

This Mortal Coil

Author: Emily Suvada

Reviewed by: Owen Broadwater, 12 years old

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This Mortal Coil is set in the future, after the breakout of the plague known in the book as “Hydra.” This plague has forced the majority of the population underground, in special bunkers controlled by the organization named “Cartaxus”. The world is also largely digitized, and almost everyone has an armband wired into them, which contains helpful programs and codes. Thus, the places people can hack grew exponentially. The protagonist Catarina is the daughter of a world-renowned geneticist and hacker Lachlan Agatta. After years living in seclusion on the surface, Cartaxus abducts Lachlan and his assistant Dax. As the population above-ground plummets, Catarina is able to hide from the group that runs the world and is exclusively self-serving, Cartaxus, and aid the Skies, a group of gene hackers who release medicinal codes to people on the surface. Her life is isolated and unremarkable. That is, until a Cartaxus soldier named Cole appears at her front door, claiming that she alone holds the key to the Hydra vaccine Lachlan died creating. However, she is not the only one looking for the cure and finds unexpected enemies at every turn.

The best part of this book is how the author is able to keep the reader in the dark, creating plot twists that leave you reeling. It always seems as though Suvada has a few dozen tricks up her sleeve, waiting for the proper moment to reveal those secrets. Throughout all of these twists and turns, it was intriguing to see the dystopian world from Catarina’s perspective and to witness how her character is forged by unfortunate circumstances. Furthermore, the futuristic world of the book raised some very interesting ideas of human nature. Everyone could change their appearance with a few lines of code, so issues such as race are not seen. This tremendous book is going to leave you on the edge of your seat, eager for the sequel, This Cruel Design.

There are not that many negatives about this book, but the gene-hacking aspect of the book is not particularly well written. For those who have a good understanding of coding, you will be able to understand the concepts, but then the coding in the book is present at an elementary level. For all others, you will barely be able to understand what Emily Suvada is talking about. All in all, it is a little frustrating, but the positives far outweigh the negatives. No one younger than 9 should read this book, as a result of violence. This dystopian book would be a great read for anyone interested in coding, or who enjoy the examination and revelation of deeper ideals. It would also keep anyone captivated by its unpredictable storyline and plot twists.

Recommended Titles:

- Pandemic by A.G Riddle
- Age of Order by Julian North
- This Cruel Design by Emily Suvada
- Legend by Marie Lu
- Gone by Michael Grant