

# **Uncaged Study Guide**

**Uncaged by John Sandford and Michele Cook**

(c)2016 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



# Contents

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <a href="#">Uncaged Study Guide.....</a>   | <a href="#">1</a>  |
| <a href="#">Contents.....</a>              | <a href="#">2</a>  |
| <a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>          | <a href="#">4</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter 1-2.....</a>           | <a href="#">9</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapters 3-4.....</a>          | <a href="#">11</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 5-6.....</a>          | <a href="#">14</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 7-8.....</a>          | <a href="#">17</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 9-10.....</a>         | <a href="#">20</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 11-12.....</a>        | <a href="#">22</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 13-14.....</a>        | <a href="#">24</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 15-16.....</a>        | <a href="#">26</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 17-18.....</a>        | <a href="#">28</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 19-20.....</a>        | <a href="#">30</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 21-22.....</a>        | <a href="#">32</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 23-24.....</a>        | <a href="#">34</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 25-26.....</a>        | <a href="#">36</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 27-28.....</a>        | <a href="#">38</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 29-31.....</a>        | <a href="#">40</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapters 32-34.....</a>        | <a href="#">43</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 35.....</a>            | <a href="#">46</a> |
| <a href="#">Characters.....</a>            | <a href="#">48</a> |
| <a href="#">Symbols and Symbolism.....</a> | <a href="#">51</a> |
| <a href="#">Settings.....</a>              | <a href="#">53</a> |
| <a href="#">Themes and Motifs.....</a>     | <a href="#">54</a> |
| <a href="#">Styles.....</a>                | <a href="#">58</a> |



Quotes.....59



# Plot Summary

Uncaged by John Sandford and Michele Cook is the first novel in the Singular Menace series. The reader is immediately thrust into the middle of a high stakes operation where a boy named Odin, along with several other teens, are breaking into a high security facility. They are breaking in to protest animal testing and to take videos to expose the type of experimentation that is being done. Odin, it is clear, is a highly sensitive, incredibly talented hacker, whose expertise has allowed them to gain entry to the labs. His girlfriend, Rachel, and the leader of the group, Ethan, will not allow him to bring any of the animals with him when they take videos, but Odin doesn't listen to them and manages to escape along with the others, as well as a dog and a tortured mouse. Two of their group are wounded in the escape attempt and they are forced to leave them behind. The reader also learns that Ethan, Rachel and the others are part of a social anarchist group called Storm. While they tell Odin that this is what they are, in reality they are up to something much more chaotic. Ethan tells Rachel to keep Odin in line - or else. Rachel shows Ethan that she has managed to take two highly classified USB drives.

Readers are introduced to the director of security, Sync. Sync is ex-military and dedicated to following his orders without question. He cultivates loyalty among his men, and acts quite custodial toward them, even when they fail him. Two of his top right-hand men, Thorne and Harmon, report that the USB drives have been stolen, as well as a dog. If the dog falls into the wrong hands, Sync knows, then the secret human testing that they've been doing will go public and it would spell the end for the facility, named Singular.

Shay is Odin's sister and the reader learns that she has been searching for him for many months. She has always had to look out for him and when he just up and left, she panicked. Finally, he reached out to her to let her know that he was in Hollywood and that he needed her. She immediately gets onto a bus and heads to Hollywood but isn't there even a day before she's in trouble again. The reader learns that Shay has a nose for getting herself into trouble. This time, she's being followed by two men who intend to rob her. She tries to get away from them by disappearing down some side streets but this isn't her town and she ends up going down a blind alley. It doesn't look good and she prepares to fight them when out of the shadows a crippled man and two very large teenagers come to her rescue. After they've beat up the two attackers, the older man introduces himself. He says his name is Twist and he offers her a place to go to get off of the streets. She declines, so he gives her his card and tells her that if she changes her mind, she should reach out.

The reader learns that Shay is no stranger to living on the streets. Her parents died and she was left to raise herself and her brother as best she could. The authorities separated them and Shay ended up in multiple foster homes, which she promptly ran away from each time. While she's camped out on the outskirts of Hollywood, with a nice view of the sign, she meets a member of the police force, a Detective West and his partner, Detective Cherry. They question her about the break-in at the facility, but she



has no idea what they're talking about. They see that she has a laptop and they take it to try and discover if she's been involved. Shay is upset that they've taken her computer, but is also confident that they will not be able to find anything incriminating. She and Odin are that good. They ask her about Odin and she lies, telling them that she has no idea who he is.

Back at the Singular facility, Harmon overhears the CEO of the company talking about the break-in. He also overhears the company's owner telling someone on the phone that they should eliminate the people who broke in, meaning he has just given someone the go-ahead to kill the activists. Harmon is conflicted because he isn't sure that this is what he's signed on for. Still, he follows orders.

Meanwhile, Storm has released the first of their videos showing the nature of the animal testing going on at the facility. Singular is able to contain the damage by releasing a statement to the press that the videos were fabricated by the competition.

Shay wakes up in her cardboard house and realizes that she can't live like this indefinitely. She goes to a local Starbucks and ends up falling asleep with her head on a table. A social worker comes into the coffee shop and sees Shay sleeping. She wakes Shay up and tries to get her to go to a shelter. Shay fishes out Twist's card and shows it to the woman. She tells Shay that Twist is just as he says and that he has a hotel where he takes in kids off of the street. Shay decides that she will give Twist and his hotel a chance.

When Shay arrives at Twist's hotel she is welcomed in warmly and given a room to share with a girl named Emily. Emily is a 'picker.' She goes to thrift shops, yard sales, etc.. and finds items that she then resells to antique shops for a profit. Shay observes the police bringing in a boy named, Cade, who has been involved in a tech incident at an Apple store. After the police leave, she sees Twist give Cade grief for pulling a stunt like that especially since they plan to hijack a skyscraper in a few weeks. Shay is worried and wonders what sort of new trouble she's gotten herself in to.

Shay decides to confront Twist point blank and asks him what he's planning to do. Twist explains that he's a social activist and he pulls daring stunts in order to draw attention to their various causes. He asks her if she is personally against breaking and entering and Shay evades the question. He also learns that she is an expert climber, having been involved in rock climbing for many years. Twist tells her she can stay at the hotel if she is willing to work for her keep. Reluctantly, she agrees.

Shay helps to create the banner that they will hang from the top, goes with Emily to purchase the climbing equipment that she needs, and then the next day, goes with the gang to place the banner on the skyscraper. They just barely manage to get it on the top before the cops arrive. Shay is mortified to see that the news cameras were there filming the entire time, and her flaming red hair is the star of the show. Across town Detective West has just watched the same news story and he recognizes Shay immediately.



Shay continues to look for her brother, whose correspondences have become erratic. She researches and locates many of the animal activist groups, but begins to realize that there are already other agents there. They are easy enough to spot because all of them, including Detective West, have prosthetic limbs. Twist asks Shay if they could capitalize on her celebrity and literally make her their poster child. She only agrees when he agrees to give her 10% of the profit from the campaign.

Shay goes to the beach where a pod of whales have beached themselves. She believes that Odin might be near, since she knows he can't resist being a part of such a rescue effort. She isn't wrong and as she is turning to go, he steps out of the shadows. He fills Shay in on what he's been up to, then he gives her the USB flashdrives. They are encrypted and he can't break them. He begs her to help them expose Singular. Before Shay can ask more questions they both spot Detective West. West and several other detectives attempt to apprehend Shay, Odin, and the others, but they get away. Shay goes back when she sees West go down after a taser shot knocks out his prosthetic leg. He tells her that Singular isn't bad and that they help people, that she has it all wrong. Seeing that he will be okay, she takes off, noticing that the dog, which they've named X, is now following her. Odin is gone.

Shay tells Twist about what happened, leaving Odin's name out of it all. She gives the USB drives to Twist and tells him about the dog. X is not doing well. He seems very sick and is having difficulty moving around like a normal dog. Later, when X has a seizure, she runs to Twist to see if he can help.

The reader learns that after the raid at the beach, Odin did not get away, but was apprehended by Sync, who was also there at the time. Sync discusses what they should do with him. Odin isn't talking and Harmon wants to know how far they are supposed to go to get the information. They also know that Odin gave the drives and the dog to Shay. Sync reveals that he knows who both Odin and Shay are because he used to work with their parents for Singular. Odin is dumbfounded and is even further resolved not to say anything.

Meanwhile, Twist has taken X and Shay to a doctor that he knows, who works off of the radar. He examines X and states that all of the cybernetic implants are most likely the problem. The doctor says that it would seem that the dog is dying, but that he can't help. However, when Shay and Twist take X back to the hotel, Shay notices that there is a small USB port in X's head. She opens the port and realizes that it is for charging. She plugs the dog in and he immediately starts recovering.

Shay manages to decode one of the drives. There are videos of the various surgeries that Singular has performed. Shay shows the videos to Twist who becomes enraged. He recognizes one of the people being operated on as an aid worker to Korea that had disappeared a year or more earlier.

Sync's men have figured out where Shay lives, and in the middle of the night they invade the hotel. None of the kids give Shay up, and when the men start to force their way in, the kids stand up to them, effectively driving them off. One of the men, Thorne,



manages to slip through and corners Shay. X attacks him and he is forced to retreat with the rest of his men.

Meanwhile, Twist and the inner circle of kids from the hotel debate their next steps. Finally, they all decide that West is someone they should try to turn. Shay believes that he is a good person and doesn't know what is really going on at Singular. She is certain that if she shows him the videos that he will act as their inside man at the facility, and moreover, help her to rescue her brother. They also realize that it is just a matter of time before Singular's agents come back to the hotel, this time better prepared and more heavily armed. They need another place to stay. Twist knows of several safe houses and they leave that night. Shay reaches out to West and tells him that Odin must be released within 24 hours or that they will start leaking the video footage to the press. West has not seen the footage and has no idea that this is going on.

Twist is right about Singular returning. They come back in a few days and hit the hotel surgically, using the FBI as a convincing cover. While inside, however, Harmon finds the USB drives, and switches them with some fakes. That way if the information is 'leaked' then the footage is bogus. It will discredit Twist and his group.

After the raid on the hotel, West realizes that he's on the wrong side and agrees to help Twist and Shay. Twist's plan for getting the information out is to create a secure website, then to post a banner with the website URL across the Hollywood sign. West does some recon and figures out where Singular is holding Odin.

Twist and the crew pose as camera crews setting up for a film to gain access to the Hollywood sign. Shay teaches Cruz how to climb so that they can both get the website address up in record time before the police show up. Singular sends a fake message to Shay stating that they've released Odin. They urge her to turn in the USB drives. West contacts Shay to tell her to disregard that message, and that Singular still has Odin.

Singular has figured out where Twist has been hiding and comes for him and the kids. Twist is able to receive early warning from West and they barely escape. They learn from West that Odin is at a hidden facility in Sacramento so they go to the facility. West meets them there with a layout of the interior and where Odin is being held. Originally, they planned to set a fire using a fuel tank, but then they opted to, instead, capture a supply truck, and impersonate the crew to gain access. This they do fairly well and once inside they find Odin as well as a group of North Koreans that have been there for a very long time, and were part of the human experiments.

They are discovered and gunfire is exchanged. West sends them on out ahead of him, telling them that he will hold them off. He is shot, but assures them that he is fine. They take Odin and the others and get them to safety. Later, Shay and the others learn that West was gunned down.

Shay is devastated. Worse yet, she and the others learn that the videos that have been released are bogus and that they have somehow been altered. Sync and the Singular press corp make a statement that discredits the attacks on the facility as the act of

terrorists. The group splits up for safety, and Odin and Shay go to Reno to lay low. Shay decides that her red hair is a liability. She cuts it short and dyes it.





# Chapter 1-2

## Summary

### Chapter 1

A group of teenage activists break into a facility, later identified as belonging to a company called Singular, where animals are being abused. Nobody really knows what for, but they suspect it has something to do with robotics. The activist group consists mainly of young teenagers. Odin is an expert hacker, who is responsible for them being able to get into the facility in the first place. He's accompanied by his girlfriend, Rachel. The activists start freeing animals and recording what condition they are being kept in. Odin wants to take some of the animals with them, most notably a tortured mouse and an injured dog. Rachel says they can't, but Odin ends up taking the dog with him anyway.

### Chapter 2

A security guard at the facility, Darrell, calls the police once he notices the break in. He goes to confront the group, firing several shots. Most of them miss, but he does hit one of the girls, Aubrey. The leader, Ethan, takes Darrell out with a taser. All of the protestors escape, except for one that stays behind to treat Aubrey. In the escape van, Rachel shows Ethan several USB drives she has recovered. Ethan praises her for that, but warns her that she needs to get a better grip on Odin. He doesn't want to take Odin on any more missions because of how sympathetic he is towards the animals. The activists manage to get away before the cops arrive.

## Analysis

### Chapter 1

The first chapter primarily serves to set up the main antagonist group, soon identified as Singular. Singular presents a very positive image to the general public, so the reader is shown exactly how horrific they are in the beginning chapter. This is especially important because at the end of the chapter both Ethan and Rachel are shown to be very suspicious as characters, outright admitting that they are manipulating Odin. This way, readers don't have to doubt whether or not the activists are just making everything up.

Odin's caring nature is shown when he wants to rescue the animals. Despite being one of the main characters, Odin only appears in a few chapters. Making him sympathetic and charitable is a good way to get the readers to care about Shay's quest to rescue him. Odin's rescue also leads to X being introduced as a character once he and Shay meet again.



Odin rescuing the animals also shows off two themes, Everyone Deserving a Chance, and Making a Difference. Odin embodies these two themes through his actions. The theme of Everyone Deserving a Chance is indicated with Odin's reaction toward the animals being imprisoned and experimented on. He wants them to be free to live their lives. The second theme, Making a Difference, is shown by Odin's involvement with the activists. He believes that what they are involved in is helping to make the world a better, kinder place.

The symbolism introduced in the way of cages in both this chapter and the next, represents literal restriction of freedom and rights, and where Odin is concerned, the reader learns that he has emotions and personal history that he keeps 'caged' inside of him.

## Chapter 2

The theme of Manipulation is brought up between Ethan and Rachel's conversation regarding Odin. Rachel makes it clear that she doesn't have any feelings for Odin and she's just using him for the benefit of the group. Ethan himself is also shown to be very manipulative. He's able to command nearly all of the activists with ease. He convinces all but one of them to abandon Aubrey for the cause.

Even when Ethan praises Rachel, it suggests that she has also been manipulated into trying to gain his approval. Ethan not caring about any of his activists is a trending characterization for him, and one that eventually has some of the characters pay a very high price.

## Discussion Question 1

Given the information about Odin in the first couple of chapters, what is he like as a person?

## Discussion Question 2

How is the theme of Manipulation demonstrated in Chapter 2?

## Discussion Question 3

In what way is the symbolism of cages used in these early chapters, and what is the author attempting to say about the restriction of freedom or rights?

## Vocabulary

abhorrent, abrasion, plausible, counterpart, infamous, instigator, binding, acerbic, tentatively, tortured, inquisitive, trembling



# Chapters 3-4

## Summary

### Chapter 3

Darrell, the security guard, was taken into custody by the police and is now, after a few days, released from prison. Aubrey, the girl that was shot at the facility, is in critical condition, and he'll be charged with murder if she dies.

Darrell returns to Eugene Labs, where the head director, Mary Trane, is waiting for him. She brings him to see Sync, the head of security. Sync assures Darrell that he did his job and the company will support him. He sends Darrell away and speaks with two other security associates, Thorne and Harmon. He gives them instructions to find the dog that Odin took, and to continue to cover up what really happened. They tell Sync about the missing USB drives, which worries him. He doesn't want anyone finding out about the true nature of this or the other secret labs.

### Chapter 4

Shay is traveling through Hollywood, trying to shake two dubious looking men who are tailing her. She takes a wrong turn and is cornered in an alley, but she manages to keep the two men at bay with her knife. She's rescued by a man named Twist, who stands up to the two men and tells them that they aren't welcome in Hollywood. Twist is an older man who walks with a cane, but he travels with two younger and stronger men.

While Twist continues to speak with the men, his own hired muscle sneak up and brutally beat the men that threatened Shay. Though grateful, Shay is also disgusted and fearful. Twist gives her a card with his number, mysteriously saying she should call when she is ready. Shay has no idea what he's talking about, but keeps the card anyway. Then, the men all leave as quietly as they had appeared.

## Analysis

### Chapter 3

Several antagonists are introduced in this chapter: Sync, Thorne, and Harmon. Sync is the only one that's explored in much detail during the initial introduction, but both Thorne and Harmon will be featured later on. Sync is shown as being very loyal towards anyone working under him. He's protective of Darrell, despite Darrell not seeming to understand the true nature of the lab. He also goes out of his way to praise Darrell for what he did.

These small character traits are very important for Sync, since it shows that he truly believes what Singular is doing is correct. Sync also foreshadows the true depth and power behind Singular labs, a subject that is explored more over the course of the book.



The importance of the flash drives is brought up, as well as how heavily encrypted they are. This is the driving force for Singular pursuing Odin. Sync also stresses how important getting the dog back is. Clearly, there is more going on at the labs than most of the employees realize. Whether or not the actual activists knew or not is still unclear at this point in the book.

The symbolism of the flashdrive is introduced. This represents the holy grail of knowledge and is one piece of a puzzle that could expose all that the labs have been involved in, and more importantly, who has been involved in it, and at what level. When Rachel took this, unwittingly, she has set up everyone as a target.

#### Chapter 4

This chapter brings up the theme of Judging Others. The two men who are initially pursuing Shay, are doing so because she looks like a weak homeless girl they can victimize. Shay proves them wrong when she pulls out her knife, keeping them at bay. Twist embodies this theme as well. While he presents himself with more confidence, he still seems physically weak because he walks with a cane. Twist's parental nature is shown when he gives Shay his card.

Twist's card represents, both literally and figuratively, who he is and what he is about. Shay is not aware of it this early into the story, but Twist protects and parents those who work with him and for him, thereby ensuring their loyalty to him and his causes. This is a direct parallel, too, between Sync and the way he interacts with his team. Both men believe that what they are doing is for the greater good, but in the end, only one, by legal standards, is.

### Discussion Question 1

Compare what is known about Sync and Twist.

### Discussion Question 2

Why did the men follow Shay in the first place, and how is the theme of Judging Others demonstrated in their interaction?

### Discussion Question 3

What does Twist's business card mean, symbolically to Shay? What is he really offering her?



## Vocabulary

misshapen, corpse, credible, baffled, enraged, mangled, stammered, recoiled, titter, grovel, disdain, lewd



# Chapters 5-6

## Summary

### Chapter 5

Shay leaves the area quickly, shortly after Twist and his men leave. She sets up a camp on the outskirts of Hollywood and thinks back to what brought her there in the first place.

(flashback)

She had been staying at a foster home when she received a message from her brother, Odin. Odin vaguely said that he had to leave the foster home and he wasn't going to be able to come back. She had found out about his involvement at the animal testing facility. After Odin's raid on the facility, she was questioned by two people claiming to be with the police. They were named West and Cherry. She told them that she and her brother were not close.

They had gone through her computer, but she and Odin had been smart enough to use private communication. West tried to gain Shay's trust, she recalls, by showing her his prosthetic leg and telling her how he lost it in the war. Shay had liked West, despite the fact that he knew she was lying about how close she and Odin were.

West told her that Odin was part of a group called Storm. Shay didn't know anything about it, which West believed. Shay left a message for Odin, explaining what happened. He responded nearly two weeks later, saying that he was in Hollywood. Shay took what money she had left and set off for Hollywood.

### Chapter 6

Harmon arrives at an agency called Singular, where Sync is. Harmon and Sync briefly discuss the situation. Videos have recently been leaked from the lab, but they're trying to contain it. They know the flash drives haven't been decrypted yet, but they're worried about them eventually being broken.

They've been trying to track the activists, but haven't had any success tracking them down. Harmon and Sync go to a meeting with the Singular CEO, Micah Cartwheel. Harmon assures them that he'll be able to track the kids down. He starts to leave, but lingers to listen to the rest of their meeting. He overhears that they're killing people with their research, and he isn't sure how he feels about that.

## Analysis

### Chapter 5



Much of Shay and Odin's background is explored in this flashback chapter. Their closeness is shown almost immediately with the way they communicate between one another. Shay's protective nature for Odin is shown off as well when she refuses to give any information to West and Cherry. This touches on the theme of Family which is mentioned many more times during the course of the story.

Shay and West both take an immediate liking towards one another. This foreshadows their eventual alliance much later in the book. West is initially very protective of Shay, not pressing her for more detail even when he knows that she's lying. It is also of note that this is the second older man that has taken a custodial interest in Shay. That she doesn't trust either one of them, is very telling. The reader doesn't yet know the full story surrounding Odin and Shay's parents, but from Shay's reaction, there's been a significant amount of time that she and Odin have lived without true parents in their lives.

West's prosthetic leg is also an interesting device that the author works in to this chapter. Not only does it make him seem like less of a threat, but by offering up some vulnerability, it makes Shay feel that she can at least be sympathetic towards him, that he is one of the 'good guys.' This is also touching on the theme of Judging Others. Shay believes that West is not as dangerous simply because he has a false leg.

The mention of Hollywood becomes more frequent from this chapter, going forward. The author seems to be suggesting that Hollywood, both the famous Hollywood sign, as well as the actual place named Hollywood, are symbols of hope, of fresh starts, of a chance to do something 'big.'

## Chapter 6

Singular is identified as the main antagonistic group. The significance of their name is explained later on in the book. Both Harmon and Sync are expanded on as characters. Sync is shown to be very competent at his job, and he has the respect of everyone in Singular, not just the people underneath him. Singular's power is shown in the way they're able to casually brush aside the video leaks showing the experiments they have been performing.

The darker nature of Singular is revealed when Sync and the others are discussing killing the activists. While they're willing to go through such extremes, Harmon gives the impression that these aren't common occurrences, which is why he feels conflicted. This also lets the reader know that not everyone is aware of what the true nature of Singular is, and that not all of the people who work there are necessarily bad people.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does Shay relax around Detective West, and how is the theme of Judging Others demonstrated in their interactions?



## Discussion Question 2

How does the author use the Hollywood sign as a symbol?

## Discussion Question 3

What initially brought Shay to Hollywood?

## Vocabulary

listless, wanton, livid, blatantly, mechanical, torrid, lucid, wasteland, targeted, mesmerized, apologetic, prosthetic





# Chapters 7-8

## Summary

### Chapter 7

Back in the present, Shay wakes up after a few hours and goes to a Starbucks. She gets in early so she can use the bathroom to try and clean herself up. She's always been very low maintenance, except for her hair. She's kept her red hair down to her waist just like her mother used to. She ends up falling asleep in the restaurant. A social worker shakes Shay awake and tries to get her to go to a shelter. Shay asks her about Twist. The woman says that she knows Twist, and that he runs a home for children. Apparently, he had been a poor child too, but had come into wealth and now tries to help out the neighborhood.

Shay ends up going to Twist's. Outside, she sees a police officer bringing in a young man named Cade. Cade has gotten into trouble for messing around with the demo booths at an Apple Store. The officer owes Twist a favor, so he brings Cade back instead of arresting him. Twist chastises Cade for bringing the police to their place when Twist is making plans to try and hijack a skyscraper.

### Chapter 8

Shay speaks to Twist, who says that she can stay if she's willing to work for him. He asks her if she's uncomfortable with burglary, and she evades the question. Instead, she asks what Twist had meant about hijacking a skyscraper. Twist is surprised she has recognized it as a climbing term. Shay explains that she has a rich background in rock climbing. Twist brings her inside, explaining that he's planning a protest against the new district attorney, who is trying to deport Latinos. He wants to drape a banner over a building for everyone to see. They plan on sealing off the roof, so the only way down will be climbing the building.

Shay agrees to help. She works with Cade and Twist on the banner. While they are working Cade asks where she's come from. She evades the questions, but learns a little more about Cade. He had wealthy parents and is very skilled with computers. He doesn't volunteer any more information, leaving Shay just as curious as he is about her. Shay's assigned roommate, Emily, soon shows up to take Shay shopping for the climbing equipment she'll need.

## Analysis

### Chapter 7

Shay's hair is mentioned several times throughout the story. Shay keeps it at a very distinct length because it reminds her of her mother. Not only that, but it makes Shay



feel like she's someone's daughter. It has a great deal of meaning to her, not only as reminding her of who she is, but also it is a very tangible connection to her mother, who also had long red hair.

Twist is explored as a character. More of his parental traits are shown, which relates to the theme of Family. Twist also embodies another theme which is, Second Chances. This is why he takes in runaway children. He knows what it's like to feel helpless as a child, so he tries to make a difference by giving them a chance to stay. This, Making a Difference, is another theme of the book, one that Twist actually states much later on.

## Chapter 8

This chapter continues to explore Twist as a character. Like the last chapter, it shows Twist being a very parental figure, who believes in making a difference. Twist hates the idea of anyone being discriminated against, and he wants to use his art to protect people from being victimized. Twist shows a little more of his parental side with the way he talks about Cade, clearly acting as a father figure to him.

Art as protest is indicated in Twist's use of it as a graphic reminder, and to draw attention to the problem that he's protesting. This, art as protest, has a very long history, one that most readers may not realize. Much of it began in the Latin American areas of the world, which are primarily Latino. Thus, it is also ironic that Twist is using this as a way to protest the deportation of Latinos.

Twist's artistic prowess is also shown in this chapter to explain where he obtained his wealth. Twist also mentions Cade's computer skills, which again becomes very relevant towards the end of the book. The banner that Twist makes is a sign of resistance. Twist wants to put it up to show everyone that they can stand against racial injustice, even if it is coming from someone as powerful as the district attorney.

## Discussion Question 1

Discuss the character named, Twist. What motivates him to do what he does, both with the kids he finds and takes in, and with his art?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Shay feel particularly strongly about her long red hair?

## Discussion Question 3

In what way does Twist demonstrate the theme of Second Chances in these two chapters?

## Vocabulary

magnitude, malcontent, skyscraper, undertaking, protestation, awry, focus, injustice, felony, burglary, fail-safe



# Chapters 9-10

## Summary

### Chapter 9

Emily runs her own business out of Twist's building. She buys old items that she knows are valuable, and then sells them to antique shops. Emily gives Shay a quick makeover, getting her clothing that's more appropriate for Hollywood, and giving her a chance to shower. The two of them drive down to a local sporting goods store. Shay identifies one of the clerks as a fellow climber, and she manages to negotiate a great deal on the equipment. When they leave, Emily comments how skilled Shay is at working people, which makes Shay feel a little guilty.

### Chapter 10

Shay and Emily return to Twist's building. Twist is there and invites her into his private room, something that nobody else has ever seen. Twist has Shay demonstrate her climbing skills, going from his room to the ground floor. She manages it easily, impressing Twist and the others that gather outside to watch.

Shay meets another boy, Cruz, who seems interested in her. Shay is given the rules and is told that Twist takes care of them, but he can be very strict regarding the rules. Shay is given a job working directly with Twist. She spends the rest of the evening helping Twist, Cruz, and Cade prepare the banner. Shay gets a few hours of sleep before heading out to put the banner up.

## Analysis

### Chapter 9

Emily brings up the theme of Manipulation, which is present throughout the course of the story. In this instance, the theme goes hand-in-hand with Judging Others. When Shay first shows up in the sporting goods store, the clerk is dismissive of her. He doesn't believe she could possibly be a climber because she's dressed in such a feminine way. Shay is able to prove it because of the callouses on her hands as well as all the knowledge that she has. The clerk is clearly attracted to her, and Emily notes that Shay uses this to her advantage to get a better price.

Shay feels guilty about manipulating the clerk, implying that it wasn't intentional. This is backed up by the fact that Shay frequently tries to avoid being direct with people. This gives the reader a clear indication that Shay often finds herself in situations that she is not necessarily in control of, and that she does not like being kept in the dark about things. This will come back to be an integral part of the story later on.



## Chapter 10

This chapter is another example of how Twist acts as a father figure to the children in the hotel/apartment, and how important family is, which is another theme. Twist is portrayed as being very strict, but when Shay is presented with the rules she realizes many of them are just things that a father would require of his own children. Twist doesn't want anyone fighting in the hotel, or doing something that is illegal.

This declaration by Twist to 'behave' is slightly ironic, since they are all planning on breaking the law with their protest. Clearly, the author is showing that many people rationalize the things that they do as being right, even when, technically, they are wrong.

Twist is also trying to help the children by giving them different jobs they can perform, and he even pays them. Twist has already been shown not to be as strict as he makes himself out to be, since he doesn't kick Cade out when he gets in trouble with the police. He might be strict, but he doesn't want to actually abandon anyone and take away their opportunities.

### **Discussion Question 1**

How does the character of Twist embody the theme of Family?

### **Discussion Question 2**

Why did the cashier at the sporting goods store not think that Shay was a climber and what theme does this portray?

### **Discussion Question 3**

What does it tell the reader about Shay's character that she doesn't like hearing that she manipulated the cashier in the store?

### **Vocabulary**

carabiners, callouses, frigid, preclude, wiry, wittingly, philosopher, aberrant, winsome, outgoing, personable, massive, monolith



# Chapters 11-12

## Summary

### Chapter 11

Twist, Shay, Cruz, and Cade all make their way to the building where they're going to unfurl the banner. Twist makes a deal with the Latino owner, who is more than happy to let them sneak inside. Shay and the others set up the banner.

The boys leave and Shay locks the door from the roof, ensuring the banner will stay up for some time. As she's climbing down, news helicopters arrive. Shay and the others quickly escape and return to the hotel. The banner is a huge hit, and is played on all the news channels. In San Francisco, Detective West is watching one of the news reports, and is easily able to recognize Shay because of her red hair.

### Chapter 12

People are starting to recognize Shay because of her telltale long red hair. She switches outfits and does her best to cover her hair, to counter this. She starts looking into other animal activist groups, hoping to find possible leads on Odin.

When she goes to investigate, she finds that there are already Singular agents there. She's able to identify them due to the fact that all of them have prosthetic limbs, just like West. She returns to see Twist, who is working with other artists. They want to take photos of Shay to use in propaganda posters. Shay agrees when Twist promises her 10% of the proceeds, which would end up being around \$10,000.

## Analysis

### Chapter 11

Shay and the others work together for the first time in this chapter, foreshadowing their eventual alliance when they oppose Singular. This chapter continues to show characters using their talents and demonstrating the theme of Making a Difference. Shay's climbing ability, as well as her ability to talk people into doing her bidding, is a strong character trait that is more defined in this chapter, especially in her dealings with the security guard at the building.

Shay is easily identifiable thanks to her distinct hair color. This brings West back into the story when he sees her on the news. West heads down to California to investigate what she's doing down there. By doing this, West becomes involved in the story and ultimately becomes one of Shay's main allies.

### Chapter 12



The theme of Manipulation comes up again at the end of the chapter. Twist wants Shay to stay with him because she's so important to his art. Twist knows that Shay is very independent and doesn't need his protection, not like the other kids in the hotel. Twist later apologizes for this, since he feels responsible for her being in the spotlight at all. He manipulates her by offering her a sum of money that she can't say "No" to. Additionally, the posters are a form of manipulation on their own, using Shay as their poster child.

During this chapter, Shay encounters other Singular agents. She discovers that they all have prosthetic limbs. This ends up being a plot point towards the end of the book. All of Sync's agents seem to be veterans that have had lost limbs replaced with advanced cybernetics. The symbolism is inherent in this trait in that each of them has a lost a part of their true humanity, leading the reader to wonder just how far of this 'false' humanity extends.

Shays motivation in working with Twist is still very evident. She wants to find her brother, and Twist's situation allows her the safety and the income to make that happen. Plus, they all seem to be operating in similar circles. It should be noted that without this motivation Shay's credibility would be called into question, so its inclusion is a decided technique by the author to give her cause to be where she is and to do the things that she feels she must do in order to achieve her goal, which is finding her brother.

## Discussion Question 1

What is it about Shay that makes her memorable to people, and useful to Twist and his group?

## Discussion Question 2

What is the author trying to imply by having all of Singular's people portrayed with prosthetic limbs?

## Discussion Question 3

How does Twist's group embody the idea of the theme of Making a Difference?

## Vocabulary

merciless, scaled, descent, flickered, solemnity, derive, facade, unfurl, manifesto, lunatic, Madonna, tresses



# Chapters 13-14

## Summary

### Chapter 13

Shay spends the next few days working for Twist and trying to keep an eye on animal rights groups in the area. Little does she know, she's being followed by people whenever she goes out. Shay, Cade, Cruz, and Emily go to a beach when they hear about a pod of whales who have beached themselves. Shay hopes that Odin will be there. They try and help save the whales, but nearly all of them end of dying. At the end of the chapter, despondent and worn out, she finally spies Odin.

### Chapter 14

Odin and Shay go under the pier and he catches Shay up on what has happened. He has the dog with him that he's taken from the lab, as well as the USB flash drives. He's only been able to decode one of them so far, but he knows that Singular is performing tests on humans and animals. He gives Shay the flash drives, insisting that he has to work with Rachel and the others to stop Singular.

They're interrupted by the arrival of Cherry, West, and other singularity agents. Odin gives Shay the dog and tries to run away. West catches up to him, but Rachel hits him with a taser. Odin is captured by other agents and Rachel escapes. Shay helps West, whose prosthetic leg has been damaged from the taser. He says that Singular isn't as monstrous as Odin says, and they've helped people like him. Cherry helps West recover, and while they are distracted Shay and her new dog get away with the others from the hotel.

## Analysis

### Chapter 13

Shay is being shadowed by Singular agents, foreshadowing their eventual assault on Twist's hotel. When Shay goes to find Odin, she's accompanied by Cade and the others, showing how close they've grown over a short amount of time. All of the characters show the theme of Making a Difference when they go to help the beached whales. The fact that the author has chosen whales is significant, not only because it is a monumental task to get them back out to sea, but that the whales have beached themselves because they have lost their ability to navigate. They've literally lost their way. This may be a suggestion by the author about one or the other of the groups, though which it might be is anyone's guess. Both Singular and Twist's group are not above breaking the law to further their agendas.

### Chapter 14





This chapter primarily serves to set up the plot for the rest of the book. Odin gives Shay the details on what Singular is up to, and how they are experimenting on humans. He gives Shay the missing flash drives, but only one of them is decoded. This ends up being Shay's main weapon against Singular, since it contains evidence of all their wrongdoings. Shay is given X, the dog, although she doesn't know that he's also living proof of the experiments Singular were performing. Odin is captured, which gives Shay and the others motivation to go after Singular.

West and Shay are briefly reintroduced. Their friendly feelings towards one another are shown when Shay lingers to help West, even though she knows that he's part of Singular. This kindness helps explain why West is willing to ally with them later on. The reader is also given the impression that West doesn't fully understand what Singular is really doing.

Quite literally the dog, named X, is a symbol of the truth. When Odin gives X to Shay he is essentially handing her the truth about what is going on. That the dog's name is only X is also revealing in that X could literally mark the spot, or X could be a representative name for 'ground zero' or patient zero.

West is still relatively unknown as a character, so the reader isn't sure whether or not he's telling the truth. This foreshadows the later conflict that Shay and the others have when West reaches out to them, since they have no idea if he can actually be trusted or not. This is also another example of Manipulation, since Singular is clearly tricking West by making him think they're just helping veterans.

## Discussion Question 1

What actions taken by West indicate that he is unaware of what Singular's real agenda is?

## Discussion Question 2

Discuss the symbolism of X, the dog, and the significance of Odin giving him to Shay.

## Discussion Question 3

What do the beached whales seem to indicate about the two opposing groups?

## Vocabulary

beached, monochromatic, concede, manifested, conciliate, floundered, labored, incredulous, elated, trepidation



# Chapters 15-16

## Summary

### Chapter 15

Emily and the others want to know what happened, but Shay is very vague on the details, not wanting to get Odin in any more trouble. Shay gets a call from Rachel, who pleads with her not to go to the police. Shay convinces everyone to help her hide the dog from Twist.

Shay names the dog X. X only eats and drinks when other people aren't looking. Shay is worried because X is clearly having a hard time just moving around. They can't go to the vet because Odin believes he was tagged. Shay hopes X will get better once he's had a chance to rest and eat more.

Shay spends the next day learning how to paint from Twist. She's later interrupted by Emily, who says X is having a seizure. Shay comes clean to Twist, saying she knows she broke a rule, but asks for his help.

### Chapter 16

Sync, West, Thorne, and Harmon are all gathered together to discuss what happened with Odin. Harmon is trying to get information out of Odin, but he won't give anyone up. They have video footage of Odin meeting with Shay and giving her X. Sync has been looking into Shay and Odin. He reveals to everyone that their mother used to work at the lab, which must have been where Odin got the keycard in the first place.

Sync sends everyone out to try and find more information about the activist group, as well as X. When questioned, he doesn't say why X is important; simply saying that X needs to be recovered for quality control.

## Analysis

### Chapter 15

Shay is given a chance to show her protective nature in this chapter. She doesn't want to involve Cade and the others because she knows Singular is dangerous. In her mind, she's the one that has to take them on because she's directly involved. Shay is also very protective of X; trying to do everything she can to take care of him.

Twist's relationship with Shay continues to grow. While he treats everyone else like a child he's got to protect, he treats Shay more like an equal. Emily even comments that it seems like Twist is grooming Shay to be his apprentice.



The theme of Family shows up in this chapter, again, not only in the way that Shay and Odin act with one another, but also in the way that Twist treats Shay. He sees her worth and her potential and Shay responds to this.

This also demonstrates the theme of Second Chances. Shay has not had too many adults who have attempted to connect with her, or to help her better herself in any way. Shay believes that potentially with Twist, she may have that chance. Though it is doubtful that she realizes it, in many ways she's beginning to view him as a father-figure.

## Chapter 16

This chapter primarily foreshadows the torture that Odin eventually goes through while he's a prisoner of Singular. The other important fact this chapter establishes is the relationship that Shay's mother had with Singular. Sync doesn't say exactly what she was doing at the lab, but he implies that she was an integral part of the team when she worked with Singular.

The connection between Odin and Shay has been made by Singular and Sync is doubly committed to finding Shay. Though Shay and Odin, neither one, know that their mother worked for this group, the fact that Sync knows it also indicates that he believes that their mother may have given them something, or told them something that could potentially compromise everything. His desperation to retrieve the dog (X) is elevated significantly in this chapter.

### Discussion Question 1

What is the significance of the dog's name (X)?

### Discussion Question 2

How is the theme of Family suggested in Shay's ongoing relationship with Twist?

### Discussion Question 3

Why does Odin and Shay's connection to their mother make Sync more determined to find them?

### Vocabulary

abject, ruse, allay, rummage, expanse, forlorn, seizure, hobbled, inexplicable, mangy, noticeable, noxious, semblance



# Chapters 17-18

## Summary

### Chapter 17

Twist takes Shay to a secret shop where one of his contacts, Girard, works as a doctor. Girard starts to treat X. At first he isn't sure what's wrong, so he starts to X-ray the dog. He finds out that X has been given many cybernetic implants, which he suspects are causing the trouble. An angry Twist demands to know what happened, and Shay tells him everything about Odin and discovering X.

She says she's ready to leave for what she did, but Twist says she can stay. Shay sees a sketch lying on Twist's desk. It is of a parrot flying out of its cage. She understands how the bird feels. Shay discovers a hidden port in X's head. She opens the port and realizes that it's a charging port, similar to what a computer uses. Taking a chance, she plugs X in and it seems to restore power to his cybernetics, slowly improving his health.

### Chapter 18

X continues to recover over the next few days. Twist allows Shay and X to stay, telling everyone else that X was hired as his guard dog. During this time, Shay tries to crack some of the flash drives that Odin gave to her. One of them Odin had decoded, but she needs the password set by Odin in order to open the files. She eventually figures it out and has access to them.

Odin has left her a note on those files, saying he couldn't break through the encryption on the rest, and advises her to watch two specific videos. She does, one is of a prisoner being interviewed, and another is Singular operating on a man. Twist comes in and she shares the information with him. Twist is horrified when he sees the videos. He thinks that he recognizes the man being operated on, and it turns out to be an aid worker that went missing a year ago.

## Analysis

### Chapter 17

Twist is very upset that Shay wasn't upfront with him about X. Shay thinks she'll be thrown out for breaking the rules, but Twist's parental side shines through, and he keeps her around. Not only does he let her stay, but he actively starts to help Shay in her fight against Singular. Shay and Twist discover the port hidden in X's cybernetics. They're able to recharge his limbs and bring him back to full strength. In exchange, X is very loyal and protective towards Shay once he's recovered.



The theme of Manipulation is demonstrated in a different way this time. In this chapter it is discovered that X, the dog, has had his body manipulated extensively. His entire biology has been rearranged and sublimated with tech. On a larger scale, then, Singular has begun to manipulate living body, and the author seems to be asking the reader to consider at what point is it unethical?

The drawing of the parrot is symbolic of Twist's desire to free the world from tyranny, to make a difference in the world, and to free the minds and dreams of the kids that he works with.

## Chapter 18

Twist is one of the characters most disgusted by what Odin is doing. Twist eventually goes into more details about why, but it ties into two themes, Making a Difference and Second Chances. Twist is so upset because he hates the way that Singular is abusing people, especially when they discover that they're using prisoners and minorities.

Twist believes that people should all have the chance to do what they want with their lives, they shouldn't be turned into lab rats. Twist also believes that he has the ability to make a difference in their lives, which is why he immediately sides with Shay. Both of these chapters focus upon X as the proof of the extent of the experimentation that Singular is engaged in. Though he doesn't tell Shay, it is evident that Twist understands the importance of the dog, which is why he agrees to help Shay keep the dog alive.

## Discussion Question 1

How does X demonstrate the theme of Manipulation in these chapters?

## Discussion Question 2

Given all of the additional information that has come to light about Singular, discuss what Singular is attempting to accomplish.

## Discussion Question 3

Why is Twist so driven to Make a Difference?

## Vocabulary

severely, shiftless, discord, assess, preliminarily, assumptive, scrutinize, baffled, dawned, synchronous, affixed, port



# Chapters 19-20

## Summary

### Chapter 19

Odin is being held in a Singular facility. He is completely ignored when he is brought in, and is just left to sit in a cell. Someone eventually brings him out and forces him to watch videos of the released lab animals being sent to death, blaming it all on Odin. They start to torture Odin directly, but he still refuses to talk. They eventually relent and Odin feels like he might be able to hold out against them.

### Chapter 20

Singular agents show up at Twist's hotel. They demand Shay and the dog, but none of the kids give her up. The men start forcing their way inside, but Cade, Cruz, and the others start to fight back. One of them manages to call Twist.

The Singular agents are well trained, but overwhelmed by the teens, who start to arm themselves with anything they can get their hands on. Thorne ignores the fighting and goes for the upper levels where Shay is. He attacks her, but she's rescued by X, the dog. The agents are forced to retreat when Twist and more of his men arrive.

## Analysis

### Chapter 19

This chapter provides another example of how far Singular is willing to go to pursue their goals. Singular is merciless in their treatment towards Odin, cruelly torturing him both physically and mentally. Odin gets an opportunity to show off how strong his character really is when he resists the torture. This is made even clearer later on in the book, when Singular reveals that they had specifically molded the tortures around Odin's fears and insecurities.

The theme of Family is briefly touched upon. The author suggests that strong family bonds allow a person to put up with incredible amounts of pain and stress, such as Odin experiences. It is his love for his sister, and belief in the cause that they share, that gives him the strength to resist their torture.

### Chapter 20

The theme of Judging Others is brought up when the Singular agents raid Twist's hotel. The agents immediately write off the children because of their age and appearance. They storm through the hotel, acting like they own the place. This upsets the kids, who ultimately end up fighting back against them. The teens are able to overwhelm the



Singular agents, quickly arming themselves and fighting them off. Not only that, but they're able to get a message off to Twist.

X's abilities are briefly shown off, with his cybernetic implants making it easy for him to take down the Singular agents. He also shows how loyal he is to Shay by defending her. His loyalty is shown several more times throughout the story, most notably in the way that he refuses to leave Shay's side.

## **Discussion Question 1**

What false assumptions do the Singular agents make in regards to the kids at Twist's hotel?

## **Discussion Question 2**

How does Odin's situation example the theme of Family?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Now that the Singular agents know where Twist's hotel is, and that Shay and X are there, what is likely to happen?

## **Vocabulary**

elusive, recuperate, belligerent, surly, rancid, acrid, snarl, willful, guileless, wispy, pillage, reconnaissance



# Chapters 21-22

## Summary

### Chapter 21

Harmon and Sync meet up after the failed raid. Harmon takes responsibility, blaming himself for not having better intel. He wants to go in again, this time with more men and better armor, but Sync says it's pointless. Shay and X will be on the move, and they don't want to draw anymore unwanted attention to themselves. Sync goes back to torturing Odin. Odin stubbornly continues to hold out, giving up some information like Ethan's name, but lying about the important information, like whether or not he was able to decrypt any of the flash drives.

### Chapter 22

Twist gathers everyone in the lobby, praising them for fighting back against Singular. He gathers the main characters in his private chambers for a separate meeting. He and Shay show everyone the tapes that they have seen. After seeing the videos, they think the prisoner was being implanted with the memories of someone else. Twist wants to stop Singular, but he doesn't want to endanger the hotel. They debate what to do, with Emily wanting to hand over the evidence in exchange for West. They believe that of all the members in Singular, West is not aware of what is really going on, and once informed, he would turn against Singular and become their greatest ally.

Twist wants to copy the files first, which Emily thinks is too dangerous. They decide getting in touch with West is the next step, but are still unsure if they want to double cross him or not. Twist, Shay, X, and Cade leave the hotel, with Cruz and Emily staying behind to take care of things and serve as Twist's inside men at the hotel.

## Analysis

### Chapter 21

Harmon follows up on the theme of Judging Others in the last chapter by outright admitting that he made a mistake. He underestimated the children and Twist based on their appearances. As a result, he didn't send in nearly enough men, nor did they have the right equipment. Sync is once again shown to be very loyal to his underlings. Sync isn't angry with Harmon, even though Harmon admits that he has failed.

Odin gets a chance to show off how clever he can be. He knows that he can't keep resisting the torture, so he starts to give Sync and Singular some information. He tries to only give them information that won't lead to Shay. He starts with Ethan, since he's confident that Storm will be on the move, and Storm doesn't have any sort of connection to Shay.





## Chapter 22

The main characters all come together to unite against Singular. This is another example of how loyal the group has become, since Shay is really the only one that has any investment in stopping Singular. It also offers a different perspective on the theme of Family. The group act, in many respects, as a surrogate family for most of the members.

Twist once again shows how protective he is of everyone in the hotel. He wants to move Shay and the others away to avoid drawing more Singular agents in. He ends up leaving Cruz and Emily behind because he still wants to be able to keep in touch with them in case any of them need help. This shows how important family can be.

The theme of Manipulation is brought up again when Cade brings up double crossing West. He wants to use West as a weapon against Singular, which Twist is initially very supportive of. Shay has an issue with this, since West has not shown that he understands or knows what is really going on. She feels protective of him in many ways, and as a result is uncomfortable with them using him in this way. But, as of this point in the novel, she doesn't feel that she can necessarily go against Twist.

### **Discussion Question 1**

How is the theme of Family shown in a different light in Chapter 22?

### **Discussion Question 2**

How does each group (Singular and Twist's group) view the use of manipulation? How do they justify their actions?

### **Discussion Question 3**

What indicates Shay's feelings about West?

### **Vocabulary**

contusion, unsuspecting, frivolous, pinnacle, vulnerable, frail, listless, forlorn, sadistic, ecstatic



# Chapters 23-24

## Summary

### Chapter 23

Twist brings everyone to see an actor friend of his, Sean. Sean gives them access to his house to use as a hideout. Everyone gathering during dinner to once again discuss plans. Cade thinks they should threaten to upload the files online if West doesn't bring them Odin. Twist and Shay agree, figuring that's their best bet. Cade thinks he knows what Singular wants. They want to achieve the Singularity, a merger between man and machine. Effectively, they'd be able to upload their brains into machines to become immortal.

### Chapter 24

Twist instructs Cade to watch Shay when she goes to deliver her message. They go to a crowded mall to use the Wi-Fi and to blend in. Cade makes a special tag for X, allowing him to pass as a guide dog in training. Shay gets in touch with West, saying she has the files and she wants her brother back.

West insists that Odin is safe and that he voluntarily went with Singular in exchange for legal immunity. Shay doesn't think that's true, but she believes that West believes it. West doesn't know anything about the attack on the hotel, and he's just as surprised when Shay sends him one of the files from the flash drives. Shay tells West that he and Singular have 24 hours to release Odin, otherwise she'll start leaking files online.

## Analysis

### Chapter 23

This chapter continues the discussion from the last chapter, with the characters debating whether or not they should upload the files. Shay shows her connection to Odin again, making it clear that all she cares about is getting her brother back, even if it means working with Singular. The other thing this chapter does is establish exactly what Singular wants, and the meaning of their name. Singular refers to Singularity, the idea of merging man and machine to become immortal. This helps to explain the exact nature of their experiments, which has only been speculated on before.

Interestingly enough, this offers another perspective on the theme of Manipulation. Literally, this time, the manipulation that is taking place is manipulating man's genetic makeup and his biology. The underlying question that is suggested by this discovery about Singular is that mankind has the imperative to judge, not whether they could do something, but rather if they should do it.



## Chapter 24

This chapter makes it clear that West doesn't know the full extent of what Singular is up to, even though he's working alongside them. This is just another example of how effective Singular is at manipulating people, which once again touches on the theme of Manipulation, and continues it from the earlier chapter. Shay providing evidence to West helps to bring him over to their side. From this point on, West starts acting as an inside agent, as well as a middle man between Shay's group and Singular.

What Shay had hoped for in regards to West has happened, and she's glad that they are no longer using him without his knowledge. He is fully involved and dedicated to putting an end to Singular's plans.

### **Discussion Question 1**

In Chapter 24, how is the theme of Manipulation presented in a different light?

### **Discussion Question 2**

Considering what it is that Singular wants to accomplish, what are the debates for and against this type of biological manipulation?

### **Discussion Question 3**

Throughout the entire novel, what has been Shay's driving motivation for all that she does, and why?

### **Vocabulary**

zeal, pivotal, judicious, corpulent, stoic, prudent, placate, taciturn, happenstance, novice



# Chapters 25-26

## Summary

### Chapter 25

Harmon and Synch infiltrate and work with the FBI, planning a raid on the hotel where the remaining Storm members are. Rachel sees the agents right before they enter, and she manages to escape while Ethan and the others are caught. Harmon switches out the flash drives with a series of fake ones provided by Sync. The FBI takes the fake flash drives, which are filled with legal research documents that will make it look as if Singular is only engaged in above board operations and research.

### Chapter 26

Twist and the others discuss how they're going to upload the files. Twist has a plan involving the Hollywood sign, which he intends to tell them about later. He also tells them that he got in touch with an LAPD contact, who had no idea about the raid on the hotel.

West is starting to doubt Singular. He tells Sync about his meeting, noting that Sync didn't deny anything about Odin. Later that evening, West breaks into the director's headquarters, copying files from his computer. He sorts through the files and discovers a Singular facility about two hours away where he guesses Odin is being held.

## Analysis

### Chapter 25

Singular continues to show the theme of Manipulation by using the FBI. They use the FBI go after Storm. This backs up their claims back in the beginning of the book that they were raided by a bunch of criminals who made up the videos against them. Having a legitimate group like the FBI pursue them just solidifies their claim. To go along with this, Harmon uses the opportunity to switch out the flash drives. This makes it seem like Singular isn't hiding anything because they were so willing to hand over the stolen evidence to the FBI.

### Chapter 26

West is clearly convinced by the evidence that Shay has previously given him. He knows that Singular is a dangerous group, but he's still willing to put his life on the line to find more evidence against Singular. When he breaks into the director's office, he's able to find the location of a secret Singular facility, which is where Odin is being held prisoner. This chapter also foreshadows Twist's plan with the Hollywood sign, which he explains in more detail throughout the next chapters.



The symbolism of the flashdrive surfaces again in this chapter. It is clearly the one thing that will offer proof of Singular's activities, but a new wrinkle has been offered now. There is another flashdrive, a fake one. And this further represents the depth and lengths to which Singular will go to protect its assets. Information, or even disinformation, is something to be used as a weapon and a commodity. They have carefully set the stage in this chapter to insulate themselves even if the information on the original drive is leaked to the press. It will now just look like a terrorist act, and most likely won't even be taken seriously now. This increases the stakes for both Shay, Odin and Twist.

## **Discussion Question 1**

What is Singular's plan in regards to the information that Shay and Twist took?

## **Discussion Question 2**

How does Singular, in Chapter 25, exemplify the theme of Manipulation?

## **Discussion Question 3**

How has Detective West's character evolved and changed from the beginning of the novel, thus far?

## **Vocabulary**

corrugated, enduring, bestial, stealth, guttural, summit, brutal, pacify, stamina, infamy, purloin, gaiety



# Chapters 27-28

## Summary

### Chapter 27

Twist begins to put his plan into effect. He pretends to be part of a film crew, which will give the group access to the Hollywood sign. Shay teaches Cruz how to climb, since he'll be joining her on the Hollywood sign. Twist and Cade handle the electronic side of things, with Twist assuring Shay that they'll be able to expose Singular if they don't return Odin.

### Chapter 28

Twist explains the plan, which involves climbing up onto the Hollywood sign and lighting it up with the address of their website. While this is going on, West is camping out at the Singular facility. He sees armed men bringing a prisoner into the facility, cluing him in to the sinister side of Singular.

Singular sends a fake message to Shay, saying that Odin has been freed after a brief investigation and the rest of Storm have been arrested. They go on to say that the files Shay has were made up by Storm, and releasing them online will just get her sued.

West gets in touch with Shay shortly afterwards, telling her that the message Singular sent was fake and filled with lies. He wants to make plans to meet with Shay. She's hesitant at first, but decides that West can be trusted. She asks West why he's helping her, and he admits he feels responsible for Shay being noticed in the first place, and he can't stand what Singular is doing.

## Analysis

### Chapter 27

This chapter is one of the shorter chapters in the book, but it is critical in that it sets up the credibility for what Shay and the others are going to attempt to pull off. This is another example of how close the group has gotten, and demonstrates the theme of Family.

Likewise, everyone is willing to support Twist's dangerous plan, because they want to help Shay. This ties into the theme of Second Chances. All of teens at the hotel know what it's like to feel helpless, which is how they have ended up at the hotel in the first place. None of them like the idea of Odin being imprisoned and not having a chance to live his life.

### Chapter 28



This chapter continues the theme of Manipulation, with Singular trying to fabricate more evidence to bend Shay to their will. Thanks to West, Shay doesn't fall for their trap. The rest of this chapter is primarily about setting up events for the finale. West discovers the facility and sees that it is, in fact, a prison. Twist lays out the plan for the Hollywood sign, just in case Singular doesn't agree to their demands.

The chapter does provide a little more character insight into Twist. He talks about how important the Hollywood sign is, because it's the first thing that people see when they arrive. He's always wanted to put a message up on it; he just never had anything that important until now. He also apologizes because he feels like he manipulated Shay earlier, since he was essentially using her to further his own agenda. He doesn't want to be that kind of person, and he wants Shay to know that.

The Hollywood sign, aside from being part of their overall call to action and attention, is also an important symbol. It is the first thing that people see when they enter the area, and it is also representative of a hope for a better life. Many who come to Hollywood come to pursue an acting career or a career in showbusiness. It represents a dream. Though none of these characters tend to have the desire toward that end, all of them have dreams and live on the fringes of society. They feel as if they have been rejected by society and that with this last act they will prove themselves useful and needed by society.

## Discussion Question 1

Discuss the importance of the Hollywood sign, both as it pertains to Twist's plan, and its symbolic significance.

## Discussion Question 2

Why is Twist just now apologizing to Shay for manipulating her earlier?

## Discussion Question 3

What has changed Detective West's mind in regards to Twist and Shay?

## Vocabulary

aggressive, cynical, recuperate, sociable, formalities, miserly, withered, capricious, redolent



# Chapters 29-31

## Summary

### Chapter 29

Shay, Cade, and Cruz set off towards the Hollywood sign. They start putting up their website address, Mindkill.net as a large banner over the Hollywood sign, while Cade tries to convince the technicians working on the sign that they have permits. The excuse buys them some time, but they're soon being threatened with police action. They know the police won't be able to reach them in time and finish setting up the sign, displaying their website where the files are uploaded. They quickly climb down and escape into Twist's car.

### Chapter 30

Shay and the others are celebrating their victory over Singular. News footage of Shay is being displayed again. She and Twist worry they've become too public a figure. At Singular, a panicked Harmon calls Sync to tell him what happened. It's decided that Sync should give a statement to the press. Sync says that the videos were faked, made by Storm.

He goes on to show off several veterans with advanced prosthetic limbs. He says that this is what Singular has been working on, winning over the approval of the press. Singular writes a note to Shay, informing her they don't have Odin. They believe he's with Rachel, who escaped when everyone else was arrested. They do have some of Odin's possessions, which Shay can claim.

West gets back to Shay, informing her that the message from Singular is just a trap to lure Shay. He knows where Odin is being held and will help get him back. He also warns them that Singular is now after Twist, as well as Shay.

### Chapter 31

West and Shay go back and forth with their communications. Shay responds to the fake messages, saying they're looking into them, and if they find that Singular is lying, they'll release more videos. She coordinates with West to go and rescue Odin.

West convinces Singular that he's going up north to try and find Rachel. West discovers that someone reported seeing Twist in Malibu. West warns Shay that there are agents coming to get them. Twist creates a diversion, calling the fire department and claiming that there has been an explosion in the neighborhood.





## Analysis

### Chapter 29

Cade chose the website name because it was not only something that would get people curious, but also because it was a way of defying Singular. By choosing that address, they were saying they weren't buying into Singular's lies, and they knew all about the sick experiments they were performing on other humans.

### Chapter 30

The theme of Manipulation and Judging Others is shown by Singular when Sync has to give his press conference. Sync uses his veterans as a way of deflecting the blame. Nobody wants to believe that a group helping veterans replace their limbs could be evil. For Sync, this is also a way of countering the message from Mindkill. They're showing off that not only can they control the press, but that their agents are physically superior. This leaves a lasting impact, since later Shay comments they can't outrun the agents thanks to their superior cybernetic limbs.

Shay becomes more famous thanks to footage identifying her as the same person who put up the banner. She becomes the Girl on the Wire, an inspirational figure for everyone in Hollywood. Through Shay, they see a larger than life figure that cannot be stopped, and is willing to fight for the common people. Unfortunately, this makes things harder for Shay, who is trying to oppose Singular from the shadows. In many ways her desire to make a difference (one of the themes) is severely hampered by her notoriety, making it more difficult for her to continue to make political statements in spectacular ways.

### Chapter 31

The theme of Manipulation continues, with Shay and West tricking Singular into believing the messages between the two of them are genuine, while they secretly communicate under West's hidden account. West is able to get a message to Twist and Shay, giving them the chance to escape the Singular agents going after them.

## Discussion Question 1

How has Shay's involvement with Twist had unintended consequences for her?

## Discussion Question 2

Why would Twist's group decide to call their website Mindkill?



## Discussion Question 3

Track the various forms of manipulation presented in this novel.

## Vocabulary

uncultured, feisty, pivotal, cunning, defraud, furtively, composed, deft, pensive, wary



# Chapters 32-34

## Summary

### Chapter 32

Twist and Shay manage to slip out once the firefighters and ambulances show up. However, they don't make a clean getaway. Some of Singular's vehicles start to trail them. Twist is able to shake them, using his knowledge of LA's back roads. Twist and Shay get in touch with Cade and Cruz, arranging for a meeting at an airport so they can regroup and try once again to get Odin.

### Chapter 33

Twist and the others travel to Sacramento, where the prison is located. They meet up with Detective West, after ensuring that he isn't with any Singular agents. West gives them a rundown of the facility, and how difficult it will be to break in. They make a plan to steal a truck from a nearby refueling station, then using the gas inside to start a fire and create a diversion.

### Chapter 34

Twist and the others decide against starting a fire, figuring it will be too risky. They instead ambush one of the supply trucks heading towards the facility. They tie up the crew and take their badges.

West guides them into the facility, where they find not only Odin, but a group of North Koreans that are also being experimented on. Shay goes to rescue Odin, but he pleads with them to rescue one of the Korean girls in the cell next to him. While the rescue is going on, West gets into a gunfight.

West is injured, but he insists that they leave him behind. He holds the guards off while they escape. Thorne arrives, taking West's gun and killing him point blank.

## Analysis

### Chapter 32

This chapter gives Twist the opportunity to show off his knowledge of LA. Not much is known about Twist's history, except that he came to Hollywood at a young age and didn't have any parents. This chapter makes it clear that Twist has been around for a while, and that the city is very important to him. This helps to explain some of his previous actions, such as why he felt so strongly about opposing the district attorney.



This also explains his desire to offer second chances (one of the themes) to the street kids that he finds. It is apparent that someone, at some time in his past, also gave him the benefit of the doubt and a second chance. The author is taking this time to illustrate the benefits that second chances offer, not only the person getting the second chance, but for those who offer them.

This also ties in to the theme of Making a Difference. While Twist ostensibly makes a difference by taking on various political and social campaigns, he more importantly makes a difference in the lives of the street kids that he recruits and nurtures.

### Chapter 33

This chapter gives the resistance group a chance to officially meet up with West, and to come up with a plan for getting into the facility. West shows that he's trustworthy by showing up alone, convincing Twist and the others that they can work with him. West also gives the group their first real insight into how secure Singular buildings are, and just how dangerous their security can be.

There are very few themes initiated within this chapter, as its real purpose is to raise the stakes and create suspense. However, this is a chance for some character development, mainly for West, but also to offer a contrast between Twist and West. Both are self made men, both care for Shay, and yet, both are for the most part on the opposite side of the law.

### Chapter 34

Shay and Odin are finally reunited. Odin's caring side shines through when he insists that they rescue the Korean prisoner first, even after all the torture that Odin has been through. This is another example of everyone deserving a chance. Odin can't stand the thought of being given his freedom when there were other prisoners being denied that same right, which is why he refuses to leave without the prisoner.

The group suffers their first real loss when they're leaving the facility. West forces them to leave without him. Up until now, Singular has only been trying to capture the characters. With West, there's no reason to keep him alive, so Thorne executes him on the spot. With his death the stakes are raised yet again and it is clear that Singular has no problem killing anyone at this point.

## Discussion Question 1

Compare and contrast Twist to West.

## Discussion Question 2

How has Twist made a difference in his life?



## Discussion Question 3

What most likely is Twist's story and background, and what about that has formed his choices as an adult?

## Vocabulary

futile, fervid, adamant, derivative, contrite, linchpin, glimpse, forlorn, noxious, relegate, reprobate, forbearance, hysteria



# Chapter 35

## Summary

### Chapter 35

Shay and the survivors split up and escape. Shay and X, the dog, take West's jeep. Police start to show up at the facility, and everyone becomes separated in the chaos. At the lab, Sync, Thorne, and Harmon are cleaning everything up, hiding the section of the lab where their experiments took place. They have their PR teams in place, blaming the whole thing on West leading an animal rights group into the lab.

Shay stops off at a hotel, cutting and dyeing her hair. She reconnects with everyone in Reno. Twist tells her West didn't make it and Shay is devastated, writing a final message to West's email account, saying he was a hero and she always trusted him. Shay and the others want to get help for the Korean girl they rescued, and they're more determined than ever to bring Singular down.

## Analysis

### Chapter 35

The theme of Manipulation is shown one final time, with Sync and the others making themselves look like the victims, despite the fact that they had kidnapped Odin and the other prisoners. Not only are they hiding their illegal experiments, but they're making West look like a villain, something that hurts Shay when she discovers what they are up to.

Shay is forced to cut and dye her hair so she can evade Singular agents. This is hard for her to do, because of how significant her hair is to her. It has been a physical tie and memory of her mother. By cutting her hair she is cutting her ties to her mother, and is separating her own identity from that of her mother.

Shay also takes the time to leave a final message for West, saying that she always trusted him and viewed him as a hero. Shay is clearly devastated and angry with the loss of West, which explains the title of the next book in the series, *Outrage*. Shay writes the email to West, after his death, because she needed to tell him what she had never been able to tell him while he was alive. The letter, itself, represents her acknowledgment of the fact that she looked up to him as a daughter would a father, and that she would never allow his memory to be gone for long. This also sets up her motivation and resolve for continuing the fight in the next book in the series.



## **Discussion Question 1**

Discuss the symbolic nature of Shay cutting and dyeing her hair.

## **Discussion Question 2**

How is West's death particularly hard on Shay?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What are some of the problems that are resolved in this novel, and what are some of the issues that are not completely dealt with?

## **Vocabulary**

hapless, edict, conflagration, resigned, trembling, hesitancy, florid, connive, expunge, predilection



# Characters

## Shay

Shay is a teen girl who has lost her father and mother, and now her brother. She finds herself alone, on the wrong side of the law most of the time. Her ability for extreme sports, coupled with her tech savvy makes her a formidable talent and is one that has helped her survive on the streets on her own for a while.

Her brother Odin is the last person in her family still living and she feels compelled to be with him and to make sure that he is safe. She admires her brother for his dedication to trying to make a difference in the world, something that she does not really share with him. Shay's motivations and goals are straightforward and simple. She wants to keep her family together and safe. This extends to Twist and West and the others after she meets and befriends them all.

Shay's interaction with Twist and West are very revealing in that she trusts them both. In some respects they have both taken a surrogate father figure role in her life. This is why she is so devastated when they are hurt or injured.

At the beginning of the novel, all Shay wants is to find her brother and reclaim some semblance of a family. She does achieve this, but not in the way that she thought she would. Socially, and emotionally, Shay develops over the novel to be less egocentric, and more group oriented, something that she has never been for most of her life. It is a result of this shift in her thinking that allows her to finally see a future for herself that doesn't involve a life of crime.

## Odin

Odin is Shay's brother. He leaves to join an activist group whom he believes is opposing animal testing. In reality, the group he's with has an agenda that runs deeper than animal activism, to techno-terrorism and illegal testing on humans.

Odin is shown to have a kind and caring nature, as evidenced by his desire to take a couple of the animals with them when they break into the facility at the beginning of the book. The dog that he takes, which they name X, becomes a primary piece of evidence against Singular.

Odin is also shown to be the type of person that acts with his heart and doesn't always think things through. This is evident in the way he treats Rachel after they are attacked at the facility. However, it is this tenacity that also allows him to hold out under torture when Singular holds him in their secret facility.





## Cade

Cade is one of the first people that Shay meets when she joins Twist's group of teen misfits. He is shown to be opportunistic and reckless with others. Later, due to Shay's influence, he begins to see that there may be other ways of viewing people.

## Twist

Twist is an old man in his late fifties. He is shown to be a very wealthy man, but does not use his wealth to live in luxury. Instead, he uses it to combat problems and issues that he finds in the world. He becomes a type of surrogate for not only Shay, but for the rest of the kids at the hotel that he runs for outcasts like Shay.

Twist is not above bending the law on more than one occasion. This is evident in his first encounter with Shay when he steps in and has his 'goons' beat up the guys that are tailing Shay. He also breaks the law by sending Shay up on the building to hang the banner. His continual breaking and entering becomes a habit toward the end of the novel.

## West

Detective West meets Shay and instead of seeing a streetwise punk, he sees a kid that truly needs someone to give her a break. He can see that she doesn't necessarily like breaking the law or doing what she has done in the past, and this allows him to establish a connection with her.

West later realizes that everything that he has been led to believe about Singular is false. He has also been part of the test program and has prosthetic legs as a result of it. He learns the truth and helps Shay and Twist to expose Singular.

## Sync

Sync is a highly trained mercenary that works for Singular. He is the director of security for Singular and is not above causing harm or killing people who oppose or threaten Singular.

Sync is very military in his thinking, and this extends, in particular to those who work under him. He is very custodial of his men and can be shown being kindly to them even after they have failed at a mission. Harmon, for example, had to report that he'd miscalculated the abilities of the kids holed up at Twist's hotel. Instead of being angry with him, Sync simply asks him to regroup.



## Emily

Emily is one of the girls at the hotel that befriends Shay. She is one of the first friends that Shay has had in a long time. Emily is into fashion and makeup and takes an interest in bring this out in Shay.

## Rachel

Rachel is with Odin when they break into the facility. She is part of a group called Storm, whose intention was to disrupt and cause chaos to Singular's facilities. Odin becomes involved, in large part, due to his feelings for Rachel.

## Cruz

Cruz is a user and an abuser of just about everyone and everything around him. He is angry, destructive, and openly admits to Rachel, and the Storm group, that he is just using Odin and when he becomes a liability he will have no problem either killing Odin, or offering him up to the cops.

## Harmon

Harmon is one of the men that works with Sync. He is usually one of the main division leaders in the field.

## Cherry

Cherry is Detective West's partner. He is with West when they first meet Shay. Cherry, unfortunately, doesn't believe West when West tells him what Singular is really up to.

## Ethan

Ethan is one of the kids from Twist's hotel. He is more than half in love with Shay, but she doesn't really notice him. He is always trying to get her attention.

## Sean

Sean is an actor friend of Twist's who gives the 'family' a place to hideout after Singular raids the hotel looking for Shay, the flashdrive, and X the dog.



# Symbols and Symbolism

## Cages

The author uses the image of a cage to suggest that everyone in some way finds themselves in a cage and that they should not only be aware of it when it happens, but should also find a way to break free of it. Throughout the book there are references to cages. Literally, many of the animals that are experimented on are held in cages, and they are freed from these cages by Storm and later Twist and his kids.

## Flashdrive

The flashdrive represents the physical truth about what is happening in Singular. When Harmon switches out the drives for fake drives, he is in essence, hiding the truth.

## West's Prosthetic Leg

West's prosthetic leg symbolizes a second chance for him, but it later comes to symbolize the evil of Singular. It ties him to Singular and makes him, and others like him, grateful for the help. As a result they become dedicated workers for Singular, and do not question orders.

## Whales on Beach

The whales that beach themselves represent the task that the kids face and how hopeless it seems. They are all trying to fight something so huge that they are a bit like the whales stranded on the beach.

## X the Dog

The author uses the dog as a cautionary tale against the interference of man on nature's design. X the dog is the direct result of manipulation of the physical biological body.

## Shay's Hair

To Shay, her hair represents her only tie to her mother, who had the same type of hair. Shay has very long, very wild and wavy red hair. It becomes a defining characteristic which is identifiable when she begins doing Twist's bidding.



## Political Banner

The banner that Shay places on the skyscraper represents the ordinary person striking out against the powerful corporate types that prey on the less fortunate.

## Cade's Stone

The good luck stone Cade gives Shay as she is getting ready to put up the banner, symbolizes how much Cade cares about her.

## Twist's Sketch

Twist's sketch of a parrot in a cage with its wings stretching free represents freedom and directly relates to X. X was trapped in a cage, but was freed by Odin. It could also apply to Twist and Shay, as both characters refused to be caged or silenced by Singular. Twist draws this for Shay while they are waiting for X to be done getting x-rayed.

## Hollywood Sign

Twist implies the grandeur of the Hollywood sign represents hope for anyone that is just arriving. Both Twist and Shay mention the Hollywood sign multiple times, even before they incorporate it into their plan. Both remarked that it was the first thing that they saw when they arrived.

## Mindkill

Cade settles on the name Mindkill as a website for hosting the stolen files, with the name meaning to symbolize resistance, signaling to Singular that they're aware of the true nature behind the seemingly innocent lab.

## Singular (the name)

Singular chose their name to symbolize immortality, which is what they are trying to achieve. The resistance group eventually figures out that Singular is named after Singularity.

## Shay's Final Message to West

After finding out that West is dead, Shay leaves a final message on the private account they used to speak to one another. This is her way of saying goodbye and expressing how much West meant to her, as well as apologizing for appearing untrusting of him.

# Settings

## Hollywood Outskirts

The Hollywood Outskirts is where Shay first lives when she arrives in Hollywood. She stays there because she has no money and she also wants to stay as hidden as possible. This is also symbolic in some respects as she also feels as if she is on the outside of society.

## Twist's Hotel

Twist has established a hotel for street kids. There are two dozen teens that live there, all under Twist's protection. This hotel is a staging point for most of the action that takes place.

## Skyscraper

Shay works for Twist and helps to place a banner on top of one of the highest towers in the city. This also establishes her nickname, Girl on a Wire.

## Singular

Singular has a facility that offers a very legitimate face to the world, but in underground facilities, is continuing with less ethical experiments. This is where the USB drives were, and where Odin first breaks in and frees X.

## Sacramento Facility

Singular has a secret facility in Sacramento where they interrogate and torture prisoners. This is where they move Odin. It is also where they complete some of their riskier and more dangerous experiments on human beings.



# Themes and Motifs

## The importance of parental influence

The author demonstrates throughout the novel that parental presence and influence - even if not by a biological parent - makes a dramatic difference in a child's life.

The importance of family is explored in a different way through Shay and Odin. The reason that Shay and Odin are so close to one another is because they lost their parents at a young age. Shay and Odin weren't lucky enough to wind up in foster families that cared for them. The one that Shay was with didn't care about providing care. For Shay's foster family, it was just a way to get money from the state so they could pursue their own goals. Odin got involved in his activist group because he didn't have anyone looking after him. Shay was able to leave for the same reasons. This shows how important parents are in a family dynamic, and what happens when they aren't present.

The theme is demonstrated through the character of Twist as well. Twist isn't a blood relative to any of the kids that he takes in, but he acts as a father figure for them all. He gives runaways a place to live and rules to follow. The characters describe him as strict, but they make it clear that it's in a fatherly sense, not an abusive one.

His rules are things like not fighting or bringing in weapons. Early on he says that he only takes in kids because they're useful. This is proven to just be bluster later on, when Shay finds out that there have been multiple kids without jobs that Twist never kicked out. Everyone that stays with Twist is well taken care of, and he proves how important it is to have a father figure.

## Don't judge someone by their appearance

A clear message throughout *Uncaged* is that a person's appearance doesn't necessarily accurately represent their abilities, intelligence, or place in society.

When she first arrives in L.A., everyone mistakes Shay as just being a homeless delinquent. She was dirty from traveling by bus and on foot for several days, camping in the wild, and not having access to a shower. Nobody would think that in just a few short days she would become the legendary Girl on a Wire. Being invisible because she's dirty is just what she wants early on and she uses this tendency by others to judge people to remain hidden and safe.

The theme is demonstrated through Twist's character as well. On initial appearances, Twist looks like he's helpless because of his older age and the fact that he walks with a cane. Singular underestimates Twist when they send their agents to get X. Despite being highly trained professionals, the agents are stopped by Twist's children.



Singular underestimates Shay, Odin, and Storm as well just because of their age. Even when they treat Storm more seriously towards the end of the book, Rachel still manages to escape. Odin manages to crack their security, and Shay is able to upload their files and break into their prison.

Singular themselves also demonstrate this theme. When Singular is exposed by Shay and the others, they hold a press conference to denounce the videos showing them performing illegal experiments. They deflect blame by showing off the veterans they have helped by providing prosthetic limbs. The media is charmed by the performance, believing Singular must be innocent, despite all the terrible experiments they've performed.

## Manipulation

Although manipulation appears in many forms throughout *Uncaged*, the author primarily shows that using manipulation to better oneself at the expense of others results usually in feelings of guilt.

This theme is initially demonstrated during the first raid on the Singular facility. When Ethan and Rachel are talking, Rachel makes it clear that she's only in a relationship with Odin because of his computer abilities. Ethan supports the relationship because he wants to use Odin to further Storm's interests. Ethan manipulates the other members of the group as well, which is how he gets them to abandon Aubrey after she's shot.

The theme is explored again with Shay. When Shay is going to get climbing gear, Emily gives her the chance to clean herself up and pick out a new outfit. She ends up giving Shay a complete makeover. Shay uses this to her advantage when she runs into a clerk at the sporting goods store. She's able to get a discounted price for all their equipment. Emily even remarks how impressed she was with the way that Shay was able to work over the clerk. Shay insists it was not intentional and feels a bit guilty about it.

The theme is demonstrated again through the character of Twist. Twist originally wants Shay to help him because of his political agenda. He uses Shay's climbing abilities to put up his banner, even though it's dangerous. When she becomes famous, he uses her in more propaganda pieces.

Twist later admits that he feels guilty for bringing Shay into the public light, just for his own interests. Shay originally had no interest in his agenda, but Twist was able to manipulate her with a place to live and the promise of money, which she needed if she was going to find Odin.

## Second Chances

The author utilizes three characters - Twist, Sunc, and Odin - to demonstrate different motivations for giving second chances throughout *Uncaged*. Twist brings in children off



the street because he believes they should have a fair shot in life. He not only gives them a place to live, but he helps them find jobs and explore their talents.

Twist has a very gruff exterior, but he's always willing to go above and beyond to ensure the children in his care get a fair shot in life, which is why he first saves Shay in the beginning of the book.

In his own twisted way, Sync demonstrates this theme as well. Many of the characters working under Sync comment how professional he is, but also how much he cares. Sync is constantly rewarding anyone who works with him, giving them bonuses when they perform well.

Even a lowly guard like Darrell received praise and protection from Sync. Sync is especially sympathetic towards fellow war veterans. Everyone he employs is a veteran who has benefited from Singular's prosthetic experiments.

The theme is also demonstrated through Odin. The whole reason that Odin delivered the files to Shay was because he wanted the Singular prisoners to be free. Even after being tortured, Odin refuses to leave the Singular prison before Shay and the others rescue the Korean prisoner in the next cell.

Even when it comes to animals, Odin believes they should be free to pursue their own lives, which is why he rescues X from the facility, even though it put him at risk.

## Making a Difference

Towards the end of the book, Shay questions why Twist has been so supportive of everything they've been doing. Part of it is because he feels guilty for manipulating Shay and putting her in the public light. When pressed further, he admits that he believes if people are capable of making a difference, they should. This explains why Twist was so adamant in helping Shay out after seeing the Singular files, because he truly believes that they can make a difference and stop an evil corporation.

Twist demonstrates this theme earlier in the book with his art career. At first, it seems like Twist is a selfish character that just cares about making money and becoming famous. When Twist strikes out against the District Attorney, however, he's doing it because he genuinely believes that she's wrong for targeting Latinos.

Twist further proves this wasn't just him being selfish when he talks about the Hollywood Sign. He's always had plans to deliver a message from it; he just hasn't been able to find an important enough cause. This cements the idea that his art is all about the message, and not the profit.

The theme is demonstrated through the character of Odin as well. While Shay has many talents, she doesn't use them to make a difference, not until she's inspired towards the end of the book. She just wants to help Odin.





Odin is different because from the moment he's introduced, he's using his talents not for himself, but to make a difference. Odin joined Storm solely because he wanted to use his hacking talents to strike against Singular and their inhumane experiments. After they lose Odin, Storm is directionless because nobody else cared about making a difference like Odin.

# Styles

## Point of View

This novel is told from third person, omniscient point of view. Each chapter features the critical viewpoint of a character, even secondary characters at some points. From this, the reader is able to fully view the unfolding events from angles and perspectives that each character, by themselves, would not be able to, and this allows the reader's feeling of suspense to be heightened. Knowing what the characters do not know offers insight into the characters, particularly Shay, the protagonist, because the reader can fully experience the adventure with her, but at the same time be worried for her and her fate.

## Language and Meaning

The language used is modern and utilizes slang and hacker terms throughout the novel. Context clues are provided so that even if the reader does not have a background in technology or street terms, their meanings are evident enough.

## Structure

The structure is linear in nature, with a few flashbacks. It progresses through 35 chapters, and leaves a cliffhanger at the end which will be picked up in the following books in the series.



## Quotes

A hundred or more pink-faced, humanlike rhesus monkeys were isolated in separate Plexiglas cages. The tops of their skulls had been cut away and replaced with glass or plastic caps, and computer modules were strapped to the animals' backs."

-- Narrator (chapter 1 paragraph 55)

**Importance:** This is one of the first insights into the sinister nature behind Singular, the main antagonistic force in the book.

The Eugene lab was critical to the interface research. They had other labs, in other countries, where they could do the kind of research that would put them in jail in the United States. But those countries didn't have the necessary intellectual or technical resources. They needed Eugene and the other secret facilities in America, but if the public learned about what they were doing there..."

-- Odin (chapter 3 paragraph 62)

**Importance:** This is one of the first signs that the labs were not only up to something malicious, but it hints at them being part of something much bigger, with multiple labs existing.

Four days earlier, she'd been in Eugene, with no idea of going to Los Angeles. Three weeks before that, her brother Odin had fled their hometown and headed south, down the coast. She'd come to find him."

-- Narrator (chapter 5 paragraph 16)

**Importance:** Upon introduction, Shay was a mysterious character that seemed to have no connection to the rest of the events in the book. This passage explains exactly what she is doing in Hollywood.

He'd always been the sensitive one, the naive one, the one who didn't fight back when he was bullied at school; Odin, who wouldn't hurt a fly. She'd been the one to take care of business, who carried a secret knife, who went head to head with social workers and lousy foster parents. A year younger, she'd filled in for their missing parents, taking care of her sweet, mildly autistic brother."

-- Narrator (chapter 5 paragraph 42)

**Importance:** The reader is given a little more insight into the differences between Shay and Odin, as well as their relationship and upbringing.

The Cat in the Hat looked at her, suddenly serious, and in his expression, Shay felt something almost ... parental."

-- Narrator (chapter 10 paragraph 13)

**Importance:** Twist has mostly been shown as a self-serving character, but this short passage shows that he does truly care about the children staying in his hotel.



Shay had spent a good part of her life being shuffled between temporary parents who didn't much care about her. The sudden attention felt strange. And not bad.

-- Narrator (chapter 12 paragraph 6)

**Importance:** With the exception of her brother, Shay has always been a loner. After only being at Twist's for a day, she's starting to change her views on being in the spotlight around other people.

I have a neurobiological disorder characterized by poor social skills, odd speech patterns, inflexible obsessions, and sensory sensitivity to odors and high-pitched sounds," he said, starting to flail his arms at her. "Stop! You're right, I'm sorry." If she didn't stop pushing, he might run off again."

-- Odin/Shay (chapter 14 paragraph 27)

**Importance:** Odin hasn't been explored much as a character, and this helps to give readers an insight into why he acts the way he does. It also shows some of his insecurities, which Singular tries to exploit after he is captured.

Sync interrupted. 'Wait, wait, wait ... These are Kathleen Carter's kids?' 'You knew her?' West asked. 'Knew her? Jesus, she was there at the beginning.'"

-- Sync/West (chapter 16 paragraph 59)

**Importance:** This is the first time that Shay's parents are discussed in any detail, and it's revealed that her mother used to have dealing with Singularity and their experiments.

A half-dozen X-rays of the dog's head and body hung on a viewing panel for Twist and Shay to see for themselves. On the back of the eyeball, the image clearly showed a clump of tiny, complex electronic chips, a small black disk the size of three stacked quarters, and a web of wires threading into the animal's brain. More wires led out of his neck further into his body, parallel to his spine, until they actually entered the spinal column just above the dog's back legs. And those two legs themselves—they weren't bone, they were metal, with what appeared to be a miniaturized computer control complex, half the size of an iPhone, buried in the body cavity."

-- Narrator (chapter 17 paragraph 72)

**Importance:** The characters finally get a chance to learn what kind of experiments Singular was performing on X.

And they began pouring cold water over the towel. The water soaked his face and mouth, and when he had to breath, it flooded into his throat and caused him to begin gagging. He swallowed some of the water, and then was seized by the realization that they were drowning him. He tried to kick, but couldn't. Tried to scream, tried to beg, but couldn't get out anything but muffled grunts."

-- Narrator (chapter 19 paragraph 33)

**Importance:** Despite everything she has seen, Shay has her doubts about Singular,



mostly because of West. Torturing Odin shows just how far they're willing to go as villains.

But leaving that, I want to say that when these radicals trash our labs, what they do is take legs away from thousands of disabled people around the world."

-- Singular/Sync (chapter 30 paragraph 126)

**Importance:** Shay and the others are celebrating their victory over Singular, but Singular is able to turn things around by promoting the fact that they're helping war veterans.

West said, 'Don't ... please, man ...,' and tears leaked down his cheeks. Thorne shot him in the heart."

-- West/Narrator (chapter 34 paragraph 130)

**Importance:** West was a major character in the story, and instrumental in the fight against Singular. Losing him is a devastating blow to Shay, and it also reinforces just how dangerous Singular is. This is also the first time that Singular has outright killed a character instead of just trying to capture them, showing how the battle has changed since Shay and the others brought the fight into the public eye.