

Lilith's Brood Study Guide

Lilith's Brood by Octavia E. Butler

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Plot Summary

Lilith's Brood by Octavia E. Butler is the story of how Humanity was saved from the war it waged on itself by an alien species. The aliens, known as the Oankali, are nothing like Humans and while they revere life, they believe that to let Humans alone, only to destroy themselves again, is the same as allowing death. The story focuses on the Human resisters who want their freedom returned, regardless of the consequences, and the lives of the Oankali and Humans that are trying to work together.

Lilith is awakened on board an Oankali space ship and told that there is very little of the Human race left from a war that Humans waged on themselves. Lilith is picked as the Human who will lead the other Humans that will be reintroduced on the Earth's surface now, so that the planet can hold life again. The Oankali, a strange looking race, want to interbreed with the Humans and call it genetic engineering. The Humans that are awakened do not want this and eventually Lilith is deemed a traitor after helping to save the Oankali that Lilith has been mated with. When the other Humans are sent to Earth, Lilith is kept behind for her own safety.

Years later Lilith has a child that is part Oankali and part Human that is abducted by a group of Human resisters. The child, Akin, is taken to a village called Phoenix, and left there to learn about the Humans. Akin realizes that the Human resisters are being mistreated. When Akin is old enough he starts campaigning for the Humans to be able to start a colony on Mars where they will be free from the Oankali influence.

Lilith has another child much later named Jodahs. Jodahs is the first ooloi Human and Oankali mix. Jodahs goes into exile in the forest with its family since it is the first of its kind and is considered dangerous. Jodah happens upon a brother and sister who are Humans and who come from a group of fertile Humans that have been hiding in the mountains. Jodahs choose these two Humans as its mates. Together they go and tell the others in their village of the Mars colony but say that they cannot stay where they are since the Earth will be inhabitable when the Oankali are finished with it. The Humans are not trusting of Jodahs but eventually it heals all of them of the genetic defects that they have from years of interbreeding. Several of the Humans chose to stay and find ooloi mates, like Jodahs, rather than go to Mars.



Book 1: Dawn; Section 1: Womb

Book 1: Dawn; Section 1: Womb Summary

Lilith's Brood by Octavia E. Butler is the story of how Humanity was saved from the war it waged on itself by an alien species. The aliens, known as the Oankali, are nothing like Humans and while they revere life, they believe that to let Humans alone, only to destroy themselves again, is the same as allowing death. The story focuses on the Human resisters who want their freedom returned, regardless of the consequences, and the lives of the Oankali and Humans that are trying to work together.

Chapter one begins with Lilith Iyapo waking up again. She has been awakened other times and like other times she is in a room alone with no obvious doors, or other ways out. Lilith looks around and finds that she has been given clothing, which she was not given other times. Lilith does not know who is holding her captive or why. Her captives ask her questions about her life before the war. Lilith refuses to answer their questions until her questions were answered. The voices simply stop talking to her.

In chapter two Lilith awakes to find that someone is in the room with her. Lilith is frightened of the person but soon realizes he is not a person but an alien. He has gray skin and no eyes or ears but sensory organs that Lilith describes as looking like snakes. The creature explains that they to try and help the Humans on Earth that are left after a war destroyed almost everything. The creature is named Jdahya and says that Earth is being restored for Humans. Jdahya tells Lilith that there is a price for their help but that he cannot tell her now. Jdahya says he will take her outside once she has gotten used to him since there are many of his kind on the space ship they are currently on.

In chapter three Jdahya is still in the room with Lilith refusing to leave until she is capable of being around him. Jdahya says that there are three different sexes of his species, known as the Oankali. There is male, female and ooloi. The ooloi is neither male or female. Jdahya also says that Lilith had a cancer and that an ooloi removed it for her. The Oankali think cancer is beautiful but knows that it kills Humans because their bodies cannot use it correctly.

As chapter four begins it has been eleven meals since Jdahya arrived and Lilith is taken outside and Jdahya says that they will go see his family.

In chapter five Lilith watches Jdahya touch the wall and a small door opens. Jdahya explains that the ship is actually alive and responds to the chemicals that the Oankali can give. Jdahya also says that Lilith's group will be the first group to go to Earth and Jdahya and some his family will go with them. Jdahya says that many of the Oankali will go to live on Earth with the Humans. The Oankali have discovered that the Humans are one of the most intelligent species out there but that they are also hierarchical. As a result of this the Oankali often talk about the Human contradiction and say that it is the reason that Humans nearly destroyed themselves in war. Jdahya explains that the trade



that the Humans will give the Oankali is to interbreed with them or trade as the Oankali call it. This will solve the Human contradiction problem and will keep the Oankali from getting stale. Lilith says that no Human will want to mate with the Oankali but Jdahya says that it is too late that, the Oankali are already committed to the trade.

Book 1: Dawn; Section 1: Womb Analysis

Lilith is confused by a lot of different things at this point. The Oankali have told her a great deal of what they plan to do. Despite their honesty she knows there are some things that she does not know yet and what she does know she does not like. She is unable to convince the Oankali of her point of view and she asks them continually through the first book to put her back to sleep. In the next part of the book Lilith will meet the rest of Jdahya's family. Lilith knows that the Oankali want to interbreed with Humans both for their own sake and for the Humans' sake. Lilith does not yet realize that she is being groomed to be the mate of Jdahya's ooloi child. She will not realize what is going on until she is already bound to the ooloi. Lilith will have a great deal of time to adjust to Jdahya's family. This will give her a much different point of view of the other Humans that she will have to awaken.

The Oankali are very different from Humans and for this reason they do not understand how to anticipate how the Humans will react. This will be the cause for many of the fights that begin to break out. It is possible that some of the Humans might have chosen to stay on the ship rather than go back to a new Earth where it will be the stone age. It is unclear how they would have reacted if given the choice. The vast number of people that the Oankali have seem to be unrelated. The Oankali do explain that they were not able to save many of the people on Earth and because of the lack of genetic material they saved the profiles from all the people, including those that did not make it.

The bridge between the Oankali and the Human culture will continue to be a big issue throughout the story. Later in the story the gene trade will begin and it will be clear that this will be the answer to the freedom problem the Humans are facing. There are no other Humans shown yet in the story but as more of them are shown it will be more and more clear that the Humans are not equipped to handle the Oankali's coercion.



Book 1: Dawn; Section 2: Family

Book 1: Dawn; Section 2: Family Summary

In chapter one Lilith is introduced to Jdahya's family and is living with them. Lilith likes Jdahya since he is the one that stayed with her in her confinement room but she is handed off to Jdahya's ooloi mate to learn more. The ooloi is Kahguyaht and Lilith feels that it does not like her and she does not like it. Lilith also meets Jdahya's ooloi child, Nikanj.

In chapter two Lilith is taken by Kahguyaht to see where some of the Humans are kept in stasis in large plants. Kahguyaht takes Lilith back home and hands her off to Nikanj explaining that the child will answer all of her questions and open the doors for her if she needs it to. Nikanj takes Lilith to see its friends.

In chapter three Lilith quickly becomes tired of having Nikanj's friends looking at her because she feels that she is more of a pet than anything else. She soon says she wants to go back home. Nikanj refuses to leave Lilith after they are back home.

In chapter four Lilith is trying to learn the Oankali language but it is hard. Lilith learns of a Human that recently died after having chosen to live his natural life out with the Oankali rather than go to Earth.

In chapter five and six Lilith is told that she must stay with an ooloi to learn and that she has a choice of either Kahguyaht or Nikanj. Lilith prefers Nikanj because it is just a child. Later Nikanj explains that Kahguyaht wants it to surprise Lilith without her permission and make changes to her memory. Kahguyaht feels that these changes are necessary since they will give Lilith a flawless memory and the ability to learn the Oankali language quickly. Lilith does not want it done but finally agrees.

In chapter seven Lilith awakens to find that she can remember every Oankali word ever said to her one time. Every memory her mind has ever had is intact in her mind. Nikanj says that Lilith will be able to meet another Human living with the Oankali now that she has allowed these changes.

As chapter eight begins Lilith is taken to meet a Human named Paul Titus who had been fourteen before the war. Paul attacks Lilith after she refuses to stay with him.

In chapter nine Lilith is told that Paul has been put back to sleep. Lilith says that they have kept Paul a fourteen year old boy all these years by keeping him separate from Humans all that time. Lilith begs Nikanj to put her back to sleep like Paul and find someone else to lead the group of Humans that are going to be sent to Earth.

In chapter ten and eleven Lilith is changed so that she can open doors without the help of the Oankali. Lilith is still angry about Paul Titus and wants to leave the house but Nikanj has started his metamorphosis and Lilith cannot leave it to go through the



change alone. Lilith must go with Nikanj to live with its Oankali mates since its final metamorphosis has started.

Chapter twelve begins with Nikanj still in metamorphosis and other Oankali explaining to Lilith that she is supposed to be the parent for the first group of Humans that go to the Earth's surface. Lilith does not like the term parent. Lilith is sure that the Humans she awakens will attempt to kill her although none of the other Oankali believe her.

Book 1: Dawn; Section 2: Family Analysis

Paul Titus is a very real threat for Lilith. It is understandable that since he has been bereft of Human company for so many years, that being faced with a woman is too much for him to comprehend all at one time. It seems certain that Lilith is intended to go with the first group of Humans to the surface and that is what she has been trained for. There is no indication as to what would have been done if Paul Titus would have been able to convince her to stay with him or if she had agreed with his thoughts of how primitive the life was going to be. In the later chapters when the first groups go to Earth it will be obvious that much of what Paul Titus said about Earth will be true. This character is not seen again in the story but his effect on Lilith will dictate many of the decisions she makes in the next sections of the books. When Lilith gets ready to awaken people she avoids waking any men for some time until she feels she has enough women to be safe. There will also be another woman that some men try to rape and Lilith almost seems to lose control at seeing that woman attacked.

Lilith hates the thought of being used by the aliens. She has a silent plan that simply entails her getting to Earth and then running away from her Oankali. Later the strong bond between Oankali and those that they choose will be explained a little further. Lilith does not yet realize how physically attached she is to Nikanj. Later in the story, although Lilith feels that she was lied to if only by omission, Lilith will keep the same information from another Human that is attaching to Lilith's Oankali construct child.

In the next chapters Lilith will begin awakening people for the first group to go to Earth. Lilith has warned the Oankali that the people will try and kill her. They do not seem to believe that it is possible and they do not heed her warning at all. The Oankali almost seem to be perfect in terms of their logic. They are so certain of themselves and put so much emphasis on their logic that they will be unable to understand Humans who are often illogical. This inability to understand Humans will be a bridge that the Oankali will not be able to cross until the creation of the Oankali and Human crossed children. Lilith has been told in the story that she will never understand the Oankali but that her children will. The same could also be said of the Oankali understanding the Humans.



Book 1: Dawn; Section 3: Nursery

Book 1: Dawn; Section 3: Nursery Summary

In chapter one Lilith is looking over the information of the possible Humans to awaken for the first group to go to Earth. Lilith slowly goes through the folders and picks out the ones that will make up the first ones that she will slowly awaken. Lilith decides to awaken a woman first, Tate Marah.

Chapter two begins with Tate awakening and Lilith telling her the situation. Tate does not fully believe but seemingly accepts the information that Lilith gives. Lilith is able to operate everything in the room they have been given and can grow the walls, as the Oankali do, but Lilith cannot get out and explains that she is a prisoner just as Tate is. Tate argues that Lilith is more like a trustee.

In chapter three Lilith picks more people to awaken each day and then spends time trying to explain to them what is going on. Tate is in a hurry to have a man awakened but Lilith knows that they are on their own and does not want anyone awakened that she cannot control to some degree.

In chapter four Lilith awakens Joseph Shing and Curt Loehr from stasis. Neither of them believe Lilith when they are told of the Oankali or about the gene trade that is to take place. Joseph is more calm than Curt and mentions that perhaps once they are on Earth they can manage to run. This is what Lilith has been thinking all along and she is happy that there is one other Human thinking the same way.

In chapter four Lilith has awakened enough people that there are more and more fights among the people. One of the women tries to attack Lilith over the lack of meat in their diet and Lilith protects herself with two quick jabs. Lilith is amazed at the strength she suddenly has and had not realized how much more strength the Oankali had given her to protect herself. Lilith goes to her room and Joseph, who has become Lilith's lover, enters to talk to her. Lilith looks past Joseph to see Nikanj coming in through the wall.

In chapter six Nikanj explains that it has come so that Joseph can endure his fear now and be helpful to Lilith later when she will need him. Nikanj says that it has heard the Humans talking about Joseph and planning against him just as much as against Lilith. Nikanj agrees to give Joseph the ability to heal himself in the hopes that it will keep him safer. Lilith is angry with Nikanj but cannot resist its touch and lies with Nikanj and Joseph while the changes are being made to Joseph's body.

In chapter seven Nikanj admits that it has come into contact with Joseph before and had picked him as one of the ones Lilith could choose from in the hopes that Lilith would find him appealing.

Chapter eight begins with Lilith coming in and announcing to the people that she will be awakening ten new people the next day. Tate and a few others talk to Lilith and Lilith



admits that they are being lied to if only by information being left out. What Lilith needs is for the group to hold together until they get to Earth.

In chapter nine Joseph is angry that he was held by Nikanj and will not speak to Lilith for some time. Joseph is very angry that Lilith has lain with Nikanj and its mates before and tells her not to let it touch her again. Lilith cannot promise this and after a few harsh words she walks away from Joseph.

In chapter ten Lilith is opening ten new pods with ten new people in them. A couple of days later Lilith is held by several people while one of the people attempts an escape into a cabinet that the ship uses to supply food. Lilith does not try to stop them but the people become angry when the man is not returned and accuse Lilith of killing him.

In chapter eleven Lilith has been unable to get the Oankali to answer her. Lilith knows that her role will be either to get the Humans to work together under her leadership or she will be the thing that they unify against. A short time later several men attempt to rape a woman. Lilith is unable to control her anger at what the men are trying to do and attacks them. One by one Lilith attacks the men and breaks the arm of one of them, Peter. Lilith tells them that she is not going to let people act that way. Lilith goes to her room and the Oankali show up and give Lilith the option of putting any of the men back to sleep but Lilith refuses, saying that the Oankali are already suspected of being murderers and to leave the men. The woman that Lilith saved comes in and asks if Lilith is Human, since many of the people are now saying it is impossible that she is a Human woman. Lilith says that she would not care about what happened or who got raped if she was not Human. Lilith announces that they will be awakening the final ten the next day.

In chapter twelve Peter has laid with a broken arm for several days until the Oankali heal him, while he is unconscious. Peter's arm was badly damaged and there is no one that can deny the fact that it is completely healed now. Five days later the meal is drugged and the Oankali appear. The people try to run and some fight but as soon as the Oankali touch them, they are drugged and become completely complacent. Joseph is confronted by Nikanj once again and they argue. Joseph says that the ooloi touch is only an illusion and that he did not want what Nikanj had done to him. Nikanj explains that Joseph's words said one thing but that his body was saying something very different.

Chapter thirteen begins with the Humans, for the most part, still drugged. Nikanj says it is to keep the Humans safe but Lilith says that is not enough.

In chapter fourteen Peter becomes overcome with the thought of laying with the Oankali after being drugged and attacks his Oankali. The creature is still and Peter is doing no damage to the Oankali but Peter strikes a point and the Oankali loses control. One of the Oankali's stingers becomes active for a moment and Peter is struck dead. Joseph tells Lilith that at least Peter died Human and that he almost took out one of the Oankali with him.



Book 1: Dawn; Section 3: Nursery Analysis

Tate and Lilith have an odd relationship and in many ways they are not truly friendly with each other. Tate appears to be much more willing to accept the Oankali than her Human mate, Gabriel, is. This is seen several times throughout the story. The women are seemingly more willing to accept the union of the unique Oankali mating. This appears to be at least in part due to the fact that it makes the Human males feel as if their masculinity is in question although this is never absolutely stated. Tate will continue to have a significant role in book one as well as book two.

Lilith is concerned for Joseph because there are a lot of people that are talking about hurting Joseph since Lilith seems to be off limits for the anger and aggression. Despite her best intentions, it will be the safety that Lilith tries to give Joseph that will contribute to his death.

The reaction that the ooloi has to Peter's death is not explained as far as cause and effect. As the story continues this reaction will be shown again as the Humans are allowed to stray away from their ooloi. When they do the ooloi will grow saddened and despondent. The Humans that are paired up with the ooloi in the first book, with the exception of Lilith, were not bonded to their ooloi during metamorphosis. The connection that they have is strong but is not as strong as the one that Lilith and her ooloi have since she was with Nikanj during its metamorphosis. In the last chapter of the book more of this connection will be explained and the significance that it has for the characters.

Lilith is certain that the people will never be able to forgive her for her part in what has happened although Lilith is justifying her actions with the knowledge that she is going to try and run and preserve Humanity on Earth when presented with the chance. The Oankali refuse to let Humans do what they want if they believe that it is against what the Human actually wants, as was seen with Joseph's bodily reaction to Nikanj as apposed to what Joseph says, or something that will cause the Human harm. For these reasons much of what Lilith wants will not be left up to her and many of her own decisions will not be allowed to be her own.



Book 1: Dawn; Section 4: The Training Floor

Book 1: Dawn; Section 4: The Training Floor Summary

In chapter one and two the Humans are put in a part of the ship that looks like the Earth's current state and given tools to see who can adapt. There are many of the people that are speaking out about the Oankali and what they do.

In chapter three Tate, Gabriel, Joseph and some others say that they are building boats and sneaking off. They refuse to believe they are on a ship. Lilith does not want to go with them but agrees to go to be with Joseph.

Lilith and Joseph go to where they are supposed to meet the others but find no one there for a while. After a time several others come out of the forest, having made sure that Lilith was not leading the Oankali to them or being followed. Lilith leads since she has already spent time in the location before the other Humans were awakened. Many of them do not like Lilith being the leader since they are unsure about where her loyalties lie.

In chapter five Lilith and her group have made camp. Lilith tries to hold Joseph's hand but they realize that something is wrong and they cannot touch each other without being repelled. They do not understand this new feeling.

In chapter six Curt attacks Lilith's camp and knocks her out and takes the other people with him. Nikanj finds Lilith and they set out to where Curt's group was. They find Joseph dead with his head nearly cut off from Curt's tool meant to clear brush. Curt had only meant to take Joseph away from Lilith but seeing the minor injuries done to Joseph's body miraculously heal themselves and he knew that Joseph could not be Human. In his fear Curt hacked Joseph while Joseph lay unconscious. The Oankali did not think one of the Humans would actually kill. Nikanj and Lilith share their grief.

In chapter seven there is a stand off between the Oankali and the Humans. One by one the Humans that are unwilling to lay their weapons down are subdued by Oankali drugs until only Curt remains. Curt manages to cut off one of the sensory arms of Nikanj. Lilith, following the instructions of another ooloi, takes off her clothes and lies down beside Nikanj and holds his sensory arm in place. After several days Nikanj is able to heal himself with Lilith's help. Nikanj explains that the wound Curt gave it should have killed it but that the cancer ability that Humans have in their bodies can regenerate. This cancer ability in Lilith is what allowed Nikanj's body to heal.

In chapter eight and nine there are more accusations aimed at Lilith. She asks what everyone did while Curt hacked Joseph into pieces but the others cannot answer her. Lilith tries to quit but there is no way for her to undo the way she is regarded by the



others. Lilith bides her time until the group is sent to Earth. While she is off gathering supplies one day she comes back to find that the others are gone and that she alone has been left. Nikanj explains that the people were planning to wait until Lilith was with them on Earth and then kill her. Lilith says she does not care and that she wanted to go regardless. Nikanj then says that Lilith is pregnant with Joseph's child. Nikanj also says that all Humans are now infertile and that if they want any children they will have to have an ooloi to have the child. The Humans have been given massively long lives but are not capable of procreating without the Oankali now.

Book 1: Dawn; Section 4: The Training Floor Analysis

Lilith intends Joseph's ability to heal to help protect him. In truth it is this ability to heal himself that intensifies the already present Human fear. Lilith thinks about the fact that the Humans are now not allowed to have children themselves but that they will have to take part in the Oankali way of life in order to have children. The Oankali are so certain of themselves that they point out in the book several times that there is no chance that a fertile Human has gotten through. This is not true but that fact will not be known until the very last book of the series.

This is the end of book one and the focus of this book has been Lilith. She did not want the child that Nikanj has put inside of her. Although Lilith never says she is ready for this child, Nikanj says it knows that she is. Regardless of what the Humans say the Oankali seem to treat them more as children rather than people with wants and desires. There may have been potential for a much different resolution if the Oankali had treated the Humans differently from the beginning of the agreement. Nikanj says that the Oankali are drawn to the Humans. The point of view in the first book is that of a Human and so the Oankali side of the story and the pull that the Humans have is not understood or looked at very closely at this point. By the third book in the series the effect that the Humans have on the Oankali will be better understood.

Lilith will take a much more minor role as the story continues although everything will involve her and her family in some way. Despite her minor role she will be spoken of often and it will be clear that her effect is long reaching on the Humans and the relationship that they develop with the Oankali.



Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 1: Lo

Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 1: Lo Summary

In chapter one and two Akin is born. He is Lilith's son. Akin looks Human and will look much like a Human until his metamorphosis. Akin is able to put together sentences and speak clearly when he is only two months old. Akin's father is Joseph although Joseph has been dead for a long period of time. Lilith worries that Akin will be hated more than the female constructs but Nikanj disagrees. Nikanj also says that Akin will not only look different from Humans but will also act differently.

In chapter three Akin is warned about Humans by other members of his family. The construct children are highly desired by the sterile Human resisters and since Akin looks so Human, except for the gray tongue Akin has, his family is very careful about keeping him close. Akin is as intelligent as an adult and is able to talk as an adult but physically his body has developed just as a child's would and Akin is dependent upon his family for movement.

In chapter four Akin and Lilith go out into the forest to tend to a garden when Lilith and Akin sense a Human resister. The resister is holding an arrow and bow. The man comes up to Lilith and she offers to allow him to stay in the village where she lives but takes his bow from him saying that they don't allow weapons. The resister says that he left his village to see what else there is. He wants children but is unsure about the Oankali and his village say that the Oankali are evil. The man is surprised when Akin introduces himself and asks what the man's name is. The man says he is Tino. Lilith and the man talk and Lilith tells him about the Oankali making her pregnant because it knew she wanted it. Lilith admits that she did want it but that if she had the strength not to ask for it then they should have left her alone.

In chapter five Tino tells those in Lilith's village about his village, Phoenix. After Tino tells about his village everyone goes home for the night.

In chapter six Tino is left in Lilith's hut. Lilith, Tino and Nikanj talk for a time and Lilith has to tell Nikanj to go sit in a corner because it is very infatuated with Tino. Tino recognizes the name Lilith from the stories told by those in his village. Lilith learns that Gabriel and Tate are still together and living in Tino's village. Lilith tells Tino that she can lie with him and Nikanj and if Tino decides he wants to leave then she will help him. Tino has a small remembering of this same feeling from his time on the ship although he was much younger.

In chapter seven Tino and Akin are out alone when a party of Human resisters find them. One of the men knows Tino and calls him a traitor. They want Akin because Akin looks so Human. Akin tries to cry and scream to make noise but one of the men attacks Tino, leaving him badly injured. Akin continues to cry as the men take him away.



Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 1: Lo Analysis

The male born Oankali constructs must look more like Humans in order to survive in the mother's womb. It is explained later in the story that the constructs born to Humans will go through metamorphosis and look more Oankali later and those born to the Oankali will look more Human after metamorphosis. At this point in the book there is no indication how much Akin will change later on. Akin is the first of the construct males to be born to a Human. Since he is new the Oankali consider him a danger in some respects. Later in the story when the first ooloi constructs are born it will be seen that they too will be considered a threat and a danger. The Oankali state later on that any new species has potential to be dangerous.

Akin is smart in some ways but his lack of knowledge about Humans, since the only ones he has been around are those that have accepted the Oankali way of life, will prove to make him much more childlike. Akin will chose to keep quiet for a time, not letting the men know that he can talk. This will prove to be a very smart thing to do.

Akin is screaming with the intent that perhaps someone will hear him. The truth is that the Oankali realize that the Human resisters would much rather die than willingly partake in what the Oankali call the gene trade. It is decided by the Oankali that Akin is to be left with the resisters in the hopes that this will increase the Oankali's understanding of the resisters.

Tino talks about his family village. As it turns out this will eventually be where Akin ends up. Tate and Gabriel will be seen once again in the story. In the first part of the book the point of view came only from Lilith and was in third person. This part of the book will switch between several characters, including Tino, for a short period of time. This will give a better understanding of how Lilith and the Oankali are viewed many years after the first group of Humans have been sent to Earth. The exact amount of time that has passed is never stated but it is indicated that Joseph has been dead for roughly thirty years before Akin is created.



Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 2: Phoenix

Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 2: Phoenix Summary

In chapter one, one of Akin's Oankali parents hear a cry. Tino's body is found and taken to be healed from the massive damage that has been done. Akin has never been around those that might hate him before and it is wondered what will happen when the Humans discover Akin is not as Human as he looks.

Chapter two begins with the Human resisters taking Akin upriver in a boat. After stopping, the men discuss the price that Akin, a nearly perfectly Human looking male child, will bring.

In chapter three one of the men is kind to Akin. Akin decides he will try and stay close to this man since the man is trying to be kind.

Chapter four begins with one of the captors lying on his side vomiting blood. Akin is taken outside by the kind man. Akin tells the man that an ooloi could cure the sick man. Akin learns immediately that he has made a mistake in speaking.

Chapter five begins with the Oankali looking after Tino. Tino will lose some of his memories from the head wounds inflicted by the resisters but Tino will live. Tino is about to have a sibling born and Tino should be there to bond with it at the time of its birth since they will be closest in age.

In chapter six Akin has been with the resisters for twelve days. The man who heard Akin speak, Galt, has not said anything to the other men about Akin's speech. They come to a village where the men hope to sell Akin and find the village abandoned. Akin leads them to where he smells fresh ink. The men find that the people in the village gave up and went to live with the Oankali in the hopes that some part of them will continue rather than simply dying out.

In chapter seven and eight they find a village that is not willing to give anything the men want. The men take Akin and leave in the middle of the night in fear of what the people will do in order to have Akin. Akin wants to be gone from the men but is afraid of making a noise as they leave because he knows that there would be fighting and perhaps killing. After leaving they go out of the way to avoid Oankali.

As chapter nine begins the men finally reach Phoenix. Akin hopes he will be bought here since Tino was from here. Iriarte, one of the men who has become attached to Akin, tells Akin to let the people know what he can do so that the people will not feel



betrayed later on when Akin suddenly speaks. The men are taken into the home of Gabriel and Tate who want the child. Akin tells Tate about Tino being killed.

In chapter ten there is bargaining about how much Akin is to be bought for when there is shooting. Tino's father has come back with men and begins to fight with the men that brought Akin. Iriarte lies dead and Damek, the one who killed Tino, is wounded but alive. Tate picks Akin up and begins to clean up the mess in the house.

In chapter eleven Tate and Gabriel keep Akin as their son although Akin wants to go home.

Chapter twelve begins with Akin being taken to the salvage mines where pieces of Human artifacts are dug up. It is here that Akin is to be hidden when the Oankali come looking for him.

In chapter thirteen two more construct children are brought to Phoenix. They appear to be girls. They are siblings and Akin warns the people that the children, who appear to be girls, must be kept together. Some of the people in the village do not seem to believe Akin.

In chapter fourteen, fifteen and sixteen the three construct children are walked toward the salvage site. The girls know that Akin has been abandoned by the Oankali so that he can learn about the Humans. When they finally reach the salvage site, there is talk of cutting the sensory tentacles off the girls.

In chapter seventeen Akin goes to warn the girls that one of the Human women want to cut the girl's sensory tentacles off to make them look more Human.. The girls begin to leave and Akin begs them to take him with them but they cannot and still keep away from the Humans since Akin is still very slow.

In chapter eighteen and nineteen Tate is told by Akin about the girls leaving. She tries to get Akin to help them find the girls but he refuses. The girls are not found. Akin realizes he needs to learn more and that he is Oankali enough to be heard when he explains about the resisters being mistreated.

In chapter twenty, twenty-one, and twenty-two Akin has been in Phoenix for more than a year. Akin learns all that he can from the people in Phoenix. He bonds with Tate and Gabriel.

In chapter twenty-three Akin's family comes to take him home.

Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 2: Phoenix Analysis

Tino has the story told from his point of view for a very short period of time. It is unclear how much of his memory is lost. It is not explained if he goes to talk to his parents when he comes to Phoenix either. It is unclear how they would have reacted if they thought he



was alive. They already know from Akin that Tino had decided to live with the Oankali, who most Humans view as the enemy.

The Oankali seem to think that they are helping the Humans, despite the fact that the Humans do not want this help. Akin is part Human but it is the time he spends with the Humans that helps him to realize how the Humans are being mistreated. Tate and Gabriel will be seen again in the story although things will be much different when Akin finds them again.

Akin is supposed to be with his sibling when it is born. This creates a very strong bond. There are some that think that the Oankali are telepathic. This is not true but the connection between closest siblings often appears to be telepathic. This connection is denied to Akin, in part because the Humans refuse to let him go back home, and in part because the Oankali decide to leave Akin and use him as a tool. Akin is the first Human born male construct. It is unclear if this plays any part in the Oankali's decision to leave Akin. In the next section of the book it will be seen how much it affects Akin and his family to have him gone for so long.

The Humans have been allowed to return to Earth but it is not until this last section that the fact that the Earth will be habitable after the Oankali ship matures is explained. This will be talked about more in the story at a late point. It seems that the ship cannot be moved after it has been planted without killing the ship. In addition, it also seems that the Oankali are certain the Humans will eventually become agreeable to the gene trade that the Oankali have started. The Humans are obviously flawed but the Oankali's inability to understand Human emotion and desires seems to underline their own flaws.



Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 3: Chkahichdahk

Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 3: Chkahichdahk Summary

In chapter one Tino is arguing with the other Oankali about Akin, who seems to spend more and more of his time among the resisters now that he is nearing adulthood. Dichaan, Akin's same sex Oankali parent, decides to send word to the ship to send a shuttle so Akin can learn more about his Oankali heritage.

In chapter two Akin is upset at the thought of going to the ship but knows that he must if he wants to help the resisters. Akin is still considered a child to the Oankali, despite his convictions and knowledge about the resisters, and Akin's voice will carry little impact unless there are those to help him.

In chapter three Akin and his nearest sibling, Tiikuchahk, get ready to leave for the ship. Akin does not want Tiikuchahk to go with him but cannot stop Tiikuchahk. Tiikuchahk should have been the sibling that Akin bonded with but did not since Akin was in the resistor camp when Tiikuchahk was born. Akin is told to make his time on the ship useful.

In chapter four they are traveling to the ship. Aboard the small shuttle Akin is arguing for Humanity's need to continue in themselves if they desire rather than with the Oankali. Akin is told by Dichaan that Humanity has a second chance through the Oankali.

As chapter five begins they arrive at the ship. Tiikuchahk asks for an ooloi to be found for it and Akin. The thought of bonding with Tiikuchahk disgusts Akin but he says nothing. Akin finds that here on the ship he feels more lonely than he has since he was abducted many years ago.

In chapter six and seven Akin begins to study all that he can find on the ship. The Oankali that Akin is with teaches Akin much and Akin confides that he believes he can make a place for the Humans on Earth. Akin knows that the Earth will be destroyed when the ship leaves it but that there are other worlds that the Humans could live on. Akin is warned to find those that can help him get this world started because once Akin begins his metamorphosis then the urge to mate will be strong enough that Akin will not be able to help. The Humans that want to take part in this new world, Mars, will have their fertility restored but making the planet habitable will take time. Akin is told to find an ooloi to bond him to Tiikuchahk and then there will be others found who know about changing a lifeless planet into a hospitable one.

In chapter eight and nine an ooloi is found and Akin and Tiikuchahk lie with the ooloi. Akin awakes alone. The ooloi comes back and tells Akin that Akin was made in a way



that he cannot be bound to an ooloi and this confused the ooloi. Akin tells Tiikuchahk and the ooloi what he intends to do for the resisters and asks them if they will help him. Akin connects with both of them and shows them about the Human resisters and the time that he spent with them. When Akin is done the other two stand up and leave.

In chapter ten Akin's request for a Human world is brought before the Oankali for consensus. There are a lot of objections but some agree with Akin.

In chapter eleven Tiikuchahk says that it is not sure if it wants to be male or female when it finishes metamorphosis and that it is not sure it wants to help Akin to aid the resisters. Tiikuchahk is sent with Akin regardless to learn what it can until it does decide what it wants. Akin wants the ooloi with him, Dehkiaht, but knows that an ooloi can manipulate and this makes Akin leery of Dehkiaht.

Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 3: Chkahichdahk Analysis

Akin is supposed to have bonded with his sibling, Tiikuchahk, at birth. Since the Oankali and their children remember everything that ever happens to them, this is never forgotten. There is a clear rift between the two of them. There are many times in a story when construct children and Oankali children are called it rather than he or she. It is talked about more in this section of the book that if Tiikuchahk wants, it could be male or female. Sex is not necessarily determined at birth. If that is the case then the two girls seen earlier in the story when Akin is in the resistor camp most likely do not both grow up to be girls. One of them might have become male and the other female. In the Oankali groups the ooloi comes from an outside family but the male and the female in the family group often are brother and sister. The reason for this is not explained but this seems to be the general rule for the pairing of the mates.

Akin does not want Tiikuchahk with him at first. By the end of the story it seems that this has changed for Akin to a large extent but Tiikuchahk does not want to help the resisters and blames them for the pain and desperation that Akin has gone through. The other moment in an Oankali's life when there is bonding is when an Oankali goes through metamorphosis. This will happen in the next chapter but Tiikuchahk will not be there for this moment either. Tiikuchahk will not be seen again in the story.

In the next section of the book Akin will return to Phoenix. Phoenix is where Akin was when he should have been bonding with his sibling at birth. Phoenix will also be where Akin is when he begins metamorphosis. It is not said that Akin is vain but he has put a lot of value in the fact that he looks almost completely Human. During his metamorphosis this will change and he will no longer look Human. This seems to cause him some disappointment.



Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 4: Home

Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 4: Home Summary

In chapter one Akin returns to the Earth after having finished his long learning on the Oankali ship. Akin first heads to Phoenix.

In chapter two, three, and four Akin returns and finds Tate sick. Akin tells her about Mars and the options for having children there. Gabriel and Tate allow Akin to try to heal Tate. Gabriel comes in after a long period of time and hits Akin, thinking he is hurting Tate. When Akin wakes up, he realizes he has started metamorphosis. Several different people come to sit by him and ask about the Mars colony. There are many that are certain they will go and many that are determined they will not give up their home planet.

In chapter five and six Akin is in and out of consciousness. Metamorphosis takes months and during that time there are fights about the Mars colony and one raid. Tate says if she can have children she will go. Akin no longer looks anything like a Human and this worries him since the Humans will not trust an Oankali. Akin makes Tate promise to help him with the other Humans.

In chapter seven Akin wakes to find the house in flames. He is rescued by Gabriel.

In chapter eight several people from Phoenix meet in the woods and watch the town burning. The last thing seen is Phoenix burning as the group heads to Akin's village.

Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 4: Home Analysis

Akin seems upset that he no longer looks Human. It may be that he wants to remain Human looking so that he can better help the resisters but it appears at moments, such as when he is aboard the Oankali ship, that Akin honestly seems to prefer the Human form to that of the Oankali. This is understandable since Akin has looked Human himself for so long and lived among them as one of them for his early years.

Gabriel and Tate are not excited at the thought of leaving Earth. This will be a common theme throughout the rest of the story. There will be those that do not want to leave Earth and those that do not want to live under the influence of the Oankali. Humans will be forced to choose one or the other with consequences on both sides.

The Oankali seem to feel superior in many ways to the Humans although they never actually state this. In the next chapters the Oankali's ability to falter and make mistakes will be shown more clearly. This will give fuel to the hope that Oankali are wrong in their deductions that Humans are destined to destroy themselves no matter what.



Book 3: Imago; Section 1: Metamorphosis

Book 3: Imago; Section 1: Metamorphosis Summary

In chapter one Jodahs, Lilith's child, says that metamorphosis came without warning which is unusual. Jodahs is twenty-nine in Human years but has yet to undergo metamorphosis. After the change Jodahs believes it will be male.

In chapter two Jodahs closest sibling, Aor, links with Jodahs and says that something is wrong and tells Jodahs to go and see Dichaan. Nikanj instead comes to see Jodahs and check it. Nikanj is disturbed and announces that Jodahs will not be male but will be ooloi. Jodahs is afraid because there has never been an ooloi construct and it was decided long ago that any ooloi construct that was allowed to be created would be sent back to the ship to live under constant observation. Nikanj assures Jodahs that it will not be sent away.

In chapter three Jodahs' family comes together to discuss what is to be done. Lilith, Tino, Nikanj, Dichaan, and Ahajas agree to go into exile in the forest rather than send Jodahs to the ship alone. Afraid but comforted by its family Jodahs slips into its first metamorphosis.

In chapter four Jodahs sleeps while Nikanj defends himself to the Oankali. Nikanj is asked how they can trust him when he has made such a dangerous mistake. Ooloi control genetic material and so one that is potentially flawed by Human genetics could cause dangerous diseases and kill people and animals. When Jodahs is awake Nikanj explains that Jodahs will be able to change to look more like what its mates want. Oankali cannot do this. Nikanj also warns Jodahs to never touch anyone or anything that is alive without first checking to see if it has done damage.

In chapter five and six Jodahs and his family prepare to leave their village. Oankali are against killing but Nikanj tells them to stay together and that if they happen upon resisters to sting if necessary and then come to get help to save whoever has been stung. Aor and Jodahs try to figure out their relationship now that Aor cannot be Jodahs paired sibling since ooloi must come from an outside family.

In chapter seven and eight they happen upon a group of men that are hurting a woman. The woman is badly hurt and Nikanj begins healing her and lets Jodahs take over her healing. Nikanj is impressed with the job that Jodahs does. The woman is frightened when she wakes up but soon tells Jodahs that her name is Marina and she wants to go to Mars. Jodahs likes her but knows that if he mates with someone that is this much older than he is, that he will die when his mate dies. Marina does not want to leave Jodahs and tells him he looks like a man she knew once.



In chapter nine Jodahs is told that his physical appearance has changed to fit the woman since his body has been striving to please her.

Book 3: Imago; Section 1: Metamorphosis Analysis

Jodahs is a unique construct and the fact that its body changes to fit the Human female is important and this same change will be seen later on in the story as well. Oankali cannot do this physical change but the fact that their scent changes for their mates is talked about. There have been some comments about Aor, Jodahs' sibling, but the story is focused chiefly on Jodahs. In the next few chapters Aor will be a much more pivotal character although the point of view will never be from anyone other than Jodahs. Jodahs is also the only character in the story whose point of view is put in the first person. It will be hard to understand who the author is talking about at various points in the story since the terms "he" and "she" are not correct terms for an ooloi. The term "it" will be used to describe Jodahs, and Nikanj as well as other ooloi. At times this will almost seem degrading since "it" seems like an object or animal rather than a person.

Nikanj has said it will not send Jodahs away as long as it is safe to keep Jodahs with them. It is quickly being seen that Jodahs needs mates to keep its abilities controlled. For this reason Nikanj will eventually say that Jodahs has to go back to the ship. Even if Jodahs could find a Human to mate with, the Humans on Earth are old enough that it would make Jodahs life expectancy much shorter than what it should be. None of the Humans on Earth have been allowed to have children. However, it will be revealed later in the story the fact that Humans willing to join an Oankali construct are very rare. For this reason it is not likely that Jodahs will be able to have Human mates.

Nikanj has allowed there to be an ooloi construct made. This is considered Nikanj's mistake for much of the story. By the end of the book it will seem that perhaps Nikanj did not have as much control over this as it thought it did.



Book 3: Imago; Section 2: Exile

Book 3: Imago; Section 2: Exile Summary

In chapter one Jodahs begins looking like a creature of the water with no Human around for it to please. They find a Human that is wounded and whose leg must be amputated. Nikanj allows Jodahs to do the work although Jodahs does not want to because it will have to let the Human go and it is hard to let Marina go. Aor comes to Jodahs and they share a time with the Human since Aor is beginning metamorphosis and will have no more time with Jodahs. Jodahs heals the male flawlessly but Aor wakes up with a sickness from Jodahs.

In chapter two the man wakes up and Jodahs explains that he has healed the man's leg. The man, Joa, becomes angry saying that Oankali use men as women and is angry for a time with Jodahs and seems to prefer Aor's company to Jodahs.

In chapter three Joa is well enough to go home. Joa says that he would go to an ooloi if there was one that could look like a woman he had dreamed of when he was young. Joa knows that Jodahs does not really look like this but that Jodahs does this for him. Joa says he will consider going to the Mars colony to live.

In chapter four Aor goes into metamorphosis. Much to Nikanj's disappointment Aor is going to be ooloi as well. Nikanj says that both Aor and Jodahs must go to the ship since it has been seen that Jodahs cannot seem to control himself without potential mates. Jodahs wanders into the forest seeking solitude.

In chapter five Jodahs finds a male and a female in the forest. They are both covered in large tumors all over their bodies although the male is much more affected than the female. Jodahs heals the man's neck so that he can move it and then introduces himself to them. They are Tomas and Jesusa and they are brother and sister. They refuse to lie near Jodahs though they agree to sleep in the same camp.

In chapter six Jesusa and Tomas leave thinking that Jodahs is asleep. Jodahs listens to them talk as he follows them and learns that they are from a village where Humans are fertile and they are deformed as are all other natural born children in their village. They are worried that Jodahs will find out about their people. Jodahs is excited to figure out that these people are very young.

In chapter seven Jodahs sneaks into Tomas and Jesusa's camp and eventually is able to convince them to let him stay and sleep between them.

In chapter eight and nine the three begin traveling and Jodahs starts its second metamorphosis. Tomas and Jesusa agree to help it home not knowing how much Jodahs will depend on them for the time it takes to complete its second metamorphosis.



In chapter ten and eleven they reach Jodah's family after traveling for a long time. Lilith realizes that Jodahs has not told Jesusa or Tomas that they will be permanently bonded to it if they stay with it through the second metamorphosis.

In chapter twelve Aor says that he wants to go to the Human village to find mates like Tomas and Jesusa. They refuse to tell where their village is since they are certain their people will believe them to be traitors.

Book 3: Imago; Section 2: Exile Analysis

There is no explanation as to why Tomas has been so willing to accept Jodahs. It appears that Tomas believes his life will continue to be a life that will imprison him in his sickness. This relief from his sickness may be part of why he was so willing to accept Jodahs. Although the Humans in this camp are free from the Oankali, they are bound by the genetic disease that has been passed down from person to person. The people in this village have seemingly been bred until they are beyond bearing children. The people in the village are not numbered, but it seems that the numbers must be very large since so many years have passed since the first group of Humans were able to be returned to Earth.

The Oankali have said throughout the story that there are no Humans that are fertile. It is seen here that there was at least one Human that was fertile. There is no indication of whether it was simply the women that were made infertile or both men and women. If it were both that had been made infertile that it would have been much harder for two fertile people to have come into contact.

Aor is desperate to get a Human mate. Jodahs is unable to control his body without potential mates around. This will begin to be Aor's problem as well. There are rules that the Oankali create and follow but it is seen that their family bonds are strong enough that they are willing to bend, and sometimes break, the rules in order to help their loved ones as long as there is not a greater risk. The village of fertile Humans should be immediately reported but they will not be since Nikanj knows that Aor's best chance of finding Human mates will lie in finding this village. They will not force Tomas and Jesusa to tell but Nikanj will continue to hope for this.

Lilith is very angry at Jodahs for several reasons. She feels that they are tricking Tomas and Jesusa just as Lilith was tricked long ago. This causes Lilith some guilt but she ultimately chooses to side with her child over the Human race.



Book 3: Imago; Section 3: Imago

Book 3: Imago; Section 3: Imago Summary

In chapter one Aor asks Tomas and Jesusa several times to take it to their village. It also asks Jodahs to give it one of the Humans but Jodahs only hurts it through touch, without meaning to.

As chapter two begins Aor is gone and comes back looking like a fish creature that cannot come out of the water. Jesusa and Tomas agree to help Jodahs get Aor back into his form. Tomas tells Jodahs that he will not ever let Jodahs leave him.

In chapter three Aor begins his second metamorphosis. Aor begins to slip into a less stable form each time connection with it is ended from Nikanj or Jodahs. Tomas and Jesusa watch Aor as he tries to die and they agree to take them to their village.

In chapter four and five Tomas and Jesusa go into the forest alone. While they are gone they realize that they cannot leave Jodahs without doing great pain to themselves. Jesusa feels trapped but Tomas is simply happy to be with Jodahs although he admits feeling upset that his sister feels trapped. The four of them, Tomas, Jesusa, Jodahs, and Aor, leave for the Human village. Tomas and Jesusa's disorders are given back to them before they go to their village in order to keep those in the village from being afraid of Tomas and Jesusa.

In chapter six there are guards that come and spot Tomas and Jesusa and take them back to the village under guard, accusing them of betraying the village. Jodahs and Aor keep hidden while Tomas and Jesusa are taken away. Aor and Jodahs will give them time but know that they will have to go in soon and retrieve Tomas and Jesusa.

In chapter seven and eight. Jodahs has found two Humans to be Aor's mates. Aor's mates say that Tomas and Jesusa are heavily guarded in the village.

In chapter nine and ten Jodahs and Aor are spotted by guards. The guards are subdued. Jodahs heads toward the village to get Tomas and Jesusa, leaving Aor with the guards and the others.

In chapter eleven and twelve Jodahs is captured and Aor is soon brought in as well. The people in the town do not kill them but say that they are prisoners. They agree to let them live with their mates in a house but that they will be closely guarded.

In chapter thirteen and fourteen there are a great many people that Jodahs and Aor heal while they are in the town despite their guards. After a long period of time the shuttle arrived and the people all decide on either going to Mars or taking ooloi mates. Many of them want to have Jodahs or Aor as mates. There are several ooloi with the shuttle waiting to inspect Aor and Jodahs.



In chapter fifteen and sixteen it is decided that Jodahs and Aor may on Earth. Jodahs plants a town that will eventually become a ship. Jesusa is anxious for children. As Jodahs plants the seed into the ground that will eventually become a ship to leave the Earth, he feels the life growing inside of it.

Book 3: Imago; Section 3: Imago Analysis

Jodahs is able to help many of the people in the village. When Jodahs first arrives in the village it seems entirely possible that many of the people are willing to kill it. The woman that Aor gets as its mate describes the last child she had. It seems that these people are all living in a trap that they have made for themselves. Despite the horrible things they believe to be true of the Oankali, they are given the option of living with the Oankali or going to live on Mars. There is not a definitive number given in relation to how many want to stay with Oankali families and how many want to go to Mars, but it is clear that when other ooloi constructs are discovered Jodahs lets it be known that there are a great number of Humans there that will be willing to mate with them. This makes it seem as though there are a lot of the people that choose willingly to accept the Oankali.

Lilith is worried that Tomas and Jesusa will not forgive her for not saying anything about the effect being around Jodahs when he goes through his metamorphosis will have on them. The fact that Tomas and Jesusa are able to hug Lilith and bear her no ill feeling says a lot about the difference in the Humans that lived before the war and the new ones that have been born in the mountains.



Characters

Lilith Iyapo

Lilith Iyapo is the first character that the story follows. Later in the trilogy she seemingly becomes a lesser character but the characters that become the major characters are all her descendants. Lilith, when she is first awakened, is thought to be perhaps a member of the Earth military because of her behavior. She is unwilling to talk to her invisible captors. The truth of the matter is that Lilith is a wife and a mother on Earth when her husband and small child are killed in a car accident. Lilith is still mourning their passing when the bombs are dropped on Earth and everything is destroyed.

Lilith's mother and several other members of her family have died from cancer or been diagnosed with cancer. Lilith herself is carrying cancer although she does not know it. One of the Oankali removes her cancer and it is no longer an issue in Lilith's body but to the Oankali this cancer is rare and beautiful to them and holds vast powers of regeneration. Her cancer may be part of the reason that Lilith is so attractive to some of the ooloi.

Lilith was chosen to become a leader for the people that are to return to Earth. Lilith is kept awake and lives with an Oankali family for many years before she awakens the first group of people. The people are so skeptical of her that they blame Lilith for their capture and say that she is a traitor to Humanity. Lilith wants to go live on Earth even if it means that she will be killed by the other Humans, but before she can go, the ooloi that she is mated to implants a child within her, seemingly giving Lilith no choice in staying or going. Lilith does not believe there is a way to have a complete union between the Humans and the Oankali. She loves her Oankali family, and her part Oankali children, but she also feels that she has traded part of her Humanity for what she has and she feels guilt over it.

Lilith is a Human and in some respects she holds being Human above all else but she loves her family and guides them when she can. It is seen throughout the book that people speak of the Lilith Iyapo that awakened the first Humans. They refer to her as a devil and a traitor to Humanity continually.

Akin

Akin is the construct child of Lilith Iyapo. Construct children are very different than Human children and since they can remember everything from birth, and have an adult type intelligence from birth, the story is seen from Akin's point of view from the beginning.

Akin, although half Oankali, appears very much like a Human child with the exception of his gray tongue, which he uses as other Oankali use their sensory tentacles. The Human resisters cannot have children of their own and when Akin is found outside the



village with only his adoptive Human father, Akin is abducted. Akin, although highly intelligent and capable of speech, is a typical baby at seventeen months and is unable to escape his captors. Akin is soon brought to a village of Human resisters and it becomes clear that his Oankali family have chosen to leave him there for a time. Akin wants very badly to go home and blames the Human resisters for not releasing him but never becomes bitter. After a time he adopts many of the people as his own family and comes to love them. They teach him a great deal about their Human heritage, and Akin's heritage, and Akin discovers that although the Oankali believe they are doing what is best to preserve life that they are being harmful to the Human resisters.

It is Akin that shows the Oankali that the Humans that wish to be set free should be. There is a disagreement about this but it is finally agreed upon. Although the Oankali agree to setting the Humans free, they cannot let the Humans have the Earth and none of them will help the Humans. The work is left up to Akin and those that believe in his cause. Akin sets up an Earth colony on Mars where the people can have their fertility restored to them and live free of Oankali interference. Although Akin looked Human when he was born, when he begins his metamorphosis he changes to look almost exactly like an Oankali adult. This worries Akin for a time; he is concerned that the Humans will not listen to him because he no longer resembles them. Although his looks do throw some people off, it becomes clear that there are many that want a chance at a life where they are free and many Humans go with him.

Jodahs

Jodahs is a construct child of Lilith Iyapo. Jodahs is supposed to be a male Oankali when it goes into metamorphosis but something goes wrong and when Jodahs begins metamorphosis it is discovered that it will not be male or female but a third sex which the Oankali call ooloi. It is the ooloi's job to mix the genes in an Oankali family and create life. Since the ooloi are capable of so much harm a construct ooloi has not yet been made. It had been determined among the Oankali that if a ooloi construct was born that it would be sent into exile on the ship so that it could not hurt anyone. Jodahs family decides they cannot send him away.

Ooloi need mates in order to stabilize themselves but for some reason Jodahs is particularly drawn to Humans. There are no young Humans on Earth and if Jodahs bonds with any old Humans when they die then it will die also. Jodahs decides to leave its family for a time in the forest and happens upon two Humans that are fertile, which is unheard of. Although Jodahs needs mates, it appears that it is drawn to these two, Tomas and Jesusa, out of more than need.

Jodahs bonds Tomas and Jesusa to him and this makes them understandably angry since they did not know what was going on. Being bonded to an ooloi means that you can never leave it. Despite their anger Tomas and Jesusa are happy to be with Jodahs and come to love it. Tomas and Jesusa have lived in such a small group for so long that there are vast genetic disorders and monstrous looking deformed babies are born and people die very young. Jodahs is able to heal Tomas and Jesusa's defects and they



eventually show him their village where Jodahs is able to convince the Humans of the possibility of going to Mars to the Human colony. The people resist at first but have been living with death and sickness so long that they soon agree to going.

The book ends with Jodahs starting a new ship for the Humans that are his mates and the others that want to be with them. Jodahs is still in exile of a type from his people because they fear him but they see clearly that he is no threat with his new people. Jodahs is simply told that there is always a danger when starting a new species.

Nikanj

Nikanj is Lilith's ooloi mate. Lilith is paired with Nikanj when it is a child. Lilith is with Nikanj while it begins to go through its metamorphosis and stays with it until it is an adult. Lilith does not realize that staying with an ooloi during its metamorphosis will cause her to be bonded to it in such a way that she can never be apart from it. Nikanj cares for Lilith and she eventually grows to love it although she never seems to truly forgive it.

Nikanj is the ooloi parent of Jodahs and Akin, as well as Lilith's many other children. Nikanj believes he has made a mistake when Jodahs becomes an ooloi, but soon after Nikanj's two children are proven to be ooloi there is another Oankali family that has two children begin their metamorphosis into ooloi.

Nikanj is strongly drawn to Lilith. This may be in part due to Lilith's propensity to developing cancer. Nikanj is attacked by a Human and would have died if Lilith had not saved him. Saving Nikanj increased the Humans' belief that Lilith had become a traitor.

Aor

Aor is Jodahs's closest sibling. Jodahs is certain he will be male until his metamorphosis begins and it is proven that he will be ooloi. When Jodahs is completely changed, Aor also proves to be turning into ooloi. It is unheard of for both children to be ooloi. Aor nearly dies because he has no Humans to bond to. Aor unintentionally turns himself into a creature that lives in water and is slowly disintegrating when Jodahs's Human mates agree to take Aor to their village.

Tate Marah

Tate is the first Human that Lilith awakens when she starts gathering people to go to Earth. Tate is a good friend to Lilith for a time but the other Humans soon turn against Lilith and Tate goes with the man she has paired up with, Gabriel Rinaldi. Tate later is seen in the village of Phoenix where Akin is taken by his abductors. Akin tells Tate who his mother is and Tate instructs Akin not to tell anyone that information. Tate appears to have regrets about things that have been done. Although she does not release Akin,



she treats him well and she reminds him a great deal of his mother although they look nothing alike.

Gabriel Rinaldi

Gabriel had been an actor before the war. Gabriel is friends with Lilith but soon after Lilith helps to save her ooloi mate, Nikanj, Gabriel turns against her. Gabriel believes that it is against nature to breed with the Oankali and tries to start up a Human village on Earth that they call Phoenix. Despite his dislike of Oankali, Gabriel grows to trust Akin and seemingly cares for him a great deal. Gabriel will risk his own life to go into a burning building to save Akin when others are trying to kill Akin. Gabriel and Tate, his wife, go to the Mars Colony.

Tomas and Jesusa

Tomas and Jesusa, brother and sister, are part of a Human village that has been hiding on Earth. Their village managed to find a fertile Human long ago and there is now a group of people in the village that can have children. The gene pool has been interbred for so long that all the people there have debilitating diseases. Tomas and Jesusa are wandering in the wilderness one last time before they have to start breeding for their village when they meet Jodahs. Tomas and Jesusa have heard all their lives that the Oankali are the devil but they have been living so long with sickness and watching young babies and deformed children die, that when Jodahs heals them they seem rather willing to agree to stay with Jodahs. Tomas and Jesusa agree to take Aor, Jodahs's sibling, to their village in the hopes that Aor can find Human mates as well.

Augustino Leal, Tino

Tino is a man who lived for a time in the Phoenix village. He comes to Lo where Lilith is living and decides to stay with her. Tino becomes the adoptive father of Akin. Tino is nearly killed when Human resisters come and steal Akin. Tino and Lilith have many more children together.

Joseph Shing

Joseph Shing is a member of the first group of Humans that Lilith awakes to take to Earth. Joseph and Lilith soon begin a relationship and for this reason Joseph is in some danger because the other Humans fear Lilith. Joseph is given amazing healing powers in the hopes that if he is attacked he will not die. Joseph is attacked and while laying unconscious, his attackers, who had only meant to knock him out, watch his body heal itself. The attackers become frightened and one of them, believing Joseph cannot be Human, begins hacking at Joseph until he is almost decapitated. Joseph's genetic code is saved and Lilith is impregnated with several of Joseph's children including Akin, although Joseph has been dead for thirty years when Akin was born.



Objects/Places

Oankali

Oankali are the alien race that comes to Earth and saves the last remaining Humans from death. The Oankali look very differently than Humans do but feel that Humans are a treasure. The Oankali treasure life so much that they refuse to let Humans continue on the way that they have been going in the knowledge that Humans will try to kill themselves again with war or some other means. In an Oankali family there is a male, female and an ooloi, which is neither male nor female.

Ooloi

Ooloi is the name of the neuter of the Oankali species. It is the Ooloi's job to match up the genetic sequence so that there are no mistakes in birth. Male and female do not touch each other in an Oankali family but have a complete bonding through the ooloi. Many of the Humans refuse to have anything to do with the Oankali and especially hate the ooloi, who have four arms instead of two and can make the Humans feel as if they have little control over their own bodies.

Construct

Construct is the name given to the children that are both Oankali and Human. These children are looked for when they are small. Infertile Humans who do not wish to become part of an Oankali family steal the children although they are always found and returned. Lilith has many construct children. Some of the children look a great deal like Humans, but when they go through metamorphosis that changes.

Resisters

Resisters are the title given to the Humans that refuse to become part of an Oankali family. The resistor villages are not necessarily violent but it is seen that it is common for them to attempt to shoot Oankali if they come in. Resisters are allowed to do as they please unless they actually kill someone, at which point they will be taken to the ship and never allowed to return to Earth. It is a group of resisters that keep Akin after he is kidnapped.

Phoenix

Phoenix is the name of the resistor city where Akin is taken to. Here he is raised with Tate and Gabriel. Akin does not want to be here and is frightened for a time but Akin is left there to learn about the Humans. After a year Akin returns to his people. Once Akin



begins the Mars Colony he goes back to Phoenix to ask for their help in talking to the other resisters.

Lo

Lo is the name of the place where Lilith and her Oankali family live on Earth. Lo is a growing living thing that eventually will become a ship. When the ship leaves Earth there will be nothing left behind and Earth will be an uninhabitable planet.

Cancer

Cancer is a disease that afflicts Humans and has killed many of Lilith's own family members. It is this disease that is part of the reason that the Oankali are so drawn to Humans. With this disease the Oankali are able to help regenerate limbs and do things they were not able to do before.

Mars Colony

Akin is a construct and so understands both the Human resisters' problems and how to speak to the Oankali. The Humans can no longer have Earth since there will be nothing left when the Oankali are done with it. The Mars Colony is started for the people who want to be free and be able to have children. Many of the people from Phoenix choose to go here

Metamorphosis

Each Oankali goes through at least one metamorphosis. The ooloi go through more than one and during their second metamorphosis they develop their second set of arms which are sensory arms. During metamorphosis a Human around an ooloi is bound to the ooloi permanently.

Stasis Plants

These are the plants that are used to keep Humans asleep until it is time for them to go to Earth. These plants are green and before they were found by the Oankali, the plants were carnivorous. The Oankali changed them so that the plants would not eat their prey but could still feed off of the waste the Humans give off.



Themes

Freedom

Freedom is a clear theme throughout the story of Lilith's Brood. This theme is first seen when the book opens and the only perspective given to the reader is that of Lilith, who is being held captive. She has moments when she appears to almost, or perhaps does, lose her sanity because of the cage she has been put in. She has very little freedom while in the cage. The rest of Lilith's story focuses on the freedoms that the people do not have now that they are being controlled by the Oankali. Lilith, and the other Humans, do feel a great deal of pleasure when they are with the aliens but this pleasure seemingly makes the Humans lose control and they do not like that feeling either. The Humans feel that they are given no choice in the matter. This feeling of freedom gone will be responsible for many of the fights and the resisters that quickly come to play in the story.

The resisters are not seen until the Humans have been put on Earth. These are the people that want to be freed to have children on their own without the Oankali's influence and control. Many of the people seem to think that they are being treated as children. The chemical and physical draw that the Oankali can create in a person makes some of the people in the story comment that they feel that they are not in control of their own emotions or bodies. Their desire for freedom becomes the main focus for many of the Humans who are on Earth. It is not until the Oankali agree to build the Humans a colony on Mars where they can have their fertility restored that they become compliant on some level.

In the last part of the book the desire for freedom is seen from a different perspective. The first construct Ooloi has been born and there are many of the Oankali that believe it could be dangerous because of its Human contradiction and so it is decided that the Ooloi, Akin will be put on the ship, and not allowed to return to his home on Earth. Akin only wants to be free to make his own choice and this eventually drives him into the forest. Along side of his struggle to be free, it is quickly seen that there is a group of Humans that have found a fertile person among them. This fertile Human was a mistake and so the Humans began interbreeding with the hope of creating a new race but have bred in deformities so strong that babies look hideous and die when they are born and people are forced to marry those that they do not love. Many of these people feel trapped by the genetic disorders that have ravaged many of them as well as the knowledge that they are told who to marry. When they discover there is a Mars colony, with the option of agreeing to take on an Ooloi mate, these people find the freedom that they were looking for.



The Sanctity of Life

The sanctity of life is the drive for the Oankali rescuing the Humans. There are quite a few chapters that focus on the reason that these creatures were so willing to come in and pick up the survivors from Earth. They found in the Human race a great contradiction and blame this contradiction for the reason that Humans were almost successful in destroying themselves. The Oankali also believe that, given the chance, Humans will eventually fall into that same problem again. There are many Humans that argue with this but the Oankali seem certain that it is a fact. The Oankali take away the Human's ability to be fertile at first so that the Humans can only have children with Oankali mates and that the child will be free from the Human contradiction. When Humans are found that have become fertile at the end of the story, it is seen that the Oankali are willing to let these people go to Mars, or take Oankali mates; but if they choose to stay where they are, they will not be allowed to retain their fertility. This is not a punishment but the Oankali are taking a great part of Earth with them when they go into space. This will be far into the future but the Oankali believe it is wrong to allow life to be created when they know it will be destroyed because the Earth will not be hospitable when the Oankali leave.

The sanctity of life is one of the only rules that the Oankali will intervene in Human affairs because of. When a Human is known to have committed murder, that Human is drugged and taken back to the ship and is no longer allowed to live on Earth. This is not a deterrent for all Humans. There are many who say that it is better to die Human than to cooperate with the Oankali. The Oankali believe strongly that the Humans that are allowed to go and live on Mars will attempt to destroy themselves again. This is the reason that it takes the Oankali so long to agree to start a colony for the people to live on free from Oankali influence.

The Importance of Family

Many of the struggles that are seen in the story come from a desire to be free but the Humans are free to do almost anything they want—with the exception of having children. The Humans in the story often are seen stealing the construct children because they cannot have their own. There are Humans in the story that do not have a strong desire to have a construct child but many of the Humans in the story are so focused on being able to have children again that when the opportunity arises for them to go to Mars and have their fertility restored, they willingly take the opportunity, even though life on Mars will be very hard and the terrain must be changed to suit Human life.

One of the only things that the Humans and the Oankali seem to have in common is the desire to have a family and family ties. The Oankali live in very close family groups, although the family is a very different type than that of what Humans have. The family that is looked at most closely throughout the story is that of Lilith. Lilith herself is not always the focus of the story but she is seen as a constant throughout the story and her children all typically the characters that the point of view comes from.



The importance of family is also seen when looking at many of the resisters in the story. There are some of the Humans that die, or are thought to die, because they are trying to help the people that they love. Tat and Gabriel do not have any children but they appear to become a family when Lilith's son, Akin, is brought to them. This family tie seems to retain some of its importance to all of them even after Akin is taken back home to Lilith and the others. Another strong family bond is looked at when Jodahs finds a brother and sister, Jesusa and Tomas. Although this family bond is not the focus of the story, it is seen that the two, despite being Human, know each other well enough to communicate with only a look.

Style

Point of View

The point of view in the story changes. In the part of the book that is titled "Dawn," the point of view will be in the past tense and third person but will always come from Lilith. There are points in the story when Lilith is in solitary confinement or when she is being plotted against by the Humans, as well as other moments in the story, when the reader will have only the information that Lilith has. Since the point of view is limited the reader will only come to understand things in the book as Lilith begins to understand them or they are explained to her. Despite the point of view coming only from Lilith, there will be moments when it is not completely clear what Lilith is thinking either. The point of view is that of a Human that slowly begins to trust the Oankali, despite her beliefs that the Oankali are not right in what they have done.

In the second part of the book titled "Adulthood Rites," the point of view is also past tense and third person but is given primarily from the point of view of Akin. Akin is part Human and part Oankali. He is abducted and lives for a time with resister Humans. They teach him a great deal about his Human heritage. This will be crucial for the Human cause and it will be Akin who gives the Humans an option of living on Mars and being able to have their fertility restored to them. The point of view in this section of the book will come primarily from Akin but there are moments when the point of view in the story comes from other characters. This change in point of view helps the reader have a deeper understanding of the vast differences that still encompass these two cultures.

In the third part of the book titled "Imago," the point of view is written in first person, unlike the previous two sections of the book, but remains in past tense. "Imago" comes from the point of view of Jodahs, Lilith's ooloi construct child. This is the first time in the story that the perspective of an ooloi is given to the reader. It will be this point of view that helps the reader better understand much of the Oankali's reasoning for the things that they have done. It is Jodahs' Oankali heritage that gives the reader a better view of that culture but it is the Human part of Jodahs that seemingly helps the reader connect with it. It may also be the Human part of Jodahs and Aor that helps the village of Humans trust them and change their views of the Oankali.

There is a lot of background necessary for the reader to understand where the story is starting from. This information will be given in a number of different ways, including inner monologue, dialog, and exposition. The point of view is helpful to the reader in understanding much of what is going on and the point of view will change as the characters themselves and the relationship between the Humans and the Oankali change.



Setting

When the story opens, the only setting that is seen for some time in the story is that of the isolation room that Lilith is kept in. Once she is allowed out of her room the space ship she is kept on is described. The space ship is actually a living thing and so much of the story explains how the ships work and what they are capable of. The way that a ship is grown is looked more closely at later in the story because there is another ship that is started growing on Earth. Although what Lilith is kept on is a ship, it is such a complete ecosystem that it is hard for many of the Humans to believe that it is actually a craft and that they are not on Earth.

When the Humans are allowed to go to Earth it is very different than the Earth had been. There are a lot of plants and animals that are extinct in the story and because of the lack of life on the Earth there are many other animals and plants that are alien that have been introduced to stabilize the ecosystem. There are a lot of these items that are described in terms to the old animals and plants that used to be on Earth.

The war that the Earth went through is not ever seen but it is described by many of those that lived through the war. The Oankali also describe what they know of the war. Another setting that is often described is that of the life that the people will be living on the Mars colony. There is a lot of talk about how hard the life will be and how the Humans will have to live underground until the terrain can be made to sustain Human life. There is also an explanation of what the planet should look more like when it has been made into something that will hold Human life. Although the Mars colony is talked about often, the reader never follows a character to Mars. There is a great amount of detail given to the different settings in the book. Most of these settings will be very different in structure, look, and feel as described by the characters that go there.

Language and Meaning

The language in the story is written in a very informal style and very easily understood in regards to the structure of the language. The Humans in the story are from what would have been considered a modern day Earth. The aliens speak a little differently but they do most of their talking in order to communicate with the Humans. There are a lot of words and things in the story that have been named because of the meaning of the name. The town that Akin is taken to after he is abducted is called Phoenix, after the mythical bird that arises from the ashes. The last section of the book is titled "Imago." The word Imago is the word for the adult stage that an insect goes through after its final metamorphosis. This is a mirrored reflection of both the stages that the Humans and the Oankali have gone through as well as the struggle that the main character in that section of the book, Jodahs, will go through.

There are many words and phrases in the book that will be unique to this piece of literature. There will be a lot of the book that is dedicated simply to explaining the Oankali, their beliefs, customs and the way that their families are structured. Their family structure is very unique and strange and will take a great deal of description to be



understood. The ooloi are neither male and female. This causes some of the Humans confusion since Humans appear to believe that a person must be either male or female but the ooloi is neuter. It is the ooloi that is the center of the family that is created in the Oankali structure. There are many more of the women that seem able to be accepting of the ooloi rather than the men.

The name of the Oankali and the Humans that are taken into Oankali families are very long and the names themselves indicate a person's family, age, and other information. These names are very long and will often be more than four words long. For this reason the characters are called by shorter names. Nikanj, Lilith's ooloi mate, is actually named Kaalnikanj oo Jdahyatediinkahguyaht aj Dinso. There are also general names used for people that indicate if a person is a mate, child or have gone through their final metamorphosis.

Structure

Lilith's Brood consists of seven hundred and forty-six pages. Lilith's Brood was originally three different books. Each of these book is further divided into sections and each section is divided into chapters. Some of the chapters are several pages in length while there are others that are less than one page long. Each of the sections is named and numbered but the chapters are only numbered.

Since the story had originally been a three story series there is a major plot that all three have in common. There are several subplots found throughout the story as well as the major theme. The only main plot that did not seem to resolvedover the course of the three books is the question of whether or not humans would again destroy themselves after several generations. The rest of the plots are seemingly resolved before the third book is concluded.

In all three books the main plot is the question of whether Humans can learn to live with Oankali and if the Humans can regain their freedom. In the first book the plot is focused on Lilith and her struggle as she slowly accepts her place with the Oankali. In the second book the plot focuses on the life and purpose that Akin finds as a Human Oankali construct. The third book focuses on the life of Jodahs as he becomes the first ooloi construct.



Quotes

"Your Earth is still your Earth, but between the efforts of your people to destroy it and ours to restore it, it has changed." Book 1: Dawn; Section 1: Womb; Chapter 5; pp. 33-32.

"Tate and Leah laughed at her, refused absolutely to believe that any manipulation of DNA could mix Humans with extraterrestrial aliens." Book 1: Dawn; Section 3: Nursery; Chapter 4; p. 143.

"She would organize the Humans into a coherent unit or she would serve as a scapegoat for whoever else organized them." Book 1: Dawn; Section 3: Nursery; Chapter 11; p. 175.

"Yet it talked about mixed settlements, Human and Oankali-trade-partner settlements within which ooloi would control the fertility and "mix" the children of both groups." Book 1: Dawn; Section 4: The Training Room; Chapter 1; p. 200.

"In Phoenix, people had said things like that—that she was possessed of the devil, that she had sold first herself, then Humanity, that she was the first to go willingly to an Oankali bed to become their whore and to seduce other Humans..." Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 1: Lo; Chapter 6; p. 298.

"He was Oankali enough to be listened to by other Oankali and Human enough to know that resister Humans were being treated with cruelty and condescension." Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 2: Phoenix; Chapter 19; p. 404.

"And since they must be so Human and still male, and eventually fertile, they must come dangerously close to fully Human males in some ways. They bear more of the Human Contradiction than any other people." Book 2: Adulthood Rites; Section 3: Chkahichdahk; Chapter 4; p. 442.

"I would be the most extreme version of a construct—not just a mix of Human and Oankali characteristics, but able to use my body in ways that neither Human nor Oankali could. Synergy." Book 3: Imago; Section 1: Metamorphosis; Chapter 4; p. 549.

"That's why Humans are such a treasure. They've given us regenerative abilities we had never been able to trade for before, even though we've found other species that had such abilities." Book 3: Imago; Section 1: Metamorphosis; Chapter 4; p. 550.

"It wants us to stay and I want to stay and so do you, and we shouldn't! Something is wrong." Book 3: Imago; Section 2: Exile; Chapter 9; p. 648.

"Your people have been cut off for a long time. They don't realize there's another, larger colony of healthy, fertile Humans living and growing without Oankali." Book 3: Imago; Section 3: Imago; Chapter 7; p. 709.



"They didn't suddenly begin to love us, but they stopped spitting as we walked by, stopped muttering curses or threats at us, stopped pointing their guns at us to remind us of their power and their fear." Book 3: Imago; Section 3: Imago; Chapter 12; p. 737.

"My god, if there had been people like you around a hundred years ago, I couldn't have become a resister. I think there would be no resisters." Book 3: Imago; Section 3: Imago; Chapter 14; p. 740.



Topics for Discussion

Lilith obviously loves her family. Would Lilith have left her family and Nikanj if she had been physically able? Explain your answer.

The people in Phoenix take the view that if you go and live with the Oankali that you are a traitor. Would knowing that he was alive and well with the Oankali been a relief to his parents and those in Phoenix? Why or why not?

Joseph had been rather outspoken about the Oankali before his death. Would Joseph have chosen to stay with Lilith or side with the resisters? Explain your answer.

Why do the men in the beginning of the story seem to have a harder time accepting the Oankali and mating with an ooloi than the women?

All of the story is told in third person point of view except for that of Jodahs. What is the reason that Jodahs' part of the tale is put in first person? What would have been different to the reader had Jodahs' tale been in third person as well?

The name of the book is Lilith's Brood. Explain why this is or is not a fitting name for the book. What other names could the trilogy have been given? Explain.

Does Jodahs and Aor seem to be more male or female? What traits make them seem this way? Is it possible for a Human to fully understand the concept of something being neither male or female? Why or why not?

Why was it easier for the people in Tomas and Jesusa's village to accept ooloi and Oankali? Explain your answer.