



Dungeon Brain

Benjamin Kane Ethridge

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From Bram Stoker Award winning author Benjamin Kane Ethridge.

June Nilman is a woman with thousands of personalities in her head and none of them are her own. Stricken with amnesia and trapped in a room in an abandoned hospital, her caretaker, Nurse Maggie, wants her to remain captive forever. At night June hears creatures patrolling in and out of the hospital, and in time discovers Maggie has mental control over them. In planning her escape, June has an extensive catalogue of minds to probe for help, but dipping into the minds of her mental prisoners is often a practice in psychological endurance. Escape seems impossible until June discovers a rat hole in the wall-- the starting point of her freedom.

But freedom in this war-torn world may be more dreadful than she ever imagined.

Dungeon Brain is a locked room mystery of the body and mind that expands across the realms of science fiction and horror.

Dungeon Brain Details

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Author : Benjamin Kane Ethridge

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From Reader Review Dungeon Brain for online ebook

Carl Alves says

Dungeon Brain is a unique dark, science fiction novel. Exceptionally well written by Benjamin Kane Ethridge, the novel presents an interesting lead character that isn't just one character but many. June wakes up a captive in a nearly abandoned hospital in a war-torn world that is in many ways reminiscent of Europe during World War II. Unfortunately for June, she is not alone at the hospital. She is under the care of Maggie — think Misery Chastain from Stephen King's Misery. June has no idea who she is, where she's at, or what she's doing there. To complicate matters, not only does June have voices in her head, she has a whole slew of actual people in her head. These people are locked away, and sometimes they can feed June information, but mostly she seems confused by them, not that I blame her. It's hard enough to sort things out in your head without having people trying to talk to you.

Outside of the hospital lurk the alien Rotviges. Are they friend or foe? That's what June has to figure out as she hatches a plan to escape from the obsessive Maggie. June later finds herself out of Maggie's clutches and in a maze, where she begins to learn more about herself. In the process she finds out that the stakes are much higher for her than what she had originally thought.

Ethridge's prose has a lyrical quality to it. He weaves a tale that is complex and at times a bit daunting yet very satisfying. Ethridge also effectively puts the reader in June's head, making them feel as she feels, sorting through the confusion of losing her memory and dealing with all of the people living inside her. The story has a slow momentum build, gaining strength as June figures out who she is and what she must do, delivering big time for a fiery finale. Dungeon Brain is a departure from Ethridge's previous works, but also a welcome addition to his prior literary efforts - a novel I highly recommend.

Carl Alves - author of Blood Street

Queenie Thayer-Tirone says

Dungeon Brain is a twisted little Sci-fi novel, I'll give it that. I do like twisted. It's a well crafted, devious little tale. But it's not what I would consider horror, and I have to admit, it's not what I would usually read. And because of this, I find writing this review hard. There is darkness in it sure, and some would consider it horror, but sometimes I found a lot of the scenes where there only to produce shock value in the readers. But I'm getting ahead of myself...

Sci-fi is probably the least favourite of genres for me. I am highly critical of it, especially reading it, and expect too much from it. So keep that in mind when you read this. Of course, I can enjoy science fiction and have, several times. But what I require from the science fiction genre might be a little more demanding than most readers. Hard SF is not my bag. Too much explaining and not enough story telling. I like the exploration part of SF, but if you spend half the book explaining how a rocket ship can get to mars, I'm bored. I have to say, the writer does do a fairly good job balancing that out. He is a very talented story teller. But he still spends too much time keeping us completely in the dark about what's going on. We get some snippets sure, but then the main character's mind is wiped again and that irritated me. She's back to square one and it's roughly 100 pages in. It felt like a carrot was dangled then ripped away, instead of having the carrot stay to lead me on.

The main plot follows a woman who for a big chunk of the book is only known as The Woman, and who has multiple people living in her head. We find out they are mostly convicts, and later, we find out she steals minds from more than just humans. She can steal ANY being's mind. And we start off with this Woman being a prisoner of a creepy, completely bonkers woman named Maggie, who likes to fancy herself a nurse even though she repeatedly abuses The Woman and drugs her so she can't remember anything. Oh and Maggie has some aliens she keeps as slaves called the Rotviges. There's also some sort of war going on just beyond the prison The Woman is kept, and the aliens are a part of that war.

Eventually after another mind wipe and her need to follow Mr. Rat, we find out her name is June and she escapes. The abuse she has to suffer under Maggie's care before this though, seemed unnecessary to me. I know Maggie is crazy, but I didn't need to see her self mutilate on June to prove it. And readers of my blog, you know I'm not squirmish. I like gore, violence and all that. But if it's senseless and not helpful to progressing a story, I either tune it out or laugh it off. I tuned this out. I shrugged and went, "Okay, so what? Why should I care? I don't know this woman who has lost her memory and has a bunch of people in her head, and this Maggie chick is OMFG crazy!" Maybe if the writer spent more time making me care about June, instead of taking the carrot away just as I am about to know things about her as a person with feelings (let alone her past), I wouldn't feel so numb about it. June talks more to her head-mates and Maggie than learns anything substantial about herself, and that really takes away the sense of dread for me. Especially since none of these "people" want to help her and just screw her around on information.

The writer does eventually explain things, and the big reveal is nice. I am glad he tried to unravel June like a rose, so we get layers of the character. It was a neat attempt, but to me it was just that. An attempt. I didn't feel it was done successfully. Once June leaves the facility though things get more interesting. The story stopped dragging and more characters interact with June, giving her more life. She stops being this whimpering, helpless prisoner and has more agency. Of course, she falls into another kind of prison when she encounters the other run away slaves from the facility, but this time it feels like the carrot is within reach. It's not just a game of Cat-Maggie and Mouse-June, and it's more engaging for me. Also, we find out what kind of person June really is and see her explore her personality.

I like the questions the writer poses with this reveal too. Because while I was annoyed with the drawn out helpless June, I see it's merit. If it was a little more condensed I think I would have enjoyed it more, and if I didn't have to see her get wiped again so deep in the book. Because it's merit comes in the second half of the book, when it's revealed who June really is. And then you wonder to yourself if the real June is really a cowardly thing, or...something else entirely.

I won't spoil that reveal for you. June's awareness of herself is a very awesome part of the book. It reveals EVERYTHING and all the pieces fall into place. Overall, I didn't dislike the book. I found it had some interesting philosophical questions, some really well written parts, and an interesting story/premise. If you like SF, by all means, pick it up. Especially dark SF. But to me, there wasn't enough here to make me feel like it was a horror novel. I have a feeling I'd like some of this writer's other work more.

Amy says

I am not a big fan of Sci-Fi but I found Dungeon Brain to be very interesting. I like how the story unfolds to both the reader and the amnesiac main character. The writing was excellent and there weren't too many scientific explanations to detract from the flow of the story. It wasn't exactly a horror story (in my opinion) but there was a definite darkness to it.

Louise Gorton says

an absolutely brilliant book, I would recommend it to anyone. I read it 9 months ago with a view to reread before giving a review but the story was so unique and well written it is still clear in my head as if I read it yesterday.

the characters are well written and likeable, the scenery set perfectly and the story grabs you from beginning to end as you want to find out along with June what is going on, who and where she is.
a must read

Kate Jonez says

Dark and disturbing science fiction. If for a moment you think you know where this story is going, keep reading. This book is exceptionally original and well written.

Claire says

Received this book from the author so thank you Ben!

At the beginning of the book I was as confused as the main character June. The way the book is written is fast-paced and it brings you along for the ride. I did lose myself and end up there in the story, which I love. The writing flows well and draws you in.

The only thing I did not like about this book was the end. I wanted it to continue!

Jeff Beesler says

Dungeon Brain is an easy-to-read, quick-paced story that doesn't do any overkill in the details department. The antagonist, Nurse Maggie, creeps me out in the wonderful way that all antagonists, villains, and others of this ilk should disturb me. The amnesiac June is believable as a protagonist. The ending surprised me as well in a way that made sense to me. I'll be sure to read more from Mr. Ethridge as he has a firm grip on his storytelling.

Nicole says

There were a couple of parts in this book that were outside my comfort zone, but other than that I really enjoyed the story. This is the second book I've read by Mr. Ethridge and I'm quite impressed with the originality and his style of his writing. Thanks for the good read!

Raelyn Falkin says

This is the first time I've read dark scifi and needless to say I was not prepared. The book was very well written. I loved that the book started off with the reader being as confused as June. She wakes up with no memories of who she is or where she is. As we continue to read we learn along with her what is going on and what happened to June. I kept reading because I was intrigued and wanted to know where this story was going to go. The writing was very well – in my opinion. I could follow along and visualize what was happening. I felt like I could understand what the characters were feeling even if I didn't really connect to any of them.

I was also grossed out about a lot of the things that happened in this book. Which is good because it's supposed to be dark and disturbing. What I didn't like much about this book is I felt it was a bit slow going at certain parts. There were times where I just didn't feel like picking up the book. I slugged through and am happy that I did. While I didn't like how this book ended it was well written. I would recommend this book to anyone who loves dark scifi. I wouldn't exactly qualify it as horror because it wasn't innately scary, but it was very dark and gory.

While I didn't like the story I do have to admit that I felt plenty of emotion while reading this book. I think that any book that can make you feel something is probably a good book (unless the emotion is rage/hate because the writing is bad... that's something different). I felt LOTS of rage when reading this book. And it was the type where I just wanted to throw it out the window when I finished but sadly I couldn't because I was reading it on my kindle. There might also be some mental scarring at some of the things in this book.

WARNING!!!! This book does contain a rape scene. While it is between two women and no penetration occurred it does qualify as rape. There is also quite a bit of gore so be prepared.

~ The Big Nerd

A.E. says

I'm not known for liking science fiction, with very few exceptions, and I tend not to like what's commonly termed as "hard SF" which is science fiction that focuses more on the science aspect, the technicalities, etc, as opposed to "soft SF" which has sci-fi elements, but is ultimately a fantasy story, or it's a drama that just happens to be set in space. Nurse Maggie more than fulfills her role as a memorable villain, one of those people you will truly love to hate, and June, the titular Dungeon Brain, has secrets of her own that will make you as the reader question whether you're rooting for a good guy or just another villain with slightly different intentions than Maggie. So there you have it, readers. Even if you're not the biggest sci-fi fan, but you've enjoyed Ethridge's previous horror novels, you will definitely get a kick out of Dungeon Brain which is another finely crafted novel from the author's thankfully ever-growing repertoire, something I can't get enough of.

Rena Mason says

I've read a lot of this author's work, and this one in particular, resonated with me. Besides being well written, I think the author went above and beyond to explain the almost unexplainable. I enjoy reading dark science

fiction in general but I appreciated the horror slant this story had as well. A woman wakes up not knowing much of anything about her past, with people she's captured in her mind that only make figuring out what happened to her even more confusing. If you like puzzles, this book's for you. A real brain twister, but I very much enjoyed the challenge!
