



# False Hearts

*Laura Lam*

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Orphan Black meets Inception: Two formerly conjoined sisters are ensnared in a murderous plot involving psychoactive drugs, shared dreaming, organized crime, and a sinister cult.

Raised in the closed cult of Mana's Hearth and denied access to modern technology, conjoined sisters Taema and Tila dream of a life beyond the walls of the compound. When the heart they share begins to fail, the twins escape to San Francisco, where they are surgically separated and given new artificial hearts. From then on they pursue lives beyond anything they could have previously imagined.

Ten years later, Tila returns one night to the twins' home in the city, terrified and covered in blood, just before the police arrive and arrest her for murder—the first homicide by a civilian in decades. Tila is suspected of involvement with the Ratel, a powerful crime syndicate that deals in the flow of Zeal, a drug that allows violent minds to enact their darkest desires in a terrifying dreamscape. Taema is given a proposition: go undercover as her sister and perhaps save her twin's life. But during her investigation Taema discovers disturbing links between the twins' past and their present. Once unable to keep anything from each other, the sisters now discover the true cost of secrets.

## False Hearts Details

Date : Published June 16th 2016 by Macmillan (first published June 14th 2016)

ISBN : 9781447286424

Author : Laura Lam

Format : Hardcover 366 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fantasy, Young Adult, Thriller, Mystery, Fiction

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## From Reader Review False Hearts for online ebook

### The Reading's Love Blog says

LA RECENSIONE COMPLETA QUI: <https://thereadingslove.blogspot.it/2015/07/2055-false-hearts-di-laura-lam.html>...

2055: False Hearts è un romanzo distopico molto originale, ricco di colpi di scena, di missioni segrete e scenari alquanto vicini al nostro presente.

Dopo aver letto la trama ho capito che questo libro mi sarebbe piaciuto. E così è stato. Sono rimasta affascinata fin da subito da questa storia che tratta temi avvincenti che personalmente mi attraggono quali i sogni, i misteri e la mente umana. Questo romanzo non è soltanto distopico ma anche un thriller a tutti gli effetti che intreccia l'aspetto arcano e l'aspetto futuristico. Una storia, quella di Tila e Taema che va al di là di una semplice sorellanza e del tipico senso di protezione. Un romanzo travolgente, avvincente e con una buona dose di suspense. Verrete catapultati nel mondo futuristico colmo di complotti, colpi di scena, segreti ed inganni di San Francisco. La parola d'ordine è: non fidarsi di nessuno.

Laura Lam riesce a travolgere il lettore fin dalle prime pagine in un mondo moderno in cui la tecnologia ha preso possesso della vita degli individui e la plasma alla sua volontà.

Un'interpretazione escogitata nei minimi particolari che raffigura con tratti crudi un futuro del tutto vicino all'odierno. E' stato interessante e curioso poter addentrarsi nella mente umano e poter vivere il sogno come fosse realtà. False speranze e desideri ingannevoli che modellano la mente umana e la portano alla follia. Tila e Taema sono sorelle siamesi nate con un unico cuore, hanno vissuto la maggior parte della loro vita unite e quando finalmente riescono a fuggire da Mana's Hearth, un luogo avverso in cui la dirigente si professava messaggera di un Dio irreale, decidono di sottoporsi a San Francisco ad un'operazione chirurgica molto delicata per ottenere due cuori artificiali...

CONTINUA SUL NOSTRO BLOG. VENITE A TROVARCI

<https://thereadingslove.blogspot.it/>

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### Alienor ✖ French Frowner ✖ says

*After years without reading science fiction (because really, who cares about aliens anymore?), I decided to try and find some new authors because you know what? The real world sucks sometimes, and escaping it seems wonderful to me right now. Please feel free to send me your recs, and a big thank you to Emily for her review without which I would have never heard of False Hearts.*

\*looking at the news\*

\*turning my ocular implants off\*

I don't know what's worst, really : **reading about a futurist world both fascinating and frightening, or putting my book aside to discover, if needed, that our real world is more fucked-up than anything writers could create.**

Alright, I lied : **the second possibility is much, much worst.** Too bad it's the truth. As much as I've always prided myself on being able to see things in a positive light, I cannot deny that it's becoming harder and harder to stand the internet lately - and let it be known that I *love* technologies.

In that aspect, False Hearts asked the good questions in my opinion (well, I don't know if they are *good*, honestly, only that they're the ones I always wondered about) : **where do we stop? Is there a boundary, some kind of limit where science shouldn't go?** I've always been uncomfortable with people arguing against science or progress, because it reeked too much of censure for me, yet it does not mean that everything scientific or new is *good* by essence. **What matters is what we, humans with twisted minds, do with it.**

Everyone agrees (I strongly hope, at least) that experimenting on humans or animals is sick and inhuman. Everyone agrees that there are many countries that produce our stuff with no respect for basic human rights. Yet we welcome any novelty with open arms, we buy them cheaper and cheaper, and we're very sorry, and then we shrug and say -

### **What you wanna do?**

I am guilty of this hypocrisy as well. Sure, I pay attention to what I buy and try to choose human and animal friendly products more often than not - especially clothes, food, and beauty products - yet I own a smartphone, a tab, an ereader, a computer, games consoles... I love the internet and the freedom of speech it allows, even if I often struggle with the cultural - and legal - differences between the US and France (where incitement to hatred is outlawed and not protected under the cloak of freedom of expression).

And now you're wondering why the fuck I am rambling about that and what this has to do with False Hearts. I'm coming to that, I promise.

It all comes down to : human beings are complex, our world is complex, and **I need to find remnants of this complexity to be convinced by a fictional world.**

Would I be able to live in *the Hearth*, the technology-free colony Tila and Taema come from? In this hidden cult where "meditation" allows you to share your neighbor's mind? Oh, no, absolutely not.

Would I enjoy living in the Pacifica, this futuristic country where **appearances are never what they seem**, where you can order an ersatz of coffee - and anything, really - through a replicator, where all your steps are monitored and **analyzed by your brain nanobots?** Where the aseptic atmosphere hides loneliness and corruption? Where a **psychoactive drug enables you to share dreams**, at the risk of losing any interest in your real life? No, I don't think I would.

And this, my friends - this imaginative and frightening world-building? **It's what makes False Hearts stand out from the overtroped Fantasy and Scifi out there.**

But there's *more!* Not only the murder investigation, filled with **mistrust and twists**, hooked me right away, but the **depth** (both with regards to the - diverse! - characters and to the questions asked) made my reading experience even better. If not for the writing that didn't always convince me, and the beginning that I found a little slow, False Hearts was damn near perfect for me.

? Give me more of this, please.\*

Oh, also? I'll take some of these cleaning Bots, thank you very much. I'll keep my real coffee, though.

\*Apparently there is a sequel coming, and I cannot wait to dive into it.

*For more of my reviews, please visit:*

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### **Connor says**

My non-spoiler video review:

<https://youtu.be/NMJiQdJrwwE>

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### **ashley c says**

I WROTE A WHOLE REVIEW AND GOODREADS SOMEHOW LOST IT. I HATE YOU SOMETIMES, GOODREADS.

I'm going to try and rewrite everything again without throwing my laptop on the floor. I probably sound a bit snarky because writing this again is making me reflect, for the second time, all the things I didn't like about this book and that isn't pleasant.

The first thing I thought after I put down the book, after giving up halfway through it, was that it was *nothing* like Orphan Black or Inception. Both of them just happen to be my favourite TV show and my favourite film, so needless to say, I was mildly offended. I wasn't surprised, though - I don't know what possessed me to trust the blurb. False Hearts is by a stretch, somewhat similar to Orphan Black and Inception, but it has neither the intricacy of the intimate and one-of-a-kind relationship the clones have and the exciting storyline of Orphan Black, nor the masterful detailing of the dreamworld and the heist in Inception. Yes, it does have the 'similar-looking girls pretend to be one another to discover things' plot and yes, in the story criminals steals info from people's dreams while they are doped up on drugs, but that's about it.

The story revolves around once-conjoined twins who escaped a cult and rejoined society. One of them is accused of murder and the other twin goes undercover as her to find out stuff and clear her name. Good premise and worldbuilding, unfortunately, False Hearts brings nothing new to the science fiction genre. Its plot isn't new to the genre, understandably, as the genre is made up of reused and revisited ideas - but it doesn't even do its own plot justice. For the life of me I cannot figure out why the cult background and the conjoined twin angle is important to the plot. It has not shown itself to be so. The plot is disjointed with too many unrelated details - hot undercover partner that the twin fucked, cult, conjoined twin-ness, nightclubs, painful whining by twin who feels like she isn't good enough. The twin plot could have been brought out by better characterisation, but without that the connection between the twins is superficial.

I was surprised to learn that the author did not intent for this book to be YA, although people thought it was. I actually went into this book hoping to go easy on it because it's YA, because I know I would have enjoyed it if I was a few years younger. However, I am not, and this novel just seems really shallow.

I feel like I have higher standards, though, because I can see why it would have interested science fiction lovers and younger adults. Especially as a fun romp. Guilty pleasure for me, if I liked it. Sad that I didn't.

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### **Laura says**

Now that was awesome!! There is so much to be found within these pages. Formerly conjoined twins, a creepy cult, a futuristic world filled with all kinds of neat tech such as hovercars, VeriChips, auditory & ocular implants (more on that later), psychoactive drugs that bring you into dreamscapes, an organized crime group similar to the mob, shared dreaming, a murder to start everything off, and so much more. I could not get enough!

I hadn't heard much about this one. It's quite surprising considering how freaking good it actually is. The world-building is incredible, the plot is exciting, the characters are diverse. I can keep going... I'll let you know what it's about first :)

The most accurate way to classify this would be sci-fi thriller. The story is set in San Francisco in the near-future. Things are dramatically different. There hasn't been a murder in San Francisco in forty years. The world is full of all sorts of technology that doesn't yet exist..people travel by hovercar. VeriChips are in every citizen making tracking whereabouts easy. Auditory implants make it possible to just ping a person (kind of like you are paging them). Replicators can give you whatever food you ask for and just appear. Flesh Parlours are the future's version of plastic surgery. Psychoactive drugs, such as Zeal, allow for fantasies to be lived out in a dreamscape (also meaning violent fantasies hence LOW crime rate). There is so much more. False Hearts is brimming with rich, imaginative world-building.

Enter Taema and Tila. The two were conjoined twins separated ten years earlier, now living separate lives when the first sixteen years they were never apart. The girls were born in Mana's Hearth, a creepy cult that swears off modern technology and remains separate from society. At sixteen, they joined the modern world when their heart began to fail. Now twenty six, Taema is waiting for Tila to get done at work and come over for dinner. After Tila finally arrives covered in blood, begging for help, the police arrive to arrest her for murder.

*I haven't done anything, Taema. It didn't happen the way they'll say.*

Taema insists her sister didn't do it. With her heart set on proving her sister's innocence, Taema agrees to go undercover as Tila in something much bigger than she can possibly realize. The Ratel has been dealing in Zeal. And Taema must go undercover in the Ratel as her sister. After a time when no secrets could be kept between the two, now the sisters will realize just how detrimental secrets can be.

Yes yes yes. And trust me....there is a whole lot more to the plot. The story is told from Taema's perspective, but we get Tila's perspective by way of her journal entries. False Hearts is a wild ride full of excitement, suspense, and twists. Diversity was an added bonus. The twins are part Samoan and bisexual. Diversity is also displayed in some of the smaller characters as well. I have one small, small issue with a plot point near the end that I can't mention due to spoilers. That's where my one star is knocked off. Other than that I have no reason not to recommend this book. If you're looking for something fast-paced and completely engrossing, don't hesitate to pick this one up!

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### **Lola says**

Lost interest. Would not recommend. Too boring. Similar to *Vicarious* by Paula Stokes, but not as suspenseful and not as much of a page-turner.

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### **Veronique says**

4.5

What an arresting premise! A twin has to take her sister's identity to enter a criminal syndicate in order to save her life. Well, that attracted my interest right there.

The story is set in a future San Francisco where everyone has been altered to be beautiful and crime is nearly extinct - well, on the surface of course - due to a drug called Zeal that allows people to purge their non-social and violent tendencies safely, while also pacifying them. Clubs offering this miracle cure, as well as Flesh Parlours where you can alter your appearance easily and quickly, are everywhere and basis of this utopia. Lam portrays a really intriguing world, with towering high rises, greenhouses skyscrapers, green-glowing bays from algae farms, flying 'cars', etc. It does have a tad of *Blade Runner*, especially with the billboards and the pyramid, but apart from that, it feels different while keeping that 'film noir' atmosphere.

The narration is shared by the siblings, who used to be conjoined until the age of 16 when they escaped a cult that rejected everything modern, including medicine. This was fascinating too, especially witnessing how two people can be so close and yet evidently be their own persons. As for the sect, it felt captivating and revolting at the same time - particularly their use of methods that could be beneficial but for their nefarious use to gather power over the other.

With all these compelling aspects, especially the psychological ones, how did the plot fare? Very well. This novel is very much a murder mystery in a scifi setting, fast-paced and thrilling. A couple of features were a little convenient but not enough to dim my enjoyment.

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### **Lindsay says**

A fantastic SF mystery thriller about a future San Francisco, a cult and now-separated conjoined twins who escaped the cult.

Taema answers the door to find her blood-covered twin sister Tila there. Soon after the police turn up and take Tila away, the first arrest for the first murder in San Francisco in decades. The use of the drug Zeal has suppressed most peoples violent urges and city is apparently peaceful and crime free. Of course the police want to interview Taema as well, but things get strange fairly quickly, and Taema ends up deeply involved in a police investigation and where her cult upbringing is critical.

The story is told from both twins point-of-view with Taema getting the lions share of the narrative as she goes undercover as her sister into the vast criminal underbelly of San Francisco and an organization that

actually threatens to take over the government and the largest corporation based there. From her jail cell Tila writes a memoir of her and Taema's time in the cult of Mana's Hearth and their escape from it and its psychotic leader Mana-ma.

I read this in nearly one sitting. The sister's devotion to each other is so profound, but so is their separation from each other. This future San Francisco is also compelling and the author has put a lot of thought into the technological underpinnings of the society as well as the effects of substances like Zeal and Verve and where cheap and ubiquitous body-modification might take us. In another way it's a little cartoonish though. Even a drug like Zeal wouldn't reduce crime to zero; humans are too diverse for that. Also, the backlash from everyone making themselves model-perfect would be just about immediate, and you'd expect to see punkish body-mods almost immediately. But it's ok, the detail is fleshed out enough for the story to move on and move on it does. Relentlessly.

This is another one I'd give 4.5 stars to if I could. It's not perfect, but it's damn good, and it should get a read. I don't mind bumping it to 5 stars.

One final note: I don't see how people are shelving this as YA. The twins are twenty six and Tila's memoir of when they're sixteen is a very minor part of the story.

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### **Laura Lam says**

Edit June 15, 2017: If you've read False Hearts and crosspost your Goodreads review to a book retailer (Amazon, B&N, Waterstones, etc), I'll send you a signed bookplate and a bookmark as thanks. More info here: <http://www.lauralam.co.uk/signed-book...>

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I made this with my words.

A little about this book:

- Stars formerly conjoined twins (grew up conjoined and separated at 16). I imagine them looking like Suzana and Suzane Massena.

- They grew up in a cult set in the redwoods of Muir Woods

- San Francisco is obsessed with perfection and has lots of tech.

- A mob called the Ratel who do horrible things, unsurprisingly.

- Identity switches

- Brain hacking & drugged dream sequences in virtual reality.

It's being pitched by my publisher as *Orphan Black* meets *Inception*. It'll be released in June 2016. :-)

Image credits and more on my Pinterest board for False Hearts.

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## **Mogsy (MMOGC) says**

4 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum <https://bibliosanctum.com/2016/07/17/...>

I really enjoyed this book. Clearly author Laura Lam has been busy honing her craft in the years since her debut *Pantomime*, the novel that first introduced me to her wonderful writing and storytelling. She's taken those skills to a whole other level with *False Hearts*—a very different novel from her previous work to be sure, but it's no less gripping and emotionally impactful.

Taema and Tila are two of the most amazing characters you'll ever meet. For one thing, for the first sixteen years of their lives the sisters shared one heart. Even though this book takes place in a high-tech future where most medical conditions have been eradicated or can be cured, the conjoined twins were born to parents who were members of a cult that rejects any kind of advanced technology and medical treatments. In the closed compound of Mana's Hearth where access to the outside world is limited, the girls grew up under the tutelage of a cult leader called Mana-ma, participating in the kind of mind exercises that keep all the Hearth's members happily brainwashed. However, knowing that their shared heart will fail one day, worn down by the strain of supporting two bodies, the girls manage to escape Mana's Hearth to San Francisco where they are surgically separated and given new mechanical hearts.

The main story of *False Hearts* actually starts ten years later, after Taema and Tila have both pursued their own lives separately but still remained close. One night, Taema is preparing dinner when Tila suddenly bursts into her apartment, terrified and covered in blood. The police arrive to arrest Tila, claiming that she killed someone, but Tila insists that she didn't do it and Taema wants badly to believe her. After all, separated or not, after everything they've gone through together in their first sixteen years, she thinks she knows her sister better than anyone. Tila couldn't have done it, she isn't capable of being a murderer...is she? Just how much does Taema know about Tila now that they've been living their own lives for the past decade? As Taema embarks on a mission to save her twin, she begins to wonder if perhaps she has been wrong about everything. It turns out that Tila has been involved in some very dark and dangerous activities, and now her secrets are the only hope for Taema's own survival.

While Taema is working undercover for the police to try to clear her sister's name, Tila starts writing about her past in a journal as she waits in a holding cell for her upcoming trial. In this way, two stories are woven together, the past and the present unfolding side by side. This duality is further emphasized by the differences in the twins' personalities. Tila is the more open and outgoing sister who pursued a career in art before getting hired to work at one of the city's hottest nightclubs. There she works as a hostess to clients who come to the club to experience Zeal, a drug that allows its users to live out their deepest darkest fantasies in a dreamscape. In contrast, Taema is the more reserved, quiet and introspective one with few close friends. The differences between the two women can be seen in the way they speak, think, and act, and I thought Lam did an incredible job giving each twin a unique voice.

I also really enjoyed the book's atmosphere. The dual themes continue, as beneath the bright and shiny surface of this futuristic version of San Francisco (where crime is supposedly non-existent) there actually lurks a dark and violent side of the city, where a criminal organization called the Ratel holds all the power. And while the use of Zeal has helped many people live happier and healthier lives, for those who become physically and mentally dependent on it, it can also lead to the exact opposite. I was as shocked as Taema to go from the safe, clean environment she knows into this gritty world of treacherous gang bosses and seedy drug dens. And as if that's not enough, the twins' past also comes back to haunt them. There was always this air of tension that kept me on my toes, bracing for the other shoe to drop. This part-thriller, part-mystery story is addictive as hell.

Of course, sisterhood also plays a huge part in all of this. There's a larger message in here about growing up and realizing that everyone must follow their own path. Taema's loyalty to Tila certainly moved me, but it also felt so innocent and naïve at the end of the day, when it was clear that their lives were already diverging even when the two of them still shared a heart. Of course, the irony is that the more one tried to protect the other from change, the more they actually put them in danger, and the secrets just hurt all the more in the end. Taema and Tila both attempt to hold on to the past in their own individual ways, and it's just one wild ride as difficult truths emerge to turn everything upside down.

I was overjoyed when I found out that Lam is planning a follow-up to this. *False Hearts* works perfectly fine as a self-contained standalone, but believe me when I say that I wouldn't mind revisiting these characters or even this world if Taema and Tila's tale is done for now. Yes, I definitely want more after this one. Highly recommended.

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### **Amy Plum says**

I loved this book. The world-building totally sucked me in, the pace was relentless and I fell in love with the characters. Can't wait to dive into *Shattered Minds* now!

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### **Emily May says**

*“Sign on, and ... pretend to be my sister?”*

*“Yes. You’d go undercover into the deepest, darkest underbelly of San Francisco.”*

4 1/2 stars. I guess I should be reading more science fiction because if this and *Railhead* are anything to go by, the genre is exploding with goodness this year.

Are you ready for a **futuristic world** full of **criminals, twisted cults** and **undercover operations**? Are you ready to delve into this dark future San Francisco, plagued by **psychoactive drugs** and **shared dreaming**? Are you ready to read about two **formerly conjoined twins** who are so similar, and yet they hide some very different kind of **secrets**?

Because, dammit, I was *so* ready for this book.

**False Hearts** is **brimming with imagination**. Lam has created this world in intricate detail, painting a time

and place so different from the one we know, but so easy to picture in our minds. From the drugs that allow people to live out their ultimate fantasies (and the newest drug that threatens everything) to the flesh parlours that allow people to craft themselves new faces, this world is a plethora of fascinating imagery. It's hard to not get caught up in it.

The two twins at the centre of this story are Taema and Tila. **Dark-skinned (part Samoan) and bisexual**, they stand out from a white, heterosexual sea of protagonists. In fact, diversity is just another one of this book's strengths. These two sisters were brought up in a restrictive cult until the day their shared heart began to fail - then they escaped to the outside world of modern technology and started a new life in San Francisco.

Years later, Tila is arrested for murder after turning up covered in blood. Despite witnesses and an incriminating amount of evidence, Taema's sure her sister would never hurt someone. *Isn't she?*

Determined to clear her sister's name - or perhaps find out a horrifying truth - Taema goes undercover into the heart of the Ratel, dealers in Zeal, a drug that helps you enact your darkest fantasies and desires in a dreamscape. More and more is uncovered. Links to the twins' past emerge and dirty secrets come tumbling out of the closet. **I couldn't look away.**

Just to clear up any confusion: the author has said below (and the novel backs up) that this is not a YA book. It is being shelved as YA and has turned up on a lot of YA blogs, but the sisters are twenty-six, live in their own apartments and have their own jobs. While I think mature teens can also enjoy this, it is clearly an adult novel.

A fantastically original and fast-paced read, full of action, excitement and diversity. I can't wait for more people to read it.

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### **Aditi says**

*“Sister. She is your mirror, shining back at you with a world of possibilities. She is your witness, who sees you at your worst and best, and loves you anyway. She is your partner in crime, your midnight companion, someone who knows when you are smiling, even in the dark. She is your teacher, your defense attorney, your personal press agent, even your shrink. Some days, she's the reason you wish you were an only child.”*

----Barbara Alpert

Laura Lam, an American author, pens a gripping and a mind-blowing psychological thriller centered around two twin sisters in her book, *False Hearts* where the author weaves a story where the two twin sisters who are so much similar in looks yet harbor secrets of their own, which are extremely dark. Born as conjoined twins, this story is unravels so much beyond their relationship, where escape is written in bold letters.

### **Synopsis:**

*Orphan Black meets Inception: Two formerly conjoined sisters are ensnared in a murderous plot involving psychoactive drugs, shared dreaming, organized crime, and a sinister cult.*

*Raised in the closed cult of Mana's Hearth and denied access to modern technology, conjoined sisters Taema and Tila dream of a life beyond the walls of the compound. When the heart they share begins to fail, the twins escape to San Francisco, where they are surgically separated and given new artificial hearts. From then on they pursue lives beyond anything they could have previously imagined.*

*Ten years later, Tila returns one night to the twins' home in the city, terrified and covered in blood, just before the police arrive and arrest her for murder—the first homicide by a civilian in decades. Tila is suspected of involvement with the Ratel, a powerful crime syndicate that deals in the flow of Zeal, a drug that allows violent minds to enact their darkest desires in a terrifying dreamscape. Taema is given a proposition: go undercover as her sister and perhaps save her twin's life. But during her investigation Taema discovers disturbing links between the twins' past and their present. Once unable to keep anything from each other, the sisters now discover the true cost of secrets.*

Tila and Taema are the conjoined twins by birth who share a same heart and are also born in a cult society, but one day, their shared heart fails them which became an excuse to escape their dreadful and wretched life in a small town filled with superstitions and cult practices. Hence the twin sisters reach San Francisco, a city overwhelmed and contempt with latest technology, where the sisters get a surgery and finally manage to get separated from one another. So many years have passed, Tila is back in her hometown, laced with blood from head-to-toe, and she is soon convicted of a murder, now Taema knows that her sister can't commit a crime, hence she needs to save her before its too late. Taema's life-threatening journey begins from an organised crime group's den where they deal a deadly drug, Zeal, that can unleash the weird fetishes of any human being through dreaming that can be shared with another living soul, (*think Inception*) and many such other scary stuffs like lethal tattoo parlors to flesh parlors. So amidst all these dangers, Taema need to investigate the real culprit behind the murder, but little did she knew, that even though they look alike, the two sisters have so many unshared deep dark secrets.

The author's writing style is fantastic and articulate and the readers will be easy to comprehend with the story writing of the author. The narrative is engaging and mystifying that will keep the readers on their edges. The pacing is really fast as the readers sway with the flow of the story where on their way, they will be welcomed with bone-chilling events and adrenaline-rushing action scenes. The author has portrayed her story with so much vivid descriptions that the readers can easily visualize the scenes right before their eyes.

The world building of the author is very much well-developed, as the author invents an innovative world filled with modern gadgets and technology both in science and philosophy. This make-believe world is so well portrayed by the author that the readers will be transported to this fictional futuristic land in no time with the progress of the story. It seems the author's imagination knows no bounds, while creating this future world, although she has projected such a world with logic and reason so the readers can contemplate with the systems and the technologies. The horror is so vivid into the descriptions of this city, that the readers will find the fear creeping up behind their backs.

The characters are well-etched out and are multi-dimensional. The main characters, both Tila and Taema are flawed, bisexual and are somewhat realism, yet their demeanor is quite brave and strong even though they are faced with number of challenges. All through out the story, they will have that psychological hold on the minds of the readers as the author laces them with their striking back stories that will only make the readers root for them till the very end. Even the supporting cast of characters are distinct and highly interesting and flawed, thereby turning the story into something enticing and intriguing.

The mystery part is highly unraveling and puzzling as she devises the story with enough suspense, tension

and twists that will only make the readers anticipating for the truth till the very last page.

Overall, this story is a must read as it will keep the readers occupied till the very end and will also find it hard to turn away their heads from the book.

**Verdict:** *Such a compelling and a riveting read!*

**Courtesy:** *Thanks to the author, Laura Lam's publishers for giving me an opportunity to read and review this book.*

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### **Kassidy says**

\*4.5\*

I love the diversity and futuristic aspects. The technology is so fascinating and there are just so many cool aspects to this story. I would highly recommend!

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### **Ariadne says**

I have to say right up front: I really dislike writing negative reviews. I'll try and be as specific as possible on what my issues were so you can judge whether or not you think those issues will bother you as well. I strongly believe just because one person loves/hates a book it doesn't mean everyone will. Still, this is one of those times where I feel like I read a very different book than the bulk of the reviewers out there. With glowing reviews at every turn, and ample comparisons to several things I love (Orphan Black meets Inception?!?) I had to read it. And I wish I had given it a pass.

I knew early on this was one I should put down, but I kept reading because I'm one of those people who very rarely fails to finish a book. It's the prose that killed me on this book more than anything else. It felt very sophomoric. The sort of prose I read by the fistful in college critique classes, and that I myself wrote when I was younger. It's serviceable. It gets you from point A to point B. But it doesn't have a developed voice. It suffers consistently from telling rather than showing, sometimes even telling you the same thing over and over and over again, while skipping over opportunities for meatier character moments in favor of world building or plot progression. No matter how interesting I found the ideas Lam was playing with they were consistently overshadowed by the fact they all felt borrowed rather than owned - there was that constant comparing with countless other movies/books that have tread this ground before. More than anything it felt like a kitchen sink book, where the author cribbed cool ideas from a hundred other places and tossed them all in together without lingering too long on any one idea or explanation.

As a result of the wooden prose, and the hodgepodge nature of the plot/world-building, the characters suffered gravely. I wanted to like them. The idea of the characters was appealing - the cast was diverse and strong. But for me the idea of them was overshadowed by the execution. They felt like archetypes without any real depth rather than real people. I couldn't bring myself to care what happened to them, which can be deadly when reading a thriller. Will they survive this perilous situation and solve the mystery? \*shrug\*

Here's the thing: Over the years I've read a lot of sci-fi, so at this point I've gotten picky. If you're new to the

genre I think you'll find a lot of new ideas and interesting things in this book. The plot does move forward at a decent pace, and there aren't any gaping holes. Like I said, it's serviceable. The book isn't fundamentally broken. However, if you're a veteran to the genre you're not going to find much here to surprise you, and if you read for character rather than plot this one will likely leave you cold. Clearly I'm in the minority out here, so your milage may vary.

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