

Touch Study Guide

Touch by Jus Accardo

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Plot Summary

"Touch" by Jus Accardo is an action-packed story of a group of individuals with special powers and the man trying to control them all. Deznée Cross is oblivious to her father's plan to control all Sixes or people with powers until Kale appears in her life and circumstances thrust Deznée into a world of danger. She must struggle to defeat her father and his company in order to save herself and those she loves.

"Touch" is the story of Sixes or people with extraordinary abilities such as the ability to mimic objects, control elements, read minds, and tell the future. Deznée Cross is a Six, although she has never told anyone as she is unaware that there are others in the world. Having lost her mother at a young age and having a father who works constantly, Dez thrives on trouble and spends much of her time trying to make her father angry. One evening after a party, a young man falls literally at her feet by a river. From the beginning, Dez realizes Kale is different and when she discovers that there are men chasing him, his story slowly unfolds. Dez learns her own father is in charge of Denazen Corporation, a company who captures and uses Sixes to hurt, control, or kill their enemies. She also learns her mother, Sueshanna, is alive, and being held by Denazen, as she too has powers like Dez. Both can mimic objects, but Dez's is a far more powerful gift. Kale was taken as a young child, and used to kill people, as his power is that his touch kills anything he comes into contact with. He is able to touch Dez, however, and the two quickly begin to fall for one another, despite their dangerous situation.

When Dez learns of her mother, she and Kale are determined to free her and the other Sixes. With the help of Ginger, an older Six who helps others free themselves, and others, Dez manages to infiltrate the Denazen Corporation, only to find out her father manipulated her as he wants to use her for his benefit. She also learns of a project called Supremacy, where Cross and his men injected pregnant Sixes with a chemical to increase the fetuses powers. Dez was one of them, but Cross informs her many of the subjects become uncontrollable by eighteen. Although Dez does manage to save her mother and Kale, Cross escapes and she knows it is only a matter of time before he surfaces again. She travels with Kale around the country to inform other Sixes of the Denazen threat and Dez realizes that her powers are increasing.



Chapter 1 and Chapter 2

Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 Summary

In Chapter 1, Dezanee Cross and her cousin Brandt are skateboarding off the roof of a barn into hay for fun, adrenaline, and to impress the part goers down below. Once finished, Dez leaves for home, trying to avoid a scene with a boy she recently made out with while drunk. As she walks through the woods between her own and her cousins house, she realizes it is one in the morning, and hopes to get home and in bed before her father comes home. She nearly throws up, but steadies herself as she hears voices behind her. A young man, handsome, stumbles into the stream in front of her, and Dez realizes she doesn't know him. He demands her shoes, which are clearly way too small, and jams them on his feet as he wedges himself just out of site in between some tree roots. When men break through the tress in blue body suits, Dez tells them the young man ran off in the other direction, but she realizes the area Kale stood is seemingly now the wrong color. Going to him, when the young man refuses to give back her shoes and notes he is hungry, Dez decides to take him home, both to anger her father, and to spend more time with the handsome young man, with intense blue eyes.

In Chapter 2, Dez and the young man arrive at her house and the boy acts very strangely, as though he knows nothing of the real world. Dez tries to get information out of him, but he responds with very little information. He does tell her his name is Kale, but claims not to have a last name. Dez hands him clothing and tells him to shower as she makes food, but she wonders why he is so different. When he returns, she is left to wonder again, as it becomes clear he left her shoes on in the shower. When he feels threatened, Kale immediately becomes defensive, but Dex talks him down, although Kale assures her she couldn't hurt him. As Dez finds herself more intrigued and attracted to Kale, he becomes agitated when he sees photos of her family, except her mother who is deceased. Immediately he begins to claim that Marshall Cross, Dex's father, is the devil, and asks why Dez didn't just let the men from Denazen take him. Dez is extremely confused, as she knows her father is merely a lawyer at his firm, Denazen. Kale notes Marshall is a killer, having himself heard Marshall just days ago order the retirement of a child. While the two argue, they hear a car, and realize Marshall Cross is home. As he comes in the door, he orders Dez to step away, as Kale threatens to kill her. When she doesn't move, Marshall steps forward and Kale's hand shoots out, catching Dez by the neck. However, he merely touches her, and seemingly stops in awe. Marshall pulls out a gun and fires a tranquilizer dart, while Dez and Kale run out through the kitchen and into the woods.

Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 Analysis

Chapter 1 and 2 in the novel serve to introduce several concepts in the novel, without elaborating any of them. First, Dez is clearly a rebellious teenager who has issues with her father. In Chapter 2, the brief mention of her mother's death seems sad enough, but



in reality, it serves to foreshadow the knowledge later that her mother is really alive. Her father, however, is clearly the bane of her existence, as is shown through her constant urge to annoy and bother him. In fact, her anger at her father is the entire reason Dez brings Kale, a complete stranger, home. This angry relationship foreshadows the discovery of Marshall's true nature. In Chapter 1, Brandt is also introduced. Although a minor character, it is already clear Brandt and Dez have a wonderful relationship, and this is built on throughout the novel. Chapter 1 also serves to introduce Kale, and the power he has. Kale is handsome, and obviously a force to be reckoned with. Even in the beginning however it is clear Kale is off in some way. His clear predicament as well as his odd behavior with Dez's shoes shows something is amiss. Additionally, the discolored grass under Kale's feet, and his pulling away from Dez foreshadow the revelation later that his touch can kill.

Chapter 2 helps to further introduce Kale as well as Marshall Cross. Kale is very obviously sheltered, as he has little knowledge of the world. At the same time, he is also powerful, and knows his strength. His wearing of Dez's shoes shows there is something clearly amiss. However, it is his insistence that Dez's father is a killer that begins to deepen the story. Kale claims Marshall Cross is the Satan of Denazen, which Dez knows as her father's law firm. But Kale seems to know something Dez does not, and when Marshall comes home, and clearly knows Kale, Dez realizes she has been in the dark. Marshall's seeming lack of concern for his daughter foreshadows the knowledge of his true feelings later in the novel, and Kale's touch of Dez foreshadows the knowledge that his touch kills everyone else later in the novel.



Chapter 3 and Chapter 4

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 Summary

Dez takes Kale to a friend's house in Chapter 3, and she explains to Kurt Curday, known as Curd, their situation. When Curd leaves to find something to drink, Kale explains to Dez that he was shocked to touch her because his touch normally kills. To explain, he touches a plant, which immediately turns to dust. He claims Marshall Cross uses him as a weapon, and Dez knows he is probably being honest, as she is well aware that others in the world can have powers that aren't well explained. Dez finds herself memorized by his touch, and Kale seems in awe to be able to touch another person. When Dez tries to explain that Kale has to have a family somewhere, she shows him a picture of her mother to explain that even when they are gone, they are still family. Kale, however, shocked, points out that the woman in the photo is not dead, but is Sue, a woman who lives in the Denazen complex.

In Chapter 4, Dez realizes Curd has been gone too long after quizzing Kale about Sueshanna, her mother. When Kale and Dez sneak upstairs to check, however, they are trapped by Denazen men. When one of the men slaps Dez and goes to do so again, Kale grabs his wrist, and the man shrivels to dust. The two escape, and flee to Dez's high school, where Kale assures Dez that Marshall is well aware that Sueshanna is alive. When Kale explains that Sue is much like Dez, and that she has the power to mimic others, Dez admits to a feeling of excitement as she cries. Kale continues to explain that when Sueshanna explained to Kale that Denazen was holding them captive, he escaped. He had never known about the outside world, as he was always told those outside would harm him because of his power. Kale admits he left Denazen when he was sent to kill an eight year old child. He explains that Sue told him if he ever escaped, he should find the Reaper, a revered six, or person with powers, that could help. When Brandt calls Dez, she asks for his help to get clothing, money, and other supplies to herself and Kale, and they agree to meet at the Graveyard, a local hangout. Realizing she is likely being tracked by phone, Dez ditches it, and she and Kale lay low until the following day. They meet Brandt who admits that while sneaking around Dez's to gather supplies, he heard Marshall talking about body disposal. Further, he snuck into Marshall's office and discovered the firm is used as a hired assassin firm, where the sixes are rented out to those who can pay. Brandt writes the name of a local hotel on Dez's hand after she refuses to seek help from Brandt's father, and tells her to find Misha Vaughn, as she was listed in Marshall's office as a main target. They scatter when they hear the voices of Denazen men closing in.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 Analysis

Chapter 3 serves to not only show Kale's true powers, but also to introduce that Dez's mom is still alive. Kale's touch, as foreshadowed by the dead grass at the river and by his refusal to remove her shoes, will kill anything he touches. This explains not only his



threats at the house, but also that he really did intend to kill Dez. However, his touch doesn't seem to harm her in any way. Additionally, it is clear now Kale likes Dez, and not only finds her touch appealing, but also likes her for her ability and desire to help him escape. Dez's reaction when she learns of Kale's touch suggests she knows more about powers than she lets on, foreshadowing the knowledge that she too is a six with powers. At the end of this chapter, the knowledge that Kale knows her mother, and that she lives in the Denazen complex, is revealed.

In Chapter 4, the Denazen corporation shows its self in force at Curd's as they chase down Kale and Dez. Marshall's orders to bring them back show he is not willing to kill them, but Dez knows the men will spare nothing to get them back. Kale's inadvertent killing of one of the men again shows he is a dangerous individual, simply because he is unable to control his power. Dez's reaction to the conversation about her mother's powers again suggests that she knows something about having similar powers, foreshadowing the revelation later that she is a six.

Kale's discussion of Sushanna reveals he cares for her much like a mother, but also reveals the horrible life he has led. Kept prisoner and forced to kill, Kale has known nothing of the real world. Betrayed by everyone but Sushanna, Kale trusts no one. This shows one of the primary reasons he is beginning to fall for Dez, as she is trustworthy. Kale's discussion of the Reaper as a source of help foreshadows their hunt for him in the novel.

Brandt's ability and desire to help unfortunately foreshadow his capture and 'death' later in the novel. It is clear Brandt is a good friend of Dez's, and cares for her, but his snooping, and his discoveries, can only lead to a single outcome. Even though Dez warns him, the sounds of the Denazen men show he is being followed, and suggest he will be captured. His help, however, is vital to Dez and Kale. His knowledge of the hotel run by Misha Vaughn foreshadow the revelation that Brant, too, is a six.



Chapter 5 and Chapter 6

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 Summary

In Chapter 5, Kale and Dez make it to the hotel, and are put into a room to wait for Misha Vaughn. As the two talk, Dez brushes his cheek with a kiss, and Kale clearly enjoys it. When they lean in to kiss on the lips, however, they are interrupted by Misha. She explains that Denazen is a government sanctioned institution that uses sixes for their own benefit, brainwashing and coercing and hurting the sixes until they comply, or until they are eliminated. Misha mentions the Reaper, but notes she doesn't know where he might be, although she gives them an address of Cole Oyster, who may know. Once she leaves, Kale and Dez kiss again, this time on the lips, as Dez tries to explain why Kale's pulse is racing. After kissing for quite some time, they go to sleep, content.

In Chapter 6, Dez and Kale leave the hotel, only to be told to never return, as Dez is too dangerous as Marshall's daughter. Dez tries to convince Kale to leave town, but he refuses, reminding her he is there to help her, and Sueshanna. After a bus ride where Kale annoyed passengers by asking socially unacceptable questions, Kale holds Dez's hand, and she has to explain why hand holding isn't necessarily what Kale thinks it is. She tries to explain that people who love one another typically hold hands, but that she thinks Kale likes her particularly because he can touch her. After a circular argument, the two arrive at Cole's house, only to find him, and his home, disgusting, and of little help. He does admit he knows something, but he is shot before he can finish. He says only a name, that of Alex Mojourn, and Dez seems to know it, but Kale knows they need to escape. Surrounded by Denazen men, they run up a flight of stairs, and hide in a closet. The Denazen men, rushing after them, think they fled through the open window, so they back off and head outside. After a bit, they sneak out the window and off the roof, but when Dez runs into a trash can, they alert the guards, and a chase begins. They try to run into the woods, but are stopped by a bear.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 Analysis

Chapter 5 introduces the character of Misha Vaughn, as well as introduces the budding love relationship between Kale and Dez. Misha's hotel is clearly run with the idea of housing in need sixes, and Misha runs a tight ship. Her staff are well trained, and she understands the clear danger of having Dez in her hotel. However, she does allow them to stay the night, showing she has compassion. Further, she clearly has compassion for Kale, as she understands the torture he went through under the hands of Denazen employees. Additionally, Misha's hints that the government may be involved, and that Denazen uses sixes for government purposes shows the true power of the organization. The mention of the Reaper in this chapter again refers to a mythical character who may be able to help free the sixes. This foreshadows the knowledge later that Reaper is actually Kale.



Also in this chapter is the budding love between Kale and Dez. Kale has had no previous experiences with women, and therefore every new feeling is intensified. It is clear that Dez is not inexperienced, but even she admits that with Kale, she feels differently. There is certainly attraction, but there is also a sense of protection and desire that she is not used to. Kale's fast paced heartbeat, as well as Dez's, show these two characters are quickly becoming more than friends.

In Chapter 6, Kale again shows not only his loyalty, but also his strength, as he first promises to help Dez, regardless of the obstacles, and then proves it by helping her, and himself, escape the Denazen employees. Kale's innocence, however, also shows through the conversation about hand holding. It is clear that he understands little of the outside world, and his admittance that he may only like Dez because he can touch her clearly disturbs her. This chapter also introduces Alex Mojourn, although only by name currently. From her reaction, Dez knows Alex, foreshadowing more information about their relationship later in the novel. The appearance of the bear at the end of this chapter adds a bit of excitement to the already exciting chase.



Chapter 7 and Chapter 8

Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 Summary

In Chapter 7, the bear comes forward just as Denazen men arrive, and the bear begins to attack, allowing Dez and Kale an opportunity to flee. After running through the woods, they come to a mall, but they soon realize Denazen employees are not far behind. When confronted and told Marshall was worried for her, Dez admits to herself she wishes that were true, but that she also knows reality. After threatening to scream, the employee lets her go, but follows. Dez walks to a mall booth, and quietly asks the clerk to call security, as she heard the men in suits talking about a bomb. When security arrives to detain the Denazen men, Kale and Dez quietly sneak away, and head to a park to lay low. Kale describes Denazen to Dez, and explains that while he was caged, Sushanna was kept in line through threats to harm Dez. Dez finds herself amazed by Kale, in that his soul is pure, despite his horrible upbringing, and she wonders how she failed to see the truth about her father for so long.

In Chapter 8, Dez wakes to the rain, only to learn Kale has never been in the rain before. She marvels again about how the world must look through his eyes, and she realizes she may have known about her father for years, as she chose to keep things from him for a long time. After grabbing breakfast, the two head to Roudey's Pool Hall, where Dez admits she knows Alex Mojourn hangs out. Dez also knows that while they are not yet open, the back door is unlocked for regulars. Walking in, Dez is immediately recognized by almost everyone there. She admits this is where she first met Alex, and where things with him also ended. Spotting him, she asks him to talk, and he responds without a word, motioning to the back rooms. As the two talk heatedly, Alex attempts to take Dez's arm, and Kale reacts instantly. Dez intercedes however, and realizes Alex knows about sixes, and about Denazen, as he himself is a six. When he stubbornly refuses to help without knowing what is going on, Dez points out he didn't tell her he was having an affair a year ago, while they were dating.

Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 Analysis

Chapter 7 is brief, but again shows the vulnerability of Kale, but also his strength, as well as shows Dez's true deep desire for her father's love. It is clear, when Dex wishes to believe the Denazen employee about her father's concern for her, that Dez really does want her father's love. On the other hand, she also has known he was not what she seemed for many years, hence her refusal to allow him access into her life. Her instincts are good, as she gets them out of the situation, as well. For Kale's part, he clearly understands himself as a danger. At the mall, he fears going in, because he understands he is a threat, even without meaning to be. His lack of understanding about the world around him makes him naive, as is shown through the mall, but his ferocious loyalty and care for Dez also show he is a good hearted person. Raised to be a killer, Kale has not lost his conscience, or his ability to love. Dez's realizations about her



father, and his threats to harm her to control Sueshanna, only further the realization that Marshall Cross is an evil individual.

Chapter 8 again begins with Kale's lack of knowledge about the world, as he is in awe of the rain. Dez's own admittance at this point that she knew her father's lies, because she hid things from him, suggests there is more to Dez than she is admitting. It is clear she has secrets readers do not yet know about. This chapter also introduces Alex and Dez's past relationship. It has been clear that Dez knew who Alex was, but until this chapter, that relationship was unknown. Now, it is clear Alex and Dez dated until a year ago, when Alex cheated on her. Dez did not know Alex was a six, deepening the plot and foreshadowing knowledge later that Alex used Dez for information about Denazen, before realizing she didn't know anything. Kale's reaction to Alex again shows his care for Dez, whereas Alex's reactions also suggest he still has feelings for Dez. This foreshadows the conflict between these characters throughout the novel.



Chapter 9 and Chapter 10

Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 Summary

In Chapter 9, Dez tells the story of she and Alex. Meeting him when she was only fifteen, the two began dating and Dez fell off the good girl wagon as a result. They broke up when she caught him cheating, and had avoided him since. She knew nothing of his being a six. Now, he agrees to help them, and will meet them after talking to other sixes. Left alone, Dez and Kale talk about Kale's life in Denazen, and Dez reminds him that what he did does not make him who he is. In turn, Dez tells him of her attempts to make her father angry, and of her life outside Denazen. She explains she had a normal relationship with her father, but he always kept her at a distance. Asked to tell a secret, Dez admits she has a huge one, but doesn't trust Kale enough yet. Instead, she tells him about school.

Later, as they wait for Alex, Kale asks why Dez stopped him from touching Alex. He points out that Alex clearly hurt her, and that people who hurt others should be punished. Dez tries to explain there are different levels of wrong, and that Alex's hurt of her was part of life. Kale clearly doesn't understand, as he has been taught that the wrong must be punished. When Alex arrives, he explains he is taking them to a six party. The location changes daily, and the party is for sixes only. When they arrive, Dez flirts with the guard, and they allow her in, even though, she thinks, she is not a six. Once inside, Alex explains that sixes have a genetic abnormality in the sixth chromosome that makes them have their powers, hence their name. Each day, a six posts an innocuous ad on Craigslist, with a phone number to call so other sixes can get the location of the night's party. When Alex asks Dex to dance while they wait for the six they need to speak with, Dez instead asks Kale, and the two dance wonderfully around the floor. Alex, annoyed, stops them, and takes them to see Ginger, the leader of the six rebels. Ginger is an old woman, but she is clearly powerful. She agrees to help them find the Reaper, if Dez can get her a copy of all the sixes Denazen has in captivity. As an added bonus, she offers to help Kale control his power.

In Chapter 10, Dez is stunned, but Alex points out Ginger only asks people for what she things they can produce. They go back to their table to talk it out, and Dez formulates a plan. She asks Alex if there is anyone he trusts, and he points out Dax is loyal. Dax calls Marshall Cross, and pretends to have kidnapped Dez, asking for his nieces, who are held captive by Denazen. Alex informs them Dax's ability is to see true intentions, so he will know if Marshall is lying. Once off the phone, Dax admits, after hearing his niece Monica has been terminated, that he would kill Dez, if he thought Marshall Cross would care. When Kale threatens him, he apologizes.



Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 Analysis

In Chapter 9, the relationship between Alex and Dez becomes more clear, as does Alex's transgressions to becoming a bad girl. However, this relationship, and the oddities in that Cross is the lead of Denazen and Dez is his daughter, and the fact that Alex is a six, do suggest there is more to the story than what Alex is telling Dez. This foreshadows information later in the novel relating to their relationship. Additionally, this chapter shows again that Dez is hiding something, as she admits to having secrets she feels unable to tell Kale. This chapter also shows the true danger of Kale's lack of information in the world. Denazen has brainwashed Kale into thinking everyone who hurts someone should be killed. Alex tries to explain, but years of incorrect information have left Kale dangerously misinformed.

The six party is an eye opener, as the reader gets the first glimpse of the true number of sixes in the world. There are many, and although Dez shouldn't be allowed in, she is. This suggests there is more to Dez than meets the eye, and when combined with her secretive nature, one begins to imagine she might be a six. Dez's dance with Kale shows both that Kale does have some learned knowledge, but also that Dez is beginning to have real feelings for Kale. Finally, this chapter introduces Ginger, the powerhouse of the resistance. Although old, she clearly has the power, and she knows much information. Her demands, however, seem unrealistic, foreshadowing information later that Ginger can see the future, and knows Dez can achieve the end goal.

Chapter 10 reveals Dez's plan to begin gathering the information Ginger needs. Dax is introduced, and although he is willing to help, it is clear he resents Marshall Cross and, as a result, Dez as well. Their plan to pretend Dez was kidnapped is designed to lute Marshall into thinking Dez was not betraying him on purpose, thereby allowing her access to him, and his files, again. In return, Dax hopes to retrieve his nieces, one of whom the corporation has already killed.



Chapter 11 through Chapter 14

Chapter 11 through Chapter 14 Summary

In Chapter 11, as Dax and Dez wait for Marshall, Dez asks about what Dax saw in her father's intentions. Dax admits Marshall plans to use her, and also points out he knows what she is trying to do, as well, and that she may have to use the ace up her sleeve. When Marshall arrives, the trade occurs, and Dez finds herself feeling hurt that her father doesn't care about her, but pretends to. Back in the car, Dez plays the situation up, claiming Kale tricked her, and roughed her up, threatening to kill her. To conjure tears, Dez thinks of the hell Kale has gone through.

In Chapter 12, Kale sneaks into Dez's room in the night, and although she tries to entice him, Kale didn't take advantage. Instead, he expresses concern that Denazen locked him up because he was a bad person. As Dez comforts him, he explains all the threats against Sue Denazen used, the torture methods of starvation and dehydration, the threats against him. He explains that he is bad, and doesn't deserve to feel loved. Dez kisses him, gently at first and then more passionately, Kale pleading with Dez. Surprisingly, however, Kale merely rests his head on her stomach, and whispers sleepily that he understands about holding hands now.

In Chapter 13, Dez wakes without Kale, and knows he is gone. Dez walks downstairs, and petitions her father to take her to Denazen, as she feels she needs control of her life, and needs to help track down the sixes. Marshall agrees, and takes Dez to "the office", where Dez realizes she has never visited. Inside, Dez finds a security set of elevators and key passes, guards, and security cameras. After retrieving a yellow level pass for Dez on the fourth floor, they go to the fifth floor, where his office is. Marshall explains that sixes are dangerous, but that Denazen trains them to use their talents, gives them food, shelter, and protection in exchange for their voluntary services. Dez asks about why Kale's touch doesn't kill her, and Marshall agrees that is a good question. Later, in the elevator, Dez swipes his key card, claiming to be looking at his picture, and touches hers at the same time, noting to herself the stabbing pain in her head. When Marshall then leaves her to attend to something later, she meets Flip, a real Denazen volunteer six who claims to enjoy working for Marshall. When he leaves, Dez reveals she has mimicked her card to match her father's, as she too is a six. Since she was young, she knew she could mimic one item to look and behave like another. The power causes her tremendous pain and nausea, but she has used it on occasion. Dez uses the key card to gain access to her father's office, but is soon caught by Marshall.

In Chapter 14, Dez tries to convince Marshall her key card, which she claims to have lost, allowed her access to his office, where she was seeking information on Dax so she could seek him out. In the car on the way home, Dez claims she wants to work for Denazen, and claims she heard the sixes talking about taking over the corporation. She also shows him she, too, is a six. Marshall is surprised, and leaves her home while he



heads back to the office. Dez immediately leaves, and finds a pay phone to call Brandt. He explains he has found connections between almost all parts of society and Denazen, and asks Brandt not to dig any further, as he is jeopardizing his life. Finished, Dez goes to Alex's apartment, where she finds Kale. After arguing with Alex, she informs them she is now employed by Denazen, and she explains she too is a six. After demonstration, both Kale and Alex object, but Dez insists she needs Denazen, in order to help her mom.

Chapter 11 through Chapter 14 Analysis

Chapter 11, although short, does again foreshadow that Dez is more than she appears to be. Dax, who can see intentions, seems to know something about Dez readers do not, and it is clear she plans to use this against Marshall. At the same time, it is also clear from Dax that Marshall is going to use his daughter for his own benefit. Again, Marshall cross is shown as a hurtful character who wants nothing but what benefits his own cause. Dez does manage to play up the situation, however, and the fact that her tears come from her feelings for Kale reveal she really does have deep feelings for him.

Chapter 12 serves two purposes. First, Kale's dawning realization of his own actions make him vulnerable, which is possibly a bad thing for their cause. Secondly, his description of life in Denazen shows not only the lengths to which Marshall and his men will go to retain their captives, but also shows how deeply damaged Kale really is. His urgent kisses, followed by his snuggling nature, show again he is not only vulnerable, but naive. However, this scene also foreshadows the deepening sexual relationship between Kale and Dez.

In Chapter 13, Dez reveals what has been foreshadowed, that she too is a six. Her trip to Denazen reveals much about the corporation, and about her father's power, and the power of the company. However, Dez reveals she too has powers of her own, although they seem unpolished. Marshall, in this chapter, seems convincing as the corporate head, who tries to make his and the company's actions tolerable through justification. It is clear he loves what he does, and the conversations with Flip reveals there are sixes who believe the same.

Chapter 14 shows Dez is quick on her feet, as she manages to fool Marshall, at least seemingly so. When caught, she knows she is in trouble, and her only way out is to reveal her secret to her father. It is clear from his reaction that he not only was not aware of the situation, but also that he instantly knows he can use it to his advantage. This, combined with Brandt's information that these people are intertwined with almost all governments, shows the danger Dez is really in. This danger seems to be seen by Alex and Kale, as well, when Dez shows them, but even they realize she is their only chance to gain information from the company. Alex and Kale are both surprised to find she is a six, and the added bleeding suggests Dez may have more anguish coming to her as she uses her powers more often.



Chapter 15 through Chapter 18

Chapter 15 through Chapter 18 Summary

In Chapter 15, Dez waits for Kale in her room in the middle of the night, and he finally arrives. As they kiss and talk, Dez realizes she feels close to Kale, in part, because he is a six like her. He admits he learned to dance watching Fred Astaire movies with Sueshanna, and also admits he loves Dez. She tries to refute his love, but he insists. Suddenly, he leaps from her bed and back out the window, and shortly thereafter, Marshall comes into the room, followed by Denazen employees. After a brief search, Marshall tells Dez Kale has been seen in the area, and asks her to get some sleep. At breakfast, Marshall informs her she will not start that morning, but the following, as Kale has been caught and they need to process him through termination.

In Chapter 16, Dez finds herself inside Alex's apartment, asking for his help. Alex explains that Denazen killed his entire family, and that he simply cannot risk helping, and then he throws her out. The following day, Dez is taken to Denazen, where she is processed for preparation to interview with Mercy. The interview is to make sure there are no issues, as Marshall points out. He stresses she should obey.

In Chapter 17, Dez meets Mercy, who seems less than flashy, but she is highly demanding. She asks a series of questions, and although Dez tries to be funny, Mercy is extremely annoyed. When asked about her sexual partners, Dez admits to having sex with Alex Mojourne, but when pressed about Kale, she simply discusses her actions with him. Mercy reminds her Denazen has a zero tolerance for acting out, and when Dez tries to leave, she finds she is locked in. She sits again, and when Mercy tells her she has given her a break, Dez realizes she has no choice.

In Chapter 18, Dez sets out to find the six party that night, in order to ask for Ginger's help. Unable to find the Craig's list ad, she calls Brandt, but can't get an answer. That night, she has a nightmare that Brand is dead, and Kale is killed by her father. In the morning, Dez is forced by those at Denazen to display her gift, and eventually, she is forced to change herself into her interviewer and back. She succeeds, but the effort is exhausting on her body. More hours of questions follow, and when she is done, Marshall arrives with a reward: she is taken to see her "abductor", Kale.

Chapter 15 through Chapter 18 Analysis

Chapter 15 shows the developing sexual relationship between Dez and Kale, but also shows Kale's naivety. His love is pure, but even Dez understands that his love may well be tainted by his experiences, just as her feelings are touched by her own past. Marshall's comments about Kale being in the area, combined with his clear suspicion of Dez, foreshadow his knowledge of her actions, and his clear desire to capture her



abilities. His monitoring of her reaction to Kale's capture shows he knows her underlying feelings.

Chapter 16, while short, does show Dez still has feelings for Alex, and that he, too has feelings for Dez. At the same time, he has suffered greatly at the hands of her father, so it is no surprise that he wants nothing to do with Denazen. Dez's processing is concerning, in that Dez has shown herself to be less than capable of following direction, while Mercy is clearly well trained.

Chapter 17 shows Mercy is just as trained as Marshall claimed her to be. She is frumpy, but highly organized, and her skill makes it difficult for Dez to play her usual games. Dez knows her admissions about Alex, and her other men, will raise the flags, but she also knows her lies would be more suspicious. It is only through logical reasoning that she is able to fake out Mercy. However, it is also clear that mercy appears to be being kind to Dez, and this alone raises suspicion, foreshadowing Mercy's role in Dez's betrayal later in the novel.

In Chapter 18, Dez's inability to find Brandt foreshadows the knowledge of his death later in the novel, as it is clear Dez knows Brandt never ignores her. Her nightmare foreshadows the knowledge later that Brandt can control dreams, and is trying to tell her something. While at Denazen, Dez's experiences, although they seem painful, do strengthen her for the time to come, and show she can even mimic others, which she does later in the novel to save herself and Kale. Her reward, however, foreshadows her anguish at seeing Kale in his caged condition.



Chapter 19 through Chapter 22

Chapter 19 through Chapter 22 Summary

In Chapter 19, Dez is taken to level nine, where she notices the entire floor is set up to facilitate the killing sixes. He leads her to a series of cages, where he explains the inhabitants are dangerous, to themselves and others. He also explains that one of the inhabitants, Kat, was a spy for the sixes, and simply pretended to be working for Denazen. He further explains he wants to put Dez in place of Kat, working to infiltrate the sixes, and help find Ginger. Horrified, Dez realizes they have come to Kale's cage, where they are taking samples of blood to be injected into sixes, as his blood works as a calming agent. He looks terrible, and it is clear they have been abusing him. When Marshall turns away for a moment, Dez urges Kale to drink the orange juice they offer him, and plans how to get him out before they kill him.

In Chapter 20, Dez goes home, and wanders around the house, lost in her anguish. Unable to reach Brandt, she curls up, and falls asleep. She is woken, not by Kale in her room, but Alex outside her window. After a tense conversation, Alex admits he knew she was Marshall Cross' daughter from the beginning, and that the sixes thought Alex could get close, and use her for information. He did, but six months in, he realized she knew nothing. By then, however, he had fallen in love. He admits he set up the girl Dez caught him with, as he wanted Dez to break up with him, because he didn't want to use her. When he says he is sorry, Dez melts, and the two begin to kiss. Soon, however, she stops herself, as she realizes her feelings for Kale are too strong. Alex reluctantly leaves, but does promise to help with Sueshanna and Kale, before promising he will make things right between himself and Dez.

In Chapter 21, Dez awakens to find her father still home late in the morning. After a tense phone call, he informs her Brandt has been found, murdered. He leaves, and Dez runs to Brandt's, only to find his body being loaded into the ambulance. Unable to stand the pain, Dez runs to Roudey's and finds Alex, who immediately takes her to his apartment. She explains that she thinks Brandt was killed by Denazen, and after a few moments, she and Alex begin kissing, but eventually, she pulls away, knowing she wants Kale. Dez calls her father, and asks him to meet her downtown, where she and Alex join together. Dez notes that Alex is a six, and he confirms he has no moral concerns. Marshall is interested, and as they drive back to Denazen, Marshall explains he is proud of Dez, and looks forward to her work.

In Chapter 22, several days pass, and Dez is attending Brandt's funeral. Dez is furious as she watches her father console Brandt's father, knowing he was responsible for his death. She sees a boy she doesn't know, but he disappears before she can get a good look. Dez gets up and says a speech, before turning away from the service. She finds the boy she saw before, who claims to be a friend of Brandt's named Sheltie. He gives her something from Brandt, noting that he knew something was going to happen. He also tells her Brandt was a six, and then tells her to get out of Dodge, the same thing



Brandt had said when they last spoke. Dez is suspicious, but the boy leaves as Marshall arrives. Dez goes to Brandt's casket, and says her goodbyes.

Chapter 19 through Chapter 22 Analysis

Chapter 19 reveals the true nature of Denazen's termination facility. The inhabitants are clearly against Denazen, and Dez's struggle not to show emotion is clearly a problem for her. When she sees her friends from school and hears her father justify their actions, Dez rightfully wants nothing more than to harm her father. Their treatment of Kale, including their harvest of his blood, is clearly indicative of their horrible actions. The fact that Kale responds to her urging shows Kale is still coherent enough to understand.

In Chapter 20, Dez's lack of coherent thought shows how distraught she really is. Again, her lack of ability to find Brandt is concerning, as she clearly knows something is awry. Alex's admissions in this chapter not only serve to show his anguish, but also to confuse Dez. It is clear she loves Kale at this point in the novel, but she also still has feelings for Alex. Alex's actions are not surprising, and even make sense, although they hurt Dez. His promises to help Dez further show his love for her, as do his promises to make things right between them.

Chapter 21 reveals the truth depth to which Denazen is willing to go to get what it wants. The fact that Brandt has been murdered, presumably by Denazen in relation to the information Dez asked him to find, shows their willingness to do anything in order to get their way. Again, however, Dez's reaction to any situations is to find Alex, showing her continued reliance on him. This foreshadows not only his betrayal of her, but also her own duality of feelings for Kale and Alex. She knows she doesn't love Alex, but when pressured, Dez often does what she knows is safe. This eventually partially leads to her own demise. Alex's willingness to meet with Dez's father at first seems heroic, but eventually reveals its self to be a ploy to gain control over Dez. Additionally, Marshall's assumed pride in Dez seems real, but again, merely portrays his exterior facade. This foreshadows Marshall's capture of Dez later in the novel.

In Chapter 22, Dez's experience at the funeral suggests something is wrong with the situation. The appearance of Sheltie, in combination with Brandt's funeral and his knowledge of internal conversations between Dez and Brandt foreshadow the knowledge later that Sheltie is housing Brandt's soul. Dez is suspicious, but at this point, Sheltie seems legitimate. The papers he hands her foreshadow the knowledge later that Brandt found a list of all sixes that Denazen would, and did, kill for. Dez's goodbyes show she really loved Brandt.



Chapter 23 through Chapter 27

Chapter 23 through Chapter 27 Summary

In Chapter 23, Dez is informed that Kale is to be terminated, and she is to be interviewed again. During the interview, however, Mercy tips Dez off that she is going to help her, as she is one of Ginger's people. She meets her in the parking lot, and informs her she is willing to allow Dez to mimic her in order to save Kale. Dez mimics painfully, and Mercy takes her place, looking like her, in that car sent to take her home while Dez, as Mercy, returns inside Denazen. She and a guard take Kale to Mercy's office, where Dez, still as Mercy, promises to take him outside, if he answers questions. She also promises not to hurt Dez. Once outside, she explains who she is, and their plan. Just as they are about the hop the fence however, they are stopped by guards.

In Chapter 24, Kale kills one of the guards, and the two escape. Heading the Dez's, they find Mercy gone, claiming her mimic wore off. Dez changes back into herself, and finds Mercy has left the list Ginger asked for on a flash drive. Dez takes the drive to the house of a friend's, and finds the flash drive really does contain the list. She prints the list, and just as she finds the ads needed on Craigslist, someone arrives. Kale and Dez hurry to a pay phone where Dez uses the ads to locate the party, and Dez discovers that with the list is an email, noting that Sueshanna and Alex will be at Sumrun, the huge local rave, and that a secret plan, named Supremacy, has been a success.

In Chapter 25, Dez and Kale head to the party, where they find Dax, who takes them to Ginger. When Dez hands her the drive, however, Ginger claims Dex already has all the information needed, and that she doesn't need the Reaper. When Dez is furious, Ginger claims Kale is the Reaper, that she was there when he was born, and that she made up the rumor. She can see into the future, and knew Kale could eventually help the sixes break free of Cross. She claims his mother, Felicia, died, and that she is his grandmother. She insists that she couldn't stop the events unfolding, as each event in life is tied to so many that to interfere is to break the system. She continues with a story of the first visionary, whose interference with the order of things resulted in the eventual creation of Denazen. She does promise Dez protection, but Dez, furious walks away. As she leaves, Ginger tells her she is sorry for everything.

In Chapter 26, Dez and Kale decide to take up the offer for protection and head to Misha's hotel, but are stopped by Curd. After an odd conversation, Dez realizes Mercy is out, impersonating her and looking to gain information about Sumrun. Dez, turning the tables, asks Curd to send out a mass email, changing Sumrun to a costume party, hoping to throw off Denazen. When Dez and Kale reach the hotel, they are welcomed, and given a cart of food, much of which Kale has never tasted. After binging, Dez explains they can come and go as they please, and Kale has to test it out by leaving the hotel and returning. Once back, the two talk, as Dex admits she is afraid of her feelings, knowing he may simply be attracted because he can touch her. Kale responds, pointing



out that she touches him, in an emotional way no one else can. The two make love, and admit they love one another.

In Chapter 27, Dez and Kale lay low in the hotel for the day, eating, enjoying one another, and watching TV. Dez knows that she must find Ginger again, to get help for Kale to control his powers. The following day, they gather their costumes, where Dez is Laura Croft. As they talk, Dez reminds Kale his goals after Denazen may have to not include her, as she will be trying to reconnect with her mother. Kale reminds her he loves her, and that she is part of his life. Back at the hotel to change, they find Sheltie waiting for them. Sheltie, though, explains he is really Brandt. Brandt is a soul changer, so that when he dies, he takes the body of the person nearest, as well as their powers. Sheltie, it turns out, worked for Denazen, and killed Brandt, but he also had the power to invade dreams, hence Dez's nightmares. He also tells her the list he handed her at his funeral was a list of every known six in the country. He also explains he has to flee, but will see her again someday.

Chapter 23 through Chapter 27 Analysis

In Chapter 23, Mercy shows herself to be a true chameleon, as she fools even Dez into believing she is on his side. Her references to Ginger and her convincing nature persuade Dez into thinking she is on the side of the sixes, foreshadowing her role as a spy. Her ability to convince Dez to mimic her also foreshadows her ability to use Dez's appearance later to gather information. It is clear from Kale's reaction that Dez means a lot to him.

Chapter 24 shows again Kale as a killing machine, although a hesitant one. Mercy's claims should ring untrue to Dez, as she has mentioned before the lack of ability for her mimics to revert back on their own. This, combined with mercy's ability to simply hand Dez her goal, foreshadows the realization that Mercy is merely playing the situation. Further, the email Dez finds, combined with the mention of Supremacy, show that Dez is merely being led into a trap.

In Chapter 25, Ginger's refusal to help them is tempered only by the knowledge she gives about Kale, and his past. It is clear Ginger loves Kale, and that she is sorry about what is about to happen to Dez, foreshadowing possible problems later in the novel. It is also clear from this section that Ginger understands there is a limit to what one can do regarding future events. Ginger knows that to mess too much with the future may mean to jeopardize thousands of lives. Although she may not be happy with the choices she has to make, Ginger knows she has to make them.

Chapter 26 shows the deepening of Kale and Dez's relationship, as well as shows again that Mercy has been impersonating Dez. While she is quick to recover, it is clear there may be issues to content with. The addition of the costume party will allow Dez, one hopes, to move freely amidst the group. Later, at the hotel, the scene between Kale and Dez again not only shows Kale's naivety, but also the passion between these two characters. Kale's lack of culinary knowledge is considerable, but his passions when it



comes to Dez are insurmountable. Both Dez and Kale, at this point, realize their love for another, and this love will help them through the rest of the novel.

In Chapter 27, Dez and Kale's enjoyment of one another is expected, considering their new found passion for one another. Dez knows, however, that Kale must learn to control her powers, and that she alone can help him to do so. She also realizes such a power could negate his need for her. Her insistence that Kale find his own life is genuine, but so is Kale's insistence that any life of his must include her. It is clear Kale loves Dez, and that he intends to wait for her, as long as it may take. Sheltie's arrival, and the knowledge that Sheltie is really housing the soul of Brandt, is difficult for Dez to take, but she does understand that sixes have unique powers. Once she accepts Brandt's assertions, she is able to understand both his death, and his plight. The knowledge that Dex has a list of sixes in the country foreshadows she and Kale's pursuit of these individuals later in the novel.



Chapter 28 through Chapter 33

Chapter 28 through Chapter 33 Summary

In Chapter 28, Dez dyes her hair one color, and Kale dresses as Terminator for the party, noting he likes Dez's hair much better. Once at the party, the two find Fin, but Dez finally spots Alex, and leaves Kale and Fin to get to know one another. Alex, however, tells her Mercy hasn't changed back, and is still mimicked as Dez. Alex also tells her she is actually the target, along with Ginger, and that she was used to lure them to the party. As they argue, with Alex wanting her to leave and Dez trying to stay, Dez mimics him in order to fool Denazen, but Alex admits he helped with the setup, in order to try and save her. Dez spits in his face, and storms off.

In Chapter 29, Dez, as Alex, finds Mercy, as her, and tries to gather information. It soon becomes clear that Alex made love to Mercy the prior night, knowing she was an imitation, and Dez uses this to her advantage. She takes Mercy to a backroom, and knocks her cold. Once back on the dance floor, she is caught by Dax, who thinks she is Alex but she soon finds a corner, and shakes off the mimic, becoming herself. She sees Kale being followed by a young woman, and when she approaches, she realizes, as he reaches for the young woman, that she is being mimicked. Calling out, Kale realized that the mimic is really Sueshanna, who was tricking into thinking he was a mimic. Kale introduces the two.

In Chapter 30, Sueshanna warns Kale and Dez they have to leave, but Marshall soon arrives. Sueshanna asks him to let Dez go, and for a moment, Dez sees her father, but he quickly adapts, and reverts to his old self. Marshall admits he impregnated Sueshanna as an experiment, called Supremacy, where the fetuses were injected with a solution that make the power of the offspring stronger. He admits, however, that many lose their minds at eighteen. When Kale threatens Marshall, he pulls out a gun, telling Kale if he reveals Ginger's location, he can choose either Dez or Sueshanna to survive. After a tearful discussion, Kale, claiming he has chosen, instead tries to kill Marshall. After a struggle, Kale, Dez, and Sue race to the stairs, trying to find Fin to escape. They find Alex as a fight between Fin, an element thrower, and Denazen employees erupts. Sue tries to help, as does Dez, but the Denazen employees dose Fin, and attack the others. Dez is subdued, but just as Marshall puts a gun to Sueshanna's head, someone tells him to drop his weapon.

In Chapter 31, Ginger and other sixes stand at the doorway, barring exit for cross. After a struggle between the sixes under Denazen and those under Ginger, chaos ensues. Dez turns her shoes into bricks, and throws them at Denazen employees, but they manage to avoid her attacks. A boy who turns into a Panda protects Dez, but as she yells for Kale, Alex buries a knife in his stomach. Kale closes his eyes, and is still.

In Chapter 32, Marshall pulls Dez away, as the sixes come to her aid. Alex is told Marshall plans to keep Dez, but Alex, with his power, takes the gun, and aims it at



Marshall's head. Once Marshall gives up and leaves, Ginger calls for a six, Daun, who can heal others, but at a cost of herself. Since she cannot touch Kale, she alerts Dez that she will have to work through her, possibly harming her. Dez immediately agrees, and after a strong, powerful moment, Dez realizes Kale is alive.

In Chapter 33, Kale and Dez are sitting in front of the home of a six, after traveling all over the country to track down other sixes, to warn them of Denazen. They know Marshall will rise again, and hope to have an army waiting. Sueshanna waits back in the hotel, while Kale becomes more accustomed to the real world. Dez realizes she might still have effects from saving Kale, and she might lose control at age eighteen. As they talk to the six they have come to visit, Dez realizes she has developed a new power.

Chapter 28 through Chapter 33 Analysis

In Chapter 28, the party appears to be in full swing, but Dez knows they are in danger. Alex's knowledge about Denazen's plans shows he is working with them. Although his intentions may be to save Dez, the end result is still putting all sixes, including Kale, in jeopardy. Alex does love Dez, but his love for her makes him do things that are unacceptable. Even Dez realizes the danger Alex has put them all in, and knows she has to work hard to solve the problem.

Chapter 29 shows that Dez can handle a situation, as she takes Mercy completely out of the situation. However, her disgust at Alex's actions also show she still has feelings for him. The introduction here of Sueshanna has two purposes. First, it is clear Kale's tough would kill her, and that this was likely Denazen's plan. Secondly, the fact that Dez tried to save him is probably a trap, aimed at capturing all three. It is clear Denazen plans to kill Sueshanna, and possibly Kale, in order to preserve Dez.

In Chapter 30, the fight between the sixes and the Denazen employees shows culmination of the rebellion that the sixes have planned. This confirms Ginger was right, that Kale is responsible for their revolution. Marshall's response to Sueshanna suggests he has a human component, but it also shows he is capable of completely hiding it, as he continues his plan, despite her pleas. The knowledge that he impregnated her as part of an experiment simply furthers the impression that he is an evil individual, and when combined with the knowledge of Supremacy, and with the knowledge that he is forcing Kale to choose, shows he is willing to do anything to further empower his company. Dez is rightfully afraid, as she may go insane at eighteen, which is merely months away. The fight between the sixes and Denazen employees in Chapter 31 shows the true power of the sixes, as they easily overtake the Denazen staff. However, Kale's accident is cause for alarm, as it is clear that he is seriously injured at the hands of Alex.

Chapter 32 reveals Alex finally realizing that Denazen is merely using him, but it is too late. Although he does help Dez by forcing Marshall to back down, Kale is already deceased. It is only through Daun and Dez's hands that Kale is able to survive, and the knowledge that Dez helps him, knowing she could suffer greatly again shows her love



for him. Chapter 33 reveals that while Marshall fled, he is not gone. Although Dez and Kale have gone out to try and spread the word, they have much ground to cover. By the end of the novel, it is obvious that Dez is still developing new skills, foreshadowing information in a sequel about her new abilities. Both Dez and Kale continue to develop and build an army.



Characters

Deznee Cross

Deznee Cross is a teenage girl who spends much of her life trying to rebel against her father. As a young child, Deznee believed that her mother had died. Deznee loves her father, but as he works often and spends more and more time away, Deznee rebels. She begins seeking out new ways to feed her endless need for thrills, and seeks out alcohol, drugs, and boys. Deznee is not a bad person, but she does have a desire to control her own life, and her own destiny. It is only when Kale comes from nowhere, and she begins to understand her own gifts, as well as her father's lies, that she is able to break free from her own rebellion. Deznee has a capacity for deep emotion, but pushes everyone away with her tough exterior in an effort to avoid being hurt. With Kale, however, she finds herself unable to resist, and unable to conceal her emotions. She, in fact, uses those emotions to help her free Kale and her mother, who is really alive, from the Denazen Corporation, controlled by her father. She understands that her powers, and those of the others, make them special, and that she can learn to love and trust them, if she chooses to do so. Over the course of the novel, Dez grows into a stronger person, less likely to fly off the handle, and more in control.

Marshall Cross

Marshall Cross is the father of Dez Cross, and the person responsible for running the Denazen corporation. Marshall Cross is believed by his daughter to be a simple lawyer who works too many hours and spends too much time away from his only daughter. Secretly however, Marshall runs an organization responsible for kidnapping and enslaving sixes, or those with special powers, for his and his company's benefit. Marshall uses the sixes for his own gain. When Dez realizes this, she becomes determined to help the sixes, and reveals she is one herself. Later in the novel, however, Marshall admits he himself is responsible for the level of power of his daughter, as he used her mother as an experiment, injecting her when she was pregnant with a solution meant to boost the fetuses powers. Marshall does show moments where he appears to care for his daughter and his wife, but in general, he is an abusive, cruel individual who serves only himself. His attempts to trap and control others simply shows his own need for power, and when he is defeated by his daughter, it is clear that he will surface again.

Kale

Kale has no last name, as he has never had a need for one. Born to a mother he never knew, Kale was taken early into the Denazen corporation, where he was abused, and raised to simply obey commands. He was raised primarily by Sueshanna Cross, Deznee's mother, although he wasn't aware Dex even existed at the time. Kale has the



power to kill anything living with a single touch, and thus was a prime asset for the corporation. Kale was made to kill many during his life, and although he felt badly about it, he never had any choice, as those in the corporation often threatened to hurt Sueshanna if he didn't cooperate. When Kale meets Dez however, he is amazed to discover that he is able to touch her, for whatever reason. As a result of this, and Dez's attraction to him, Kale and Dez almost immediately begin a romantic relationship. Kale is a kind, fiercely loyal individual who spends much of the novel protecting those around him, at any cost to himself. At the end of the novel, he willingly gives his life for Dez, although he is then saved by another six.

Brandt Cross (Sheltie)

Brandt Cross is the cousin of Dez, and her very best friend. Brandt understands Dez, although he doesn't know she is a six, as she does not know of his powers, either. The two have a very close relationship, and when Dez is in trouble, it is Brandt she looks to for help. This, however, in the novel gets Brandt killed as his snooping into the Denazen corporation results in his assassination. Brandt is a soul jumper, however, so when he dies, he is able to inhabit and take over the body of the person nearest to him. In this case, Brandt ends up taking over the body of his killer. Dez discovers this, and although at first is horrified, she comes to understand Brandt really is in the body of Sheltie. She pushes him to leave town, knowing Cross will eventually discover him, and Brandt agrees.

Sueshanna Cross

Sueshanna Cross is the mother of Deznée Cross. Believed to be dead by her daughter, Sueshanna is in fact alive and well, working under Marshall at the Denazen corporation. Held captive and under constant threat of the harm of her daughter, Sueshanna does as she is told, even going so far as to raise Kale in the facility. However, when Sueshanna learns Marshall has lied to her, telling her Dez is not a six, she rebels, and helps the children and herself escape. Sueshanna is a loyal mother who does what she needs to in order to save her daughter's life.

Misha Vaughn

Misha Vaughn is the keeper of a hotel aimed at housing sixes on the run. Misha is a helper of Ginger's, and helps Dez and Kale when they are running from Cross. While she knows she is taking a risk, she continues to house them after the fight between Denazen and the sixes at the end of the novel, as well. Misha is an organizer, who aims to keep the sixes as safe as possible.



Alex Mojourn

Alex Mojourn is the ex-boyfriend of Dez, and also a six. Alex is a troublemaker, but he does love Dez. In the beginning, he claims, he began dating Dez because she was the daughter of Marshall Cross, and could possibly give the sixes information. Alex, however, found himself falling in love with Dez, and rather than continue using her, he set it up so she would find him with another woman. Dez was crushed, and Alex claims it was a difficult thing for him to do, as well. When Alex is given the opportunity to reconnect with Dez, he will stop at nothing to help protect her, including killing Kale, and partnering with Denazen. Alex loses Dez in the end, along with her trust, even though he does help her to escape.

Ginger Midlen

Ginger Midlen is the leader of the six resistance group. Ginger, it is discovered late in the novel, is actually Kale's grandmother, who created the story of the Reaper, a person who would help save the sixes from the Denazen corporation. Ginger is a seer, in that she can see into the future. She knew, even at birth, what Kale would help the sixes do, just as she knew Dez could help her find the information she needed to free her mother, and the other sixes. Ginger is a powerful woman, who uses her own power to help her group, although at times her methods seem a bit unorthodox.

Daxil Fleet

Daxil Fleet (Dax) is another six that helps Kale and Dez defeat Marshall Cross and the Denazen corporation. Dax is a friend of Alex's who agreed to pretend to kidnap Dez in order to draw the attention of Marshall and his men. Dax uses Dez to free his young niece, although she has already been brainwashed by the corporation. Dax is kind and caring, and turns out to be a large help in the destruction of the Denazen corporation.

Mercy Kline

Mercy Kline is the psychic of the Denazen corporation. In charge of intake interviews, Mercy is great at her job, in that she can tell if someone is lying. Mercy fools Dez into thinking she is on her side as she lets her go, following her father's choice to have her interrogated. In reality, however, Mercy is merely working with Denazen to allow Marshall access to the location for a large rave, where many sixes will likely be present. Mercy allows Dez to mimic her, thereby allowing Mercy full access to everything Dez has access to, including her personal information, as well as Alex himself.



Objects/Places

Parkview

Parkview is the city in which the novel takes place.

Denazen Corporation

Denazen Corporation is a supposed law firm that is really a holding facility for mutant humans whose powers are used by Marshall Cross against others.

Sixes

Sixes are genetically different individuals who have powers outside normal human range, such as the ability to manipulate fire, mind read, or death touch.

Soul Shifter

A soul shifter is one who is able to transfer bodies when he or she dies, taking over the mind, and memories, of their new host.

Sumrun

Sumrun is the annual rave in Parkview.

Graveyard

The Graveyard is an old junk yard teens use to party in Parkview.

Craigslist

Craigslist is an online posting where the Six teens place ads to indicate their meeting place every night.

Mimic

A mimic is one who is able to manipulate one object, or person, to look exactly like another.

Reaper

The reaper is a myth, told by Sixes, of a person who escaped Denazen and will help free the other sixes.

Shop Rite Warehosue

The Shop Rite Warehouse is the location of the party, Sumrun, where Marshall and Dez have their last fight.



Themes

Betrayal

Betrayal is one of the primary themes within the novel. From the beginning, it is clear Marshall Cross has been betraying his daughter since birth. Through the novel, readers learn Marshall has lied about her mother being dead, hidden his true position with the Denazen company, lied about his job and his life, and even betrayed Dez before birth, as he selfishly injected her mother with a solution that could make Dez's power stronger, or could kill her. Marshall Cross betrays everyone, including Sueshanna, his wife, as he uses her to produce Dez, and then imprisons her for his own use. It is only fitting that Dex betrays her father, then, by lying to him his whole life about her powers, and by using Kale to help bring down his organization at the end of the novel. Marshall betrays Kale, as well. Kale has been abused and used since birth, and Marshall has imprisoned him since his captivity. He has used him to kill people, and threatened the only people he knows as family. It is no wonder, then, that by the end of the novel Kale is also betraying Cross.

Marshall, however, is not the only character who betrays others in the novel. Alex Mojourn, despite his supposed intentions, betrays both Kale and Ginger when he helps Marshall and the rest of the Denazen corporation. He was, at one point, a loyal six, using Dez for information, but when he fell in love with her despite his betrayal of her, he painfully let her go. Not willing to let her go again, he again betrays her, using Kale and Denazen to get to her, and then trying to kill Kale. In the end, his betrayal forces him to lose everything.

Mercy Kline betrays Deznée in the novel, as well. Mercy pretends to be caring for Dez and her cause as she helps her to escape. However, in reality, she is merely using Dez to gain access to Dez's personal information, including her computer, her friends, and her family. Mercy uses this advantage to help the Denazen corporation find information about the upcoming party, where many Sixes, including those they want to capture, will be. In the end, Mercy's plan succeeds, although the end result is the take down of the Denazen corporation instead of the destruction of the sixes.

Love

Love is another important theme in the novel. The most clear example of this is the love between Kale and Dez. Dez is, by nature, suspicious of everyone, and keeps everyone at arm's length. Kale, however, wins her over, as he is clearly incapable of lying, or even of really having common sense, as his life has been so over protected. As such, Dez finds herself easily falling for the young man, and when she discovers his deep passion and loyalty, this love only deepens. For his part, Kale too finds himself loving Dez, as she is strong and capable, but also soft and vulnerable. Unlike everyone in Kale's life, Dez is open and honest and she doesn't want to use him for anything. For these two



broken characters, their mutual experiences serve to help them love one another more deeply.

Kale loves Sueshanna, as well. As the only mother figure he has ever known, Sueshanna has worked tirelessly to make sure Kale stayed strong and well. Many of Kale's actions were done to save Sueshanna from harm, and it seems only natural that Kale and Dez fall in love. For her part, Dez loves her mother, as well, although admittedly she knows little of her. Her strong desire to save her mother as well as her own desire to save the other sixes shows her closeness to her mother, even though they have been apart for many years.

For his part, Alex loves Dez, as well, although his way of showing it certainly leaves much to be desired. Alex's treatment of Dez is terrible, from his initial betrayal of her to his continued betrayal later. However, in both cases, Alex's intentions were pure enough, although not in Dez's best interest. He does love Dez, and wants her to remain safe, which is why he behaves as he does.

Super Powers

Super powers are another major theme in the novel. Those in the book with powers, or sixes, are born with an abnormality in their sixth chromosome, creating their powers. These powers range from the simple ability to tell if someone is lying to the death touch of Kale, which allows him to kill any living creature with a single touch. These powers are sought by people such as those in the Denazen Corporation, who use the individuals with these powers for their own means. People like Marshall Cross use them to gain power, and to punish and kill those who get into his way. His justification for the housing of the sixes is that, untrained, these individuals are a threat to themselves and to others. By taking them in and training them, Marshall teaches them to use their abilities in a way that helps them control them. On the other hand, it is clear Marshall takes these individuals without consent, and threatens them when they do not do as he asks. This implies his intended purpose is far from humanitarian, as he claims. The theme of super powers allows the author to introduce the idea of those who are different, and the togetherness these individuals feel once they realize they, too, are a part of something bigger. Dez's reaction when she finds there are more than herself is one of relief, since she has spent much time thinking she was alone in the world. Her new found six friends can relate to her differences.



Style

Point of View

The point of view of the novel is first person. This point of view is important to the novel, as one of the primary points of the book is the emotional fluctuations in the main character, Dez. Her thoughts, feelings, and opinions about the people around her, as well as her memories and her feelings about her father, play vital roles in understanding both her character and the people that she comes into contact with. The growth of love for Kale is also a main component of the novel and this level of emotional capacity would be difficult to understand were the novel not written in first person view. The first person view also helps keep the story focused on Dez and her companions, as there are many other characters in the novel with their own tales. The first-person view helps the reader focus only on Dez and her personal issues. The reader would often be lost, were it not for this view, as being able to gain insight into Dez's inner workings is important in understanding her as a character, and understanding her father's drives and motivations, as well. Being able to see the world through Dez's eyes adds depth and believability to the story.

Setting

The novel is set in Parkview, a mid-sized town. Dez's house is on Kinder Street, which borders Parkview Nature Preserve. Parkview is not particularly large, although it does seem expansive. Much of the novel takes place in hip locations in the city, including friends' houses, clubs, bars, and rave scenes. Much of the novel also happens at Denazen Corporate headquarters, a sprawling office building with several levels that, unbeknownst to Dez at the beginning of the novel, houses the Sixes, or people, her own father keeps prisoner. Also in the novel are outdoor locations such as parks where Kale and Dez hide out, and a hotel, where Misha Vaughn operates from. Many of the locations remain unnamed, but the town appears to be somewhat hip and forward thinking. The kids in the town, many of whom are sixes, are edgy and modern, making the town seem to be of an East Coast origin. The major fight scene in the novel takes place at an old Shop Rite warehouse by the docks. Many of the parties in the novel take place in abandoned buildings, adding to the edgy feel of the setting. This helps add depth and believability to the novel, while also allowing the characters to move freely in a setting that displays their individuality. As Dez and her friends are rebellious and thrill seeking, these settings help them to expand their characters.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel tends to be highly informal and relaxed. As most of the characters are edgy, rebellious teenagers, the novel is filled with slang, and does include some foul language. The sentences are constructed with only minor adherence



to grammatical rules. This makes the book easy to read, and does not cause difficulty in comprehension. Additionally, the slang and language of the novel actually help to convey the teenage feel of the book, and help the reader look inside the modern, edgy world in which these teens live.

In addition, the language of the novel helps to discern the ages of the characters within the novel. Since there are two basic groups, those of the teen Sixes and those of the adults, the language used helps to show the differences between these characters. Whereas Dez and her friends are cocky and quick to speak, Marshall Cross and his men are controlled and collected. This differentiation helps to show the severity of Cross and the other Denazen characters, and the recklessness of Dez. Only Kale, with his own control, differs, helping readers to understand that his influence has come from being controlled for many years by Cross. Overall, the language does help to add depth to the characters and the story, and helps to convey a sense of youth and carelessness that defines this group of teenagers.

Structure

The novel is comprised of Thirty Three chapters of unequal length, although many are very short. Each chapter is named only by number, revealing nothing about what is to happen within the chapter. However, because some of the chapters are only a few pages in length, any naming convention would be difficult. Chapters are short, because very little time happens within each chapter.

The plot of the novel is simple, although there are a number of subplots within the book. The primary focus of the novel is Dez Cross, and her father, Marshall Cross. Dez is a rebellious teenager who butts heads nearly constantly with her father. Dez soon learns, however, after meeting Kale, that her father is not a lawyer, but is instead a killer who captures sixes, or people with superpowers, and uses them for his own advantage. Dez reveals she too is a six, and when she learns Kale knows her mother, Dez is determined to save her, and stop her father. With the help of Kale and other friends, many of whom are also sixes, Dez is able to temporarily stop the Denazen Corporation. It is only a matter of time, however, before Marshall Cross regains strength, and Kale and Dez use the time to seek out other sixes in the United States, to warn them.

The novel is fast paced, and does contain some references to alcohol, drugs, and some sexual situations, making it suitable for a smaller audience. However, the novel is an easy read and is both entertaining and engaging.



Quotes

"The shame in his voice was like a vacuum, stealing all the air from the room. Eyes rising to meet mine, he reached out and ran his finger along the line of my chin and to my cheek, letting his touch linger for a few moments. I found myself wanting to take it all away" (Chapter 3, p. 21).

"I didn't know how to respond. Imagine that. Me. Speechless. Glaciers were probably popping up all over hell" (Chapter 5, p. 39).

"Tiny prickles of happy sparked a reaction from every nerve ending in my system. A complicated swell of emotion - something I hadn't felt in, well, ever - came rushing to the surface. I wanted him to elaborate" (Chapter 6, p. 46).

"Somewhere in the closed-off, dark corner of my soul, I wanted it to be true. I ached for it - to be Dad's sunshine smile girl again. But I wasn't. And I never would be. He'd turned me into his big nightmare walking - the bane of his existence" (Chapter 7, p. 57).

"Despite the life he'd endured, Kale was a good person. Fiercely loyal and courageous. To have lived through what he had and still have those qualities...It was amazing, not to mention miraculous. He'd called me brave and strong? I couldn't hold a candle to him" (Chapter 7, p. 60).

"Never out in the rain? Each minute I spent with Kale made me question my perception of reality. How the hell had I missed seeing who Dad really was? Maybe, deep down, I hadn't. I'd chosen to hide things from him at an early age. Keep certain parts of myself a secret. Suddenly I wondered if maybe - just maybe- a part of me recognized him for what he truly was right from the start. A monster" (Chapter 8, p. 61).

"It was Kale. The slightly haunted look in his eyes. The way his hair flopped over into his face. The way he'd tried to attack Alex and Dax - for me. Strange and damaged - possibly beyond repair - but there was still something about him that made me feel alive" (Chapter 11, p. 92).

"The kiss was tentative at first - brief. I pulled away until I could see his face. I'd had a lot of guys look at me like I was a fun vacation on the beach, but the way Kale's ice blue eyes devoured every inch of me, full of heat and hope, I felt like Christmas morning. Timeless and perfect" (Chapter 12, p. 96).

"People like us. Sixes. I'd accepted the things I could do, never truly knowing. Never really understanding...And all the while, there were others out there, people like me - like my mom - struggling for freedom" (Chapter 15, p. 118).

"He was given military-grade combat training and continuous physical conditioning. We used him in the most important missions. But after an unprovoked attack and his



escape - and of course his abduction of you - many of us feel 98 is unsalvageable at this point. Something snapped and now he's broken" (Chapter 19, pg. 146).

"All of a sudden, you care about me? I don't need you to be my knight in shining armor. You're an epic fail when it comes to that, so do me a favor and scam" (Chapter 20, p. 153).

"These things are not to be toyed with...Each person's future is tied to a thousand others. Change simply one thing, and you have chaos. Everything is thrown out of balance and horrible things happen" (Chapter 25, p. 195).

"With each shocked gasp and shallow, gasping breath, Kale brought me higher. There was no ceiling with him. Happiness stretched on forever. Every moment I spent with him seemed to find me someplace new - feeling something new. I hadn't loved Alex. I'd cared about him, yes, but I hadn't loved him. Not once in all our time together had I ever felt like this. Free. Euphoric. Content" (Chapter 26, p. 204).

"For a second, he hesitated. I had the insane notion that he might actually step aside and let us leave. Silly, I know, but there was something there. Something I couldn't remember ever seeing before. A flicker of emotion - a small twitch of his right cheek and the subtle flexing of his fingers. The equivalent of an emotional breakdown, considering the source" (Chapter 30, p. 228).



Topics for Discussion

In "Touch," Deznee spends a lot of time in her life trying to make her father angry. Why do you think she behaves this way? Can you relate to her feelings about her father? Why or why not? Why does she act out against him, even before she knows the truth?

Dez admits in the book that she was not in love with Alex, and yet she had sexual relations with him. Why do you think she did this, knowing she didn't love him? How does her experience with Alex differ from her experiences with Kale? How does she claim to know she loves Kale? Do you think she can really love him, after only a short amount of time?

In the book, there are many characters with special powers. Discuss the powers of Kale and Dez. What can they do? How is this useful to them in the book? What are the down sides of their powers? If you had such powers, what would you do with them?

Marshall Cross uses Sixes in order to hurt others. If you knew such people existed, what do you think should be done with them? Do you agree with Marshall that such people could be a danger to themselves and others, if their powers were not contained? Do you think some people would use the powers to gain advantage over others? What do you think the appropriate treatment would be?

The "sixes" in "Touch" are mutants, of sorts, in that their chromosomes are different than others. This concept of mutations creating powers in humans is not a new one (consider such modern depictions as XMen). Why do you think these types of powers are entertaining for us? Do you dream of having such powers? What would you choose, and why? Do you think manipulating humans genetically to produce these, or similar powers, would be ethical? Why or why not?

Compare and contrast Kale to Alex in the book. Clearly, both have good qualities, as Dez has feelings for both of them. Using examples and information from the novel, compare the two love interests of Dez, making sure to point out not only physical similarities and differences, but also mental and emotional ones as well.

Deception is a common theme in the novel. How does Dez deceive her father for many years? How does her father deceive her? How is Kale initially deceptive? How is Alex deceitful? Mercy? Why are these characters deceitful, what is their goal? Are they successful? Why or why not?