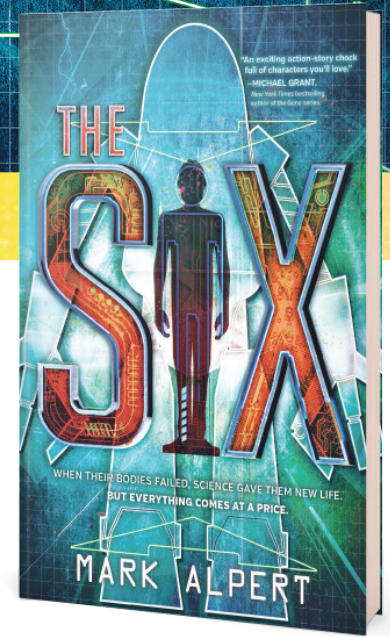


THE SIX BY MARK ALPERT

DISCUSSION GUIDE



To save humanity, they must relinquish theirs.

Crippled by muscular dystrophy, Adam spends his days playing virtual reality games, until a dangerously advanced artificial intelligence program that can control other machines tries to kill him.

Created by Adam's father, Sigma has escaped its cyber prison and is threatening world domination. In order to stop Sigma, Adam and five other terminally ill teens sacrifice their bodies and upload their minds into weaponized robots. Together, The Six must learn how to manipulate their new mechanical forms—and prepare for epic combat—before Sigma destroys humanity.



About the Author

Mark Alpert is a contributing editor at *Scientific American* and the author of several science-oriented adult thrillers: *Final Theory*, *The Omega Theory*, *Extinction*, and *The Furies*. This is his first young adult novel. He lives with his family in New York. Visit Mark online at markalpert.com.

★ “PLENTY OF HIGH-SPEED ACTION...FRESH AND FASCINATING.”

—BOOKLIST STARRED REVIEW

“A WELL-RESEARCHED, HARD-CORE SCIENCE FICTION JOYRIDE. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.”

—SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

“AN EXCITING ACTION STORY CHOCK-FULL OF CHARACTERS YOU’LL LOVE.”

—MICHAEL GRANT, NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE GONE SERIES



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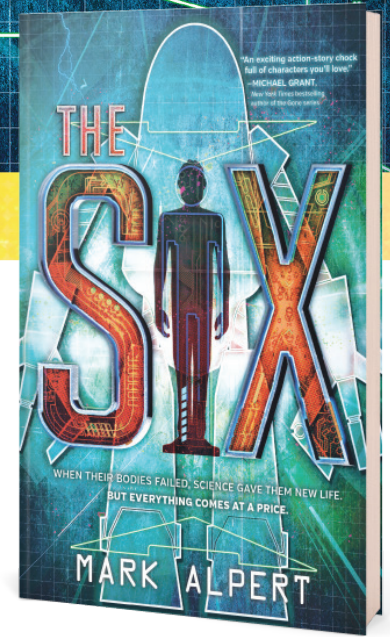
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DISCUSSION GUIDE



1. At the beginning of *The Six*, Adam Armstrong is confined to a wheelchair and dying of muscular dystrophy. What emotions would you feel if you had less than six months to live? How would you spend those final months?
2. The U.S. Army offers Adam a chance to survive, but he has to give up his body and transfer his mind to computer circuits. Some scientists believe this kind of transfer will become a real option by 2050. Would you take that offer?
3. Adam's mother believes her son's soul will go to heaven when his body dies. Adam believes his soul will transfer to the circuits along with his copied memories. Who's right?
4. When Adam "wakes up" inside the circuits of the Pioneer robot, is he still the same boy? Or is he a copy?
5. Does the U.S. Army have the right to conduct this kind of experiment, even if it's the only way to save the human race?
6. Sigma is an artificial intelligence (AI) that sees all humans as competitors. Is it possible to program an AI to be friendly instead? What instructions would you give the AI to guarantee it wouldn't hurt anyone? How would you make sure the AI obeyed those instructions if it was smart enough to change its own programming?
7. Adam and the other Pioneers have superhuman strength and speed, plus the ability to analyze huge amounts of information. Which robotic abilities would you most like to have, and why?
8. The Pioneers can also transfer their minds to planes, tanks, helicopters, and missiles. If the Army turned you into a weapon, would you be excited or appalled?
9. Adam doesn't want to follow the Army's orders. Does he have the right to disobey, or did he give up that right when he agreed to become a Pioneer?
10. The Pioneers learn how to manipulate the emotions running through their circuits. If you could do the same, would you make yourself happier? Or would you worry, as Adam does, about losing a piece of yourself in the process?



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