after with her lawyer at her side. Together, she and Helena had hatched a plan to free Callie from possible arrest by formally adopting her. By backdating the documents, they can ensure that the Institution has no claim on Callie. Lauren, having accepted the death of Helena, is now more determined than ever to find a way to shut Prime down. She assembles a team of audio/visual specialists to help manipulate the broadcast made earlier by Doris and Tinnenbaum, making it appear as though they are now reversing their endorsement of Prime and their permanent donor bodies. Then they send the original to Senator Bohn, who throws his support behind them as well. While they work on the technical issues, Callie and Lauren go to Redmond's only to discover that someone had burned him out. Callie is beginning to wonder how many people would be made to suffer as a result of her actions before this was all over.



Chapters Twenty Seven and Twenty Eight

Chapters Twenty Seven and Twenty Eight Summary

In the beginning of a multi-pronged attack, Callie enters the body bank for the first time since Helena had warned her to stay away. A guard searches her and Tinnenbaum orders her detained. Callie insists on seeing the Old Man, and fifteen minutes later she gets her wish. She isn't taken to his office, but to a large room with a single light source that turns out to be his metallic face. She offers him a trade - herself for Tyler, and the Old Man accepts. She also insists he take off his mask. He refuses and the faces represented flash faster. When Callie won't give in, he accepts and the room goes dark.

It takes a moment for her to realize he is gone. Using a sensor she turns on the lights, confirming she is alone. Two Marshals enter and they search for him. One of the exits leads to the garage, and Callie hears shuffling. She discovers Terry who begs her not to let them arrest him. He suggests Callie look for the Old Man on the helipad on the roof. They race up there and he is ready to take off. Callie jumps on the skid grabbing his coat, and demands to know what he is hiding and where Tyler is. She tries to tug off his mask as the helicopter rises but is finally forced to drop back down to the roof. They go to the lobby as teens begin returning to Prime, claiming Tinnenbaum sent out a privatecast instructing them to do so. More arrive and Madison tells Trax to return her to herself. In the waiting room, renters aged from 80 to 150 appear to have been there for as long as two weeks in some cases. Soon after, Rhiannon, the real Madison, introduces herself to Callie. The rest of the donors, including Michael, slowly regain their bearings. Lauren and Senator Bohn tell Callie they have a lead on Tyler and when they find his empty room, Callie knows the Old Man took him. Callie realizes that Tyler would likely hide from the Marshals like they always have, and begins looking around. The toilet seat is down. She steps on it and pushes a ceiling panel to one side, calling out to Tyler. Everyone is relieved, but none more than Callie. Emma isn't among the donors, and neither is Kevin, but Callie promises they'll keep looking. Later, Lauren pulls Callie to one side and informs her that Helena had left a will and that she left Callie half her estate, including the main house and a vacation place. Callie is speechless.

Chapters Twenty Seven and Twenty Eight Analysis

Callie is terrified, but she goes into the body bank alone like they planned, demanding to see the Old Man. She is immediately taken into custody, and Tinnenbaum takes her down a long hallway, pushing her through a door. The room is dark, and seems large. A single source of light is in the room and as Callie nears, she sees that it is the Old Man's face, still electronically cycling through faces that reflect horror, fear, desperation, and murder. Callie offers to exchange herself, an already experienced donor for Tyler, a sickly young boy who would require a great deal more care and attention. She also



insists not only that he stop flashing the horrible faces at her, but that he remove his mask. He refuses. Callie uses it as a bargaining chip and he finally relents. The room goes dark.

In the darkness, she can hear footsteps approaching. It only takes a moment for her to realize the sounds are electronically produced, but that is enough time for the Old Man to escape. Just then, the next phase of their attack is deployed. Two Marshals join Callie in their search for him. Callie tries the garage first, finding only Terry, terrified and crouching in a corner, begging for forgiveness. He suggests the helipad on the roof, and together they head there. The Old Man is already in the helicopter, about to leave when Callie jumps on the skid. Grabbing his jacket, she yells her questions. The pilot takes out a pistol, but a word from the Old Man has him taking off instead. Callie makes one last effort to remove his mask unsuccessfully. Back inside, teens are filling the lobby. Madison insists on being returned to her own body, and returns as Rhiannon, who introduces herself to Callie. The process is sped up when the donors are asked to sit on the floor and the plug on the entire system is pulled. Michael returns with the rest, and Callie hugs him happily, telling him it's over. There is no sign of Helena's granddaughter Emma or Lauren's grandson Kevin, but Callie vows to help them in their continuing search. A lead on Tyler's whereabouts takes them to the room he stayed in, but it is empty. Callie realizes that with so many Marshals around, Tyler would hide, and it takes just moments to find him in the ceiling. After he finally falls asleep, she and Michael talk about Florina who Michael believes likely went to stay with her great aunt in Santa Rosa, inviting Michael to join her. Claiming it is too cold there, he had stayed behind. Lauren asks Callie to join her, and to Callie's surprise, Helena kept her promise. Knowing the risk she was taking with herself and her donor, she'd left half of her estate, including two homes to her donor before she even met Callie. Callie hears only that they have a home for the first time in a long time, and there isn't a dry eye in the place.



Chapters Twenty Nine and Thirty

Chapters Twenty Nine and Thirty Summary

Callie takes Tyler to see their new home, and they slowly begin to rebuild their lives. With Lauren as her guardian, she is protected from the Marshals. Michael moves into a cottage on the estate, and then leaves again. Callie leaves messages for Blake, but he doesn't respond. Finally, she goes to visit him and he talks to her at the door as though she is a perfect stranger. Senator Harrison comes to the door and invites Callie to come in. He asks Blake for privacy, and then explains that her entire time with Blake was actually time with the Old Man. The Old Man had held Blake hostage to enforce Senator Harrison's cooperation. The real Blake believes he was sick the whole time. To avoid painful memories, Callie takes Tyler to the vacation home in the San Bernardino Mountains. There, she thinks about the series of events that led them to their new home. In the kitchen she sees the same orchids that the Old Man as Blake had once given her. His voice in her head suddenly is unnerving. He tells her what a success she is and invites her to join him since she is unique and what she is makes him special to her. She allows him to talk in her head while she searches the house, keeping one eye on Tyler who is still fishing outside, but the Old Man is nowhere to be found. She tells him she isn't interested, and he is so certain that curiosity will get the better of her that he tells her he can wait, and after a few moments, she feels his presence withdraw.

One week later, Callie watches as the demolition of Prime occurs. Lee, Briona and Raj are there, as well as Madison and Rhiannon. She sees Michael and heads towards him, stopping when she sees Blake. Blake reaches her, and explains that after seeing the photo of them, he realizes he wants that back. He holds out his hand and asks her to help him remember what he lost. She takes his hand uncertainly, remembering the feel of his touch and then hears her father's voice for the first time in a long time. Blake squeezes her hand as the wrecking ball connects.

Chapters Twenty Nine and Thirty Analysis

Things begin to settle down. Callie, Tyler and Michael move onto Helena's estate - now Callie's, and Michael moves into one of the cottages. Tyler explores everything, afraid to touch any of it and Callie assures him that he can do as he pleases now. He picks up a statue of a dog, and cradles it to himself. Callie repeatedly tries to reach Blake to explain, but without success. Finally, unable to leave things the way they are, she drives to their family estate. Blake has no idea who she is. He remembers none of their time together and Callie insists she isn't crazy - a picture of them together is even on his phone, she insists. Finally, the Senator comes to the door and invites her in. He explains that she has now met his grandson who until just recently had been a hostage at Prime and the Old Man had been in control. Callie feels sick inside. The Senator asks Callie not to tell Blake and Callie leaves without even saying goodbye to him. The rest of the night is like a movie of her time spent with Blake, but this time he is the Old Man



and the memories are soured by him. Finally, unable to escape the sights and sounds that remind her of Blake, she bundles Tyler up and heads for the vacation home in San Bernardino Mountains. Tyler spends his time practicing how to cast in the lake while Callie sorts out the last few weeks. She remembers how Blake touched her, sick inside at the thought that it was the Old Man the whole time. She goes inside and finds an orchid on the counter exactly the same variety as the one Blake/the Old Man had given her once before. His voice in her head unnerves her completely when he says hello. He tells her how successful she is, and invites her to join him in his endeavors. She flatly refuses. He accuses her of enjoying her life as Helena as much as he had as Blake, and something about that rings true in Callie. Still, she wants nothing to do with him now. Claiming he can wait for her to change her mind, he finally withdraws.

Only a week later, she is standing along with several other donors and even some renters. She sees Michael and when he sees her, his face lights up. The biggest surprise is Blake and she freezes as he walks toward her. He tells her that he doesn't know what happened, but that the photo of the two of them looked so happy. He only knows that he wants that back. He wants her to help him remember what he's lost. He holds out his hand, and she takes it gently, remembering the feeling as the wrecking ball hits the facade of Prime Destinations.



Characters

Callie Woodland (aka Callie Winterhill)

Callie is a sixteen year old squatter. She and her brother Tyler are casualties of war - orphans of society now for almost a year. Her mother died after coming in contact with a single spore in the 'Spore War' segment of the Pacific Rim war, and shortly afterward her father was taken into quarantine and never heard from again. Now, a year later, Callie is the sole provider for her seven year old brother Tyler. They live wherever they can, and avoid the Marshals who seek only to arrest and institutionalize any unclaimed Minors they can find.

Callie is capable of archery and fencing, and a crack shot with a rifle. She had learned from her father who was in the Science Corps and who assured her that she would need these skills one day. He had been right. He had managed to convey the importance of the skills by addressing her as Cal Girl to get her attention. Callie has long hair and like all other rental bodies, she has no tattoos, piercings or neon hair colors and is flawlessly beautiful.

When Callie joins Prime Destinations in an effort to make enough money to look after her brother Tyler, she is rented by an Ender named Helena who is seeking her missing granddaughter, Emma. Helena has an agenda, and plans to use her time in Callie's body to kill Senator Harrison - the man who helps facilitate Prime Destinations' use and abuse of minors. This fact is confirmed when an announcement is made that minors will be allowed to work at a select group of companies, beginning with Prime. This is followed by a more private announcement to its members from Prime, offering them permanency instead of temporary rentals. Callie and Helena work together until Helena is killed at Prime. Then Callie continues, managing to be the catalyst that brings the company to its knees.

Helena Winterhill

Helena Winterhill is a beautiful woman. She has high cheekbones with a nose and jaw line that are strong. At about one hundred years of age, she is elegant and strong, and still retains a spectacular figure. She lives in a mansion in Bel Air, staffed by a housekeeper and surrounded by elegance. The master bedroom reflects money, and two closets full of clothes and accessories separate her identity as Helena from her identity as Callie.

Helena has an agenda. She is renting a youthful body from Prime Destinations with the intention of using it to kill Senator Harrison. Having learned that the Senator supports Prime Destinations and its employment of unclaimed minors, Helena is determined to put an end to it. She is also hoping that in the process she will find her granddaughter, Emma.



When Helena enters her donor body, she begins the preparations. She finds someone to alter the chip in Callie's head so that Prime will be unable to stop her by activating the kill switch. In the process however, something changes and she is able to communicate with her donor mind to mind. An unfortunate side effect is that Callie keeps popping in and out of herself, and foiling Helena's plans at every turn. Though Callie fights her at first, she soon comes to realize that Helena is telling her the truth. Unfortunately, Prime seems able to monitor them and kills Helena while she is incapacitated in their facility. Before her first rental however, Helena recognized the danger, and changed her will to reflect this, leaving half of everything to the young girl who would be her donor body - Callie.

Blake Harrison (aka The Old Man)

Blake is even better looking up close than he is from far away. The natural dimples are accented when he smiles and the inch long scar near his chin in no way detracts from how handsome he is. His father, Senator Clifford C. Harrison is forced into supporting Prime Destinations after his grandson is taken and turned into a renter who is used by the big boss of Prime Destinations. When Blake meets Callie for the first time in Club Rune, it is actually the Old Man using Blake's body as a rental, much to his grandfather's dismay. He lures her into an emotional bond. Blake has a scent that is a cross between grassy and woody. His hair is soft and he has a light and sensual touch.

When Senator Harrison endorses Prime Destinations and is instrumental in ensuring that the young will be able to work there with government sanction, his grandson is released. He is not told anything about the body bank or his unwitting involvement, but when Callie shows up on his family's estate to see why he hasn't been returning her calls, she discovers that this Blake has no idea who she is. While he seems the same, this Blake has never met Callie. Callie tries to invoke some memory of their time together, telling him to check his phone for the photo he took. The Senator tells Callie the truth, and she leaves without even saying goodbye to Blake, devastated by the news that it had been the Old Man all along. When she later returns to Prime to watch its demolition, Blake is there as well, and seeks her out telling her that he wants the life he sees reflected in the photo of them together. He isn't sure what happened that causes his memory lapse, but wants Callie's help to remember - if she's willing.

Lauren (aka Reese)

Lauren is Helena's best friend. Together, they rent youthful bodies from Prime in an effort to shut the entire system down from the inside. Reese has green eyes and long red hair. As Lauren, she has a grandson named Kevin who is a victim of Prime and whom she hopes is still alive somewhere. In the body of Reese, she meets Callie for the first time in Club Rune, believing Callie is still her friend Helena. Callie plays along hoping that by not revealing who she is, she can figure out why she is awake during a rental. Lauren makes reference to Helena's plans, still trying to talk her into changing her mind, and gives Callie a sneak peak into what Helena had in mind.



When Callie admits the truth to Lauren, she storms out, furious both because Callie deceived her and because her friend Helena is likely dead already. When she calms down, she realizes that Callie is only continuing what Helena was trying to accomplish. She has her lawyer draw up papers that give Callie a guardian and take her from the Marshals' clutches. Lauren is seeking her grandson, Kevin, who disappeared along with Helena's granddaughter Emma and together with Callie, they manage to create a plan to bring Prime Destinations to its knees.

Lauren also arranges to claim Callie formally to avoid any further issues with Marshals or legalities that may arise as a result of Callie's recent inheritance from Helena's estate.

The Old Man

The CEO of Prime Destinations, he is often referred to as the Old Man privately by his staff. The Old Man is tall, and is usually seen in an elegant wool coat and a fedora pulled down low. He uses his gloves to accent his displeasure, slapping them against his palm, and his silver hair can be seen under his hat. The Old Man is never identified. He hides behind an electronic mask that cycles through a variety of faces, usually constricted in pain and misery. As he becomes agitated, these horrid representations increase in violence levels and in transitions from one face to another. The only face that is never seen is his own.

When the Old Man wants to keep a closer eye on Callie, he puts himself into a donor body, renting Senator Harrison's grandson Blake. This 'rental' serves two purposes. It allows him to keep tabs on Callie and monitor her behavior, and it allows him to exert pressure on Senator Harrison to publicly and politically support the efforts and direction in which Prime Destinations is growing. On both sides, his plan works well. Callie meets him as Blake and he ensures that she falls for him, while Senator Harrison is compliant and obedient with his support of the Old Man's program.

His vanity and greed is his undoing however, since Callie manages to infiltrate, and facilitate the closure of Prime Destinations. While she is unable to help secure his arrest as well, the Old Man is forced to retreat to a back up facility where he hopes that Callie will join him.

Mr. Chad Tinnenbaum (aka Lee)

The person who greets Callie at Prime Destinations, Mr. Tinnenbaum, is silver haired and well tanned. He is the front man for Prime Destinations, making the deals that turn young adults into rentals for the elderly. In order to monitor Callie's behavior while she is used as a rental for Helena, he is sent out as Lee along with Doris who appears as Briona, and Raj, who is Rodney in his true incarnation.



Lee is a daredevil. He uses his youthful body to provide thrills to an Ender who no longer can. Lee is Asian, and his face is accented by high cheekbones. He travels with Briona and Raj, shopping, and enjoying the youthful body he is in as they pursue Callie.

Rhiannon Huffington (aka Madison)

Rhiannon is a rather plump woman of about a hundred and twenty five years of age. She has a toothy grin, and a sassy demeanor. Rhiannon enjoys renting youthful bodies and has done so several times, even creating theme rooms in her home to accommodate herself in these young bodies. Her media room is an example of this since it contains the latest in holographic and gaming modules.

As Madison, she is stunning. She drives a red convertible, which she calls her teen car. She meets Callie at Club Rune, and Callie uses her in an effort to keep away from Helena's home, hoping to keep Helena from shooting Senator Harrison as is her plan. When Blake calls Callie who is at Madison's at the time, Callie deserts Madison in favor of an opportunity to meet with Senator Harrison herself, hoping to tell him what she has learned. Madison is angry that Callie deserted her, but still welcomes her back when she returns, beaten and bloody. Madison is eager to show Callie the newest privatecast sent by Prime to its premium members. In it, Doris and Tinnenbaum extol the virtues of ownership rather than time limited rental. When Callie explains that while the Enders are getting a permanent youth, the Starters who donated their bodies for rental will be held against their will, or even killed, Rhiannon changes her mind. With this new perspective, she helps Callie to bring Prime Destinations to its knees and free most of the rentals.

Doris (aka Briona)

Doris is an Ender, and is personally assigned to Callie at Prime Destinations. Though silver haired, her body is as trim as a ballerina's. She wears clothing that is classically retro with accents that are more modern. Her suit could fit easily into 1940, but her power belt cinched her tiny waist, accenting her figure so dramatically that it appeared likely that she had a rib removed to accomplish the effect. Doris originally worked in the travel industry (before the Spore War) with Rodney, and they have known each other for over sixty years. Doris goes out as Briona and follows Callie from Club Rune to Beverly Hills in an effort to ensure that she is staying within company guidelines, and to find out what Helena has planned.

Briona is as beautiful as any model. She has long limbs that she accents with Glo-Dust so they shimmer. Briona, along with Raj and Lee, try to bring Callie in but are unsuccessful when their mannerisms give away their true identity.



Rodney (aka Raj)

Rodney is the bodyguard/driver assigned to Callie when she insists on seeing Tyler between the second and third rentals. He is built so well that his suit appears to be bursting at the seams. He has short silver hair and claims to have known Doris for over sixty years. Rodney and Doris once worked in the travel industry together, before the Spore War and he is a logical choice when Doris requires extra help monitoring and if necessary, subduing Callie.

Raj speaks with an accent that he jokes about having when he first meets Callie.

Florina

Florina is a friendly that Michael introduces to Callie for the first time when she visits Michael and Tyler between her second and third rentals. She drops off two oranges for Michael and Tyler. When Callie visits Tyler in between rentals, she discovers Florina looking after him instead of Michael, who she tells Callie left angrily the day before. Florina continues to care for Tyler at the hotel that Callie arranges while Callie returns for her month long rental, still unaware of the issues Helena is bringing to the picture. When she tries to check on them, she finds them gone. Florina is tossed aside as Tyler is taken to Prime Destinations where he will be used as leverage to keep Callie in line. Florina joins her great-aunt in Santa Rosa where she is claimed and safe from Marshals, offering to take Michael with her, who refuses.

Trax

Trax is the technician who facilitates the computer exchange for donors and their renters.

Mrs. Beatty

Head of security at Institute 37, Mrs. Beatty is a stern and mean-looking woman who wears a gray suit and carries a ZipTaser on one hip. She intercepts Callie's visit with Sara, taking back the cashmere sweater Callie had given her.

Eugenia

Helena Winterhill's housekeeper, Eugenia isn't thrilled with her boss's use of Prime Destinations.



Michael

Michael has soft eyes and long blond hair. He is Callie's best friend, and looks after Tyler whenever Callie is unable. Tyler is the one who begins looking after Tyler when Callie joins Prime Destinations. He knows that he is welcome to join Callie and her brother once Callie has been paid and they are able to get a decent place to live, but Michael refuses to take charity. As such, after Callie leaves, Michael decides to go to Prime as well. He tells himself that twice the money will enable them to do twice as well.

Michael is an artist. He sketches what he sees, producing lifelike drawings of the people and places where he is. When Callie goes to Prime, he gives her a sketch he did of her to remember them by. Later, when Callie is given legal status by Lauren, and discovers that she has inherited half of Helena's estate, he moves into a guest house on the property. When he leaves again shortly afterward, Callie is at first afraid that he won't return, but when she sees his collection of artwork still hanging on the walls in the guest house, she relaxes knowing he would never leave them behind. She finds him again when she goes to Prime Destinations on the day that it is scheduled for demolition.

Redmond

Located in an area of the San Fernando Valley, Redmond's address is a complex of warehouses. Redmond has silver hair, and is the Ender to whom Helena went as Callie to have her chip altered. Gangly and thin, Redmond has nice bone structure and it is clear that in his youth, he was quite handsome. Redmond knew Helena from college from about a hundred years earlier, and recognizes that she is no longer in Callie. Prior to his current career, Redmond had been a brain surgeon, but after he retired, he returned to his first passion - computers. Redmond enjoyed working on computers, calling them patients who didn't complain.

Sara

Sara looks as though she is about twelve years of age. She has a pretty face, despite a gap between her front teeth, and wears the typical uniform for Institute 37 - a shirt that is white and frayed, and a pair of black pants which drape themselves on her bony figure. Sara is gaunt and has a bad valve in her heart which exempts her from most work details.

Enders

Enders is the name given to those of the population who are sixty or older.

Starters

Starters is the name given to the youth who survive the Spore Wars.



Objects/Places

Prime Destinations

Prime Destinations is the body bank where Callie goes to rent herself out to an Ender for a generous enough stipend that she should be able to look after her brother Tyler and their friend Michael for about a year. Prime Destinations rents out youth and vitality to Enders, who are people between one- and two- hundred years old, approaching the end of their lives, so that they can experience youth again.

Body Computer Interface

BCI or Body Computer Interface is the link that occurs between the 'renter' and the 'donor' who is hooked up to the other end. While connected, an Ender is able to do anything he or she wants with the body of the starter to which they are connected - within reason of course.

Neurochip

A small neurochip is inserted at the back of Callie's head after she agrees to the contract at Prime Destinations.

Beverly Hills

A year after the war ends, every second or third storefront in Beverly Hills is empty and those that still exist cater to the senior population.

Institution 37

Institution 37 is one of the many places where 'starters' are put if they are captured by Marshals.

Spore War

Spore War is the name given to the segment of the Pacific Rim war that included spore bombs which killed most of the adult population excepting the seniors and the youth who had been vaccinated in time.



Club Rune

A club frequented by the younger population, Club Rune is where many renters go for an evening's entertainment. The music is loud and bass driven, with laser accents. It is the first place that Callie comes to consciousness in place of her renter.

Band-bouncing

Band-bouncing is the act of jumping off a bridge or other high structure tethered to a tech strap which would calculate the weight of the jumper and stop them just short of hitting the bottom.

Lookout Point

Located on Mulholland Drive, Lookout Point is where Callie meets Blake to confirm her theory that Senator Harrison is Helena's target.

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion is the music center where Senator Harrison is booked to make an appearance at the Youth League Awards before going to see the President.

Millennium Biltmore Hotel

Callie comes to at Millennium Biltmore Hotel with a rifle against her cheek just moments before Helena had been set to kill Senator Harrison.

Friendlie

Friendlie is the name Starters give to each other to distinguish themselves from renegades, Marshals and thieves.

Drop Dead Command

Redmond fears that a drop dead command may be built into Callie's chip with which Prime Destinations is able to send a signal remotely to have the chip explode.



The Drive-In

The Drive-In is a retro-restaurant where fit Enders wearing blades deliver meals to the sounds of old rock 'n' roll music played on outdoor speakers. It is where Blake asks Callie to meet him after he returns from Washington with his grandfather.

San Bernardino Mountains

The vacation house that Helena wills to Callie is in the San Bernardino Mountains. Callie goes there to think things through after discovering that the Blake she knew was actually the Old Man.

Santa Rosa

Santa Rosa is where Florina's great-aunt lives, and it is where Florina goes when her great-aunt offers to claim her legally.



Themes

Current Laws vs Outdated Ideals

In *Starters*, written by Lissa Price, we are given a glimpse into a possible future reality in which war has taken a savage toll. All middle aged people are killed when inoculations against an airborne attack are restricted to the very young and the very old. As a result, humanity is divided into two groups - Elders and Starters. The Starters are those who are lucky enough to have grandparents, so they live in relative luxury compared to those who lost their parents and have no one else. Those youngsters are either homeless, or live in institutions in substandard conditions. Those who are still free live under the constant threat of capture or worse. Prior to the war, in a world where seniors had been living longer and lasting longer than ever before, there was a shortage of employment. A law had been written forbidding minors from working to enable seniors to work longer. After the war, the law penalizes the youth who are unable to support themselves and have no one left to look after them. As such, the law is outdated and no longer reflects the current realities of life. This is not unusual, since there are still many laws on the books today that either are unnecessary, outdated, or penalize those they were once meant to protect. Changing such laws is an involved and complicated procedure that few seem willing to embrace or attempt as is the case in real life which again imitates art.

The Pursuit of Eternal Youth vs Aging Naturally

In *Starters*, Lissa Price examines the possibility of an exchange of consciousness between one person and another. She has created a company in which an elderly person can 'rent' the body of a youthful counterpart, and fully operate that body until the rental period expires. The world as she describes it now can be divided into two age groups. There are the very young - those who are sixteen and younger, and the very old - those who have already crested middle age. Both of these groups have been inoculated against the spores that became a last resort bomb detonated during the Pacific Rim war, since they were deemed to be the most at risk. What couldn't be anticipated was the severity of the attack. Now, the elderly, or Enders as they are referred to in this story, are seeking the ever elusive eternal youth. Prime Destinations offers them short term trips to youth again, and while it is not well known yet, an elderly man or woman with enough money can become young again. Then, as young and healthy adults - all model like quality of course - they are able to relive the youth they squandered, take trips they can no longer manage, and risk injury. Then, they simply return to the body that slumbers peacefully at Prime Destinations, leaving the donor to cope with whatever side effects may result from their rental. Of course, damage and injury insurance is a must, but most who try the program are eager to return to it.

Over time, there have been many references to eternal youth. We've examined fountains that supply water for eternal youth, gone to the stars where bodies can be



regenerated if injured and found ways to forward our consciousness into youthful bodies to ensure our longevity - all because of some creative and imaginative writers in our time. The pursuit of youth is not new. It is something that each of us eventually contemplates.

Renting vs Purchasing - The Ramifications and Consequences

If I could do it all again..... How many people who reach middle age or older have not thought that at least once? Likely not many. With age comes a certain understanding of life, and a special connection with the world around you. It is easy to miss as a youth - when life is busy and full of challenges to overcome. Once time passes however, we have the time to reflect on the choices we've made, and how they've affected us and those around us. There are very few who would honestly proclaim that had they the opportunity to do it all again, they would change nothing. In fact, we all have a skeleton or two that we would love to disinter and resurrect.

As such, when Prime Destinations offers the elderly a chance to live life as a young person again, many leap at the opportunity. A rental however must be returned. The young body that is rented belongs to the youth born to it. Though while they are rented out they are unaware of what is being done or where they are spending their time, any injury to the young body would be noticed and felt on their return to awareness. When Prime sends out the privatecast offering their current members an opportunity to become owners, they change the dynamics of the deal they are offering. In the beginning, the rental is a simple, time limited arrangement from which both profit. Permanent ownership implies that the consciousness of the youth involved would simply cease to exist. The only other option would be to sustain their lives indefinitely, hooked up to machines to monitor vital statistics. For all intents, this would be a coma for the young person involved. It is unlikely to presume that if Prime Destinations actually offered this service, they would be willing to keep the donor mind alive for an extended period. Instead, to keep costs reasonable, it is more likely to assume that once the new owner was deemed happy with the exchange, or perhaps a warranty period expires, the donor mind would cease to exist. The fine line crossed is murder.



Style

Point of View

Starters by Lissa Price is written entirely in the first person perspective from the point of view of the main character, Callie Woodland. Callie is only fifteen when her parents are taken from her and her younger brother Tyler. Her mother comes in contact with a single spore during the Spore Wars. This segment of the Pacific Rim war included spore bombs which killed most of the adult population excepting the seniors and the youth who had been vaccinated in time. Callie's father is confined just days after his wife is infected and dies, even though he is not infected. Thus begins a life of running, hiding, and coping with the trials of being an only parent to her younger brother. The story follows Callie as she becomes increasingly desperate to find the money necessary to help nurse her brother back to health. In desperation, she goes to Prime Destinations and hires her body out as a rental to one of the Enders still alive. Since Callie has no living relatives, she is designated as an unclaimed minor, and therefore has no rights. The Ender who assumes control of her body is Helena Winterhill - a grandmother looking for her granddaughter Emma - taken in by Prime Destinations, and missing since. Helena uses her control over Callie to set up a hit on the Senator who supports Prime Destinations, but in an effort to turn off the existing kill switch in Callie's head, she inadvertently opens a door to share their consciousness. Popping in and out without warning, Callie finds herself in an increasingly dangerous and often frightening reality in which she no longer knows who she can trust.

Telling this story from her point of view is important because of the constant changing consciousnesses, and the confusion that this would cause if the story were also told from multiple characters with alternate personae.

Setting

Set entirely in California, Starters by Lissa Price is a fictional account of a possible future. Prime Destinations, the company that Callie goes to when she becomes a donor, is in Beverly Hills. Callie and her brother exist on the fringes of the area. Though at one time they were living a normal life in a house with a mother and father, after the Spore Wars everything changed. As youth who have no adult to claim them, they are deemed to be unclaimed minors and as such are subject to arrest on sight. Because of this, and the fact that minors are restricted from working until they become adults, Callie and her brother must go from hideout to hideout, always staying one step ahead of the Marshals. When Callie, Tyler and Michael are roused from their encampment on the third floor of an abandoned building, Callie makes the decision to join Prime Destinations long enough to facilitate proper living accommodations for herself, her brother and Michael. Michael gives her directions to another building he knows of, and takes Tyler there while Callie returns to Prime. Once at Prime, Callie's mind remains while Helena takes her body out. Helena takes Callie to Club Rune, searching for her



granddaughter Emma, or anyone who might have known her. Emma is an earlier donor, who lied to Prime Destinations, claiming to be without relatives of any kind in order to get free plastic surgery and beauty upgrades that had been forbidden by Helena. When Helena and Callie begin swapping consciousnesses, Callie attends an awards ceremony, and meets Senator Harrison. Later, Callie is arrested and taken to Institution 37 after shooting the Senator in the arm to try to force his cooperation. Her escape costs the life of one young girl named Sara, and fuels Callie's desire to bring Prime Destinations to its knees. She manages to do so, and in the process discovers that not only will she be claimed by Lauren, but that Helena had left half of her estate to her for the use of her body, even before she began. Callie moves herself and Tyler into the main house in Beverly Hills, and visits the home in the San Bernadino mountains as well.

Language and Meaning

Written in natural and regular English language, *Starters* by Lissa Price is a novel with a well formed idea and execution. The book is based on the premise that computers and technology will advance to a point where we might be able to exchange consciousness with another willing participant. Using chip technology, installed directly into the back of the head, the donor mind simply sleeps in a stasis while the recipient is free to use the body and any residual skills the body has so far acquired. This story is framed around a war that begins in the Far East and culminates in the use of a Spore bomb which effectively and quickly kills all of those who were not inoculated in advance. The Spore bombs were detonated above the cities and even contact with a single spore was enough to kill the host it landed on within just a couple of days. The surviving population - those who were inoculated in time - can be divided into two distinct but separate groups - the elderly, and the children. All those of middle age or prime adulthood have been killed.

Though the language used is straight forward English, to facilitate her descriptions of body rentals, Price uses phrases like 'Body Computer Interface' to describe the computer connection between renter and donor; 'twilight sleep' to describe the state of consciousness in which the donor will be left, similar to that during a dentist visit; and 'muscle memory' to describe how the renter is able to use the skills brought in by the donor such as archery, tennis, and other abilities.

Structure

Starters is a novel of two hundred and thirty six pages. It is divided into thirty chapters that range in length from three to thirteen pages, averaging eight pages overall. The chapters are not divided into segments or parts, and are not referred to by any designations beyond their chapter numbers. In Chapter One, the reader is introduced to Prime Destinations, and their ability to transform an elderly person into a youngster again. She is given a simple contract which, once signed, will make her the donor to an older woman who is waiting to rent her body and use it to bring Prime Destinations to its



knees. The story is told in a straight forward manner, with little time or place shifting to confuse or interrupt the general story line. While in the opening few chapters Callie concentrates entirely on finding a better place to live so that the health of her little brother will improve, she soon comes to realize that Prime Destinations is more than just a temporary path to a better life. In fact, she discovers that Prime Destinations has no qualms about ending a life, or exchanging one for another. The staff at Prime Destinations also participate in rentals in order to better monitor their clients, kidnapping and returning them if necessary. After many trials and tribulations, including arrest, incarceration and escape, Callie is able to bring Prime to its knees. Later, she will have the satisfaction of seeing Prime fall to a wrecking ball, but is unable to totally silence the Old Man. Overall, the story is told in a logical and linear fashion, making the identity changes less confusing to follow and understand.



Quotes

"I can't promise this offer will be good later." Ch. 1, Pg. 14
Mr. Tinnenbaum to Callie as he tries to entice her into signing the contract Prime Destinations offered her for a mere three rental agreement.

"We ran your cerebral input against a small database and scored the hits." Ch. 2, Pg. 35
Trax to Callie, telling her how they knew what she wanted for lunch without hearing her tell them, assuring her that it is merely how they establish whether or not a good connection with the computer was made.

"So, does he know we're renters?" Ch. 5, Pg. 56
Callie to Madison in Club Rune as she tries to get her bearings.

"You and I are coming from the same place, but this is not the way to solve anything." Ch. 8, Pg. 83
Lauren, as Reece, to Callie as they have lunch and Callie tries to find out what Helena's plans are.

"I want to assure you that if you continue as planned with our contract, no matter what happens, you will receive a bonus when this is over." Ch. 10, Pg. 97
Helena to Callie through her cell phone memo feature as she tries to ensure that Callie stays committed to the time frame originally set out in the rental.

"My sources say they'll be conscripted at best, kidnapped at worst." Ch. 12, Pg. 110
Helena to Callie as she tries to explain the urgency attached to eliminating Senator Harrison.

"I know what you are." Ch. 14, Pg. 124
Senator Harrison to Callie when he catches her alone for a moment at the Youth League Awards ceremony.

"It's so soft, I'm going to float away." Ch. 16, Pg. 137
Tyler to Callie after he has had a bath and she tucks him into the bed in the hotel.

"They're going to take some of us and make us over and give us important jobs." Ch. 17, Pg. 142
Sara to Callie as she explains why she hopes she is pretty, wanting to be chosen as one of the few who will get to work and earn money.

"It's not our fault, it's all because of that stupid war that we never wanted." Ch. 19, Pg. 151
Callie to Helena as they converse inside her head, sharing the consciousness for a brief time.



"Your deal with the government and Prime Destinations means that innocent unclaimed minors will be sold to the body bank." Ch. 22, Pg. 174

Callie to the Senator as she tries to explain the cost of his involvement and support.

"When hawks cry, time to fly." Ch. 24, Pg. 181

Callie's father's code to her to warn her of when it is time to run.

"What matters is that if I go back, they'll kill me like they did my renter." Ch. 25, Pg 195

Callie to Sara as she tries to explain why she hit her in the face if they are supposed to be friends.

"I don't have to make a deal with you." Ch. 27, Pg. 213

The Old Man to Callie as she bargains for the life of her brother Tyler, and for a glimpse of the face behind the mask.

"I've never looked that happy before. Ever." Ch. 30, Pg. 235

Blake to Callie outside Prime Destinations on the day that it is being demolished.



Topics for Discussion

Why is the world divided so drastically into two age groups? What events precipitated this situation? Who foresees this scenario and attempts to prepare his children and how does he prepare them? What is the outcome of this preparation? What two age groups remain and what are some of the issues that arise as a result?

What is the basic premise of Prime Destinations? Why would an Ender be interested in signing up? What would prompt a Starter to join? What are the prerequisites that a Starter must have in order to be considered? What are some of the things that would eliminate a Starter from participation and why?

What incident prompts Callie to accept the offer made to her by Prime Destinations? What must she prove first before her contract is signed? What skill does she have which surprises the Enders testing her? What are the main rules governing the behavior of both renter and client?

What anomaly occurs during Callie's third rental? Where is she when it occurs? Who helps her immediately and why? What two things does she warn Callie about?

How does Callie return to the home of her renter? What obstacles must she overcome to do so? What happens that causes her to feel momentary twinges of guilt and remorse?

Where has Michael gone when Callie returns to visit with him and Tyler before her third and longest rental? What prompts him to make that decision? What will his conscience not allow him to do, and why might that be the case?

What issues face Callie when she begins popping in and out of her renter's consciousness? What does she discover Helena is trying to do and why? What does it take before Callie finally believes her?

Why does Senator Harrison cooperate with the agenda that Prime Destinations has? What leverage is used and by whom? Who else is affected by this leverage and why?

What are the biggest risks involved in renting a body? Who holds the greater risk - the renter or the donor? What side benefits does each side enjoy? What legalities currently exist in this story that prevent youth from obtaining other employment and why do they exist?

To facilitate renting, what must Prime Destinations do to both renter and donor? What extra features are installed of which most renters and donors are unaware? How does Helena deal with this issue? What are the consequences?

How does Prime Destinations keep an eye on Callie and some of their other renters? What rules are the renters expected to follow? What gives their surveillance away to Callie? How does she spot them, and what is her response?



Where does Callie finally find her brother? What does Lauren do for Callie that enables her to live without fear of Marshals or arrest as an unclaimed minor? Why does Lauren take this step? What does Helena do to compensate Callie for the use of her body? When does Helena make this choice and when is it revealed to Callie? What happens to Helena?

Why is the identity of the Old Man a mystery? How does he keep others from discovering who he really is? What might some of the reasons for this subterfuge be?

Where does Callie meet Blake for the first time? How does he contact her again and with what reason? What do he and Callie do together? Why doesn't he recognize her after he returns from Washington with his grandfather? What does Callie tell this version of Blake that makes him want to find her again? What is the outcome?