



## Socialpunk

*Monica Leonelle*

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Ima is just a teenage girl trying to make it in The Dome, an encapsulated, 5-mile radius of downtown Chicago that remains after natural disaster has overtaken most of the earth. When she meets a hooded figure named Vaughn at a party, he takes her on a whirlwind escape that jolts her from her current reality into Silicon City, where humans are upgraded, currency is clout, and bionic eyes are the only way to get information among the glass and metal spiraling buildings that dot the skyline. Oh, and the year is 2198, not 2052 like she thought it was.

But this new city comes with dangers of its own, from degenerates to replications, from hostile hashes to a dictator who seems determined to control the population. To top it all off, Ima has to find some way to get back to The Dome to save her best friend Dash before the powers of Silicon City find a way to destroy it.

Something sinister is brewing in Silicon City, and Ima is determined to figure out how to stop it. Along the way, she will have to give up parts of herself to save the ones she loves. Can she survive the future long enough to fix the past?

Socialpunk is a 62,000-word young adult novel, slated as the first volume of the Socialpunk Trilogy.

## **Socialpunk Details**

Date : Published March 27th 2012 by Spaulding House

ISBN : 9780984234851

Author : Monica Leonelle

Format : Kindle Edition 400 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Dystopia, Young Adult, Cyberpunk, Romance

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## From Reader Review Socialpunk for online ebook

### Laura Beth says

The 1st 10 chapters are good - just waiting on an email from the author to get the rest. (getting impatient!! )

4/6/12 - Initial reaction after finishing: WTH!?!? How in the world could you end a book like that? Storyline is great and totally unique (with the exception of 'Come with me if you want to live' - LOL!). Just cannot believe the book ended the way it did. No idea what I am going to rate it. Going to have to sit on it a bit.

4/10/12 - Updated Review

For me this is a perfect example of 'don't choose a book by its cover'. Had I seen this on a shelf somewhere I would never have picked it up.

Thankfully this was not the case - I read the prologue and was hooked! I absolutely love the concept of this book. I have not read any other books with this type of plot and I thoroughly enjoyed it. (A cross between Sci-Fi and Dystopian)

Socialpunk is well paced and has a lot of action, but the abrupt ending left me unsatisfied as I am not a fan of major cliff-hangers. I will definitely be reading SocialMob (the 2nd in the trilogy) when it comes out in July as I am anxious to find out what happens!

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### Julie(Reading By The Beach) says

See my blog <http://readingbythebeach.blogspot.com...>

\*Huge Giveaway ~ winners picked May 1st 2012\*

"If you want to live, come with me"

I was extremely excited to have the chance to delve into Socialpunk because I have never read a "cyberpunk" book before, at least I don't think I have. I have to say that I was not disappointed. I was constantly intrigued as I followed Ima on her adventure!

I found Ima to be a great character, she had the potential to sweep me away, but she wasn't quite there. . . yet. I have high, high hopes that she will continue to grow in the future installments, gaining that little bit of extra confidence that she needs. In the beginning of Socialpunk, Ima starts out timid and meek, but she quickly starts growing into a young woman. The growth process was fun to read about, Ima is such a likable character that I was rooting for her to kick-ass the whole book. The male characters are also very interesting. Socialpunk is dominated by the male gender, and they were all strong, grab-your-attention males, but they never stole the spotlight from Ima, which was, I imagine, a tough fete for Monica Leonelle to accomplish, because they each easily could have become the star of the story.

Fan of love triangles? Hater of love triangles? Well, you haven't seen nothing yet. . . there's an actual love square, no maybe a pentagon or a hexagon? I don't know, but everybody loves somebody else or the same person. Don't worry though, it's not confusing, but it did throw me off just a tad bit because I'm not a huge fan of love triangles. I'm more into the straight forward romance of two people, but regardless, it did have me vastly intrigued and rooting for my choice!

Socialpunk took me into a world that I was not expecting, it was exciting and exhilarating that Monica Leonelle was able to transport me to such a different world with such elaborate details. I was never bored, never skipped over scenes. I was entranced by the story, curious to see where I would be taken. The ending, in my opinion, was perfect. As the story unfolded the mysteries within it set up the next two books in the trilogy perfectly, giving me enough information to appease my curiosity, but leaving some information tucked away for future revelations. But that really wasn't part of the ending. At first I just sat there staring at my Kindle, but then I realized that I had a big smile on my face. The ending, like I said, was absolute brilliance in its perfection. I was granted a small amount of solace as the last sentence was read, heaving a sigh of relief and anxious to read more.

I was thoroughly entertained and recommend Socialpunk to any YA lovers regardless of age or gender, this is a great book that presents a new world that is fun to read about.

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### **Jonathan says**

I don't think I'm cut out for Young Adult books. Maybe that's why I didn't enjoy Monica Leonelle's new novel *Socialpunk* as much as all the other reviewers out there. I had high hopes for this dystopian/sci-fi tale, which is one reason why it breaks my heart to post this review. Monica is also a sweetheart, and I'm loathe to rain on her parade. That's reason number two. But I agreed to give an honest review as part of her Socialpunk blog tour, and by God that's what I'm going to do. Now on to the plot.

So there's this girl Ima. Her life pretty much sucks. She's got an abusive father, an ineffective mother, no one at her school likes her, and her one friend Dash—whom she's madly in love with—doesn't return the sentiments. Oh yeah, and the world she lives in is a virtual reality. She doesn't find that out until later, though. She is convinced that she lives in the city of Chicago during the year 2060-something. The world has undergone a cataclysm known as "the scorched years" in which 95% of humanity perished and the remaining people have isolated themselves within giant domes to protect themselves from what has become a very hostile environment. The society is strictly controlled to preserve resources, and personal liberty is at a minimum. So far, so good.

As the book begins Dash and Ima are taking a train on their way to a concert in the city's downtown area. On the train they notice a bunch of creepy looking teenagers, all of them dressed in black hoodies (ominous, much?), who seem to have come from one of the outer train stations where no one is supposed to go. The creepy hooded guys all make their way to the same concert Dash and Ima are attending where they sell strange capsules to the kids and generally act like creepy drug dealers. Dash ditches Ima for another girl, and sets her up with Nahum, another kid from India who's new to the dome (and who immediately develops a thing for Ima). Soon an explosion rocks the concert hall. Confusion and chaos ensue, but Ima is rescued by one of the guys in the black hoodies, who hauls her and Nahum outside, dresses them up in hoodie disguises, and hustles them onto the train. Ima and Nahum go with him because... well, I don't really know. To advance the story, I guess. Anyway, the train goes on to a stop Ima's never seen, where she and Nahum and the hoodie guy elude security guards to duck through some techno-portal into "the real world."

Vaughn reveals that Ima and Nahum's world was in actuality a virtual reality, and he (Vaughn) is a VR tester. Their VR has been slated for demolition and that's why Vaughn saved them. Normal VRs have replicants or something in them, but this one has live human beings, which I guess is supposed to be illegal but it's never really explained. The current year is 2198. The earth has healed itself of its ecological wounds, and through cybernetic and bionic technology humanity has advanced to the pinnacle of evolution. Chicago (the real one) is also a city of artists, the penultimate Randian vision of art meets capitalism. While digesting all of this, Vaughn takes the kids to see the leader of his Hash (think "gang," though the concept wasn't explained fully within the novel). The hash is called the Socialpunks, and in short order Ima and Nahum are accepted into its ranks, Ima earns the enmity of the only other female member of the group (she's Vaughn's squeeze, and Vaughn digs Ima), and she and Nahum are whisked away to get their bodies sliced and diced and modified to the hilt. Oh yeah, and Ima makes the Socialpunks promise to help her go back to the dome and rescue Dash. There's that, too.

Now here's where the story went off the rails for me. Ima recovers from having her body hacked on, and she and the rest of the Socialpunks embark upon their first "job" to raise enough Clout (i.e. money) to fund a rescue operation on the dome. This job entails stealing a black data chip from another rival gang and delivering it to... somebody. They botch part of the job, the hash leader gets carted off to prison, Nahum gets shot and captured, and Ima, Vaughn, and the other girl escape with the chip. They make the drop off with the chip, which somehow ends up in the hands of a researcher from the Big Bad Corporation in the story, who briefly contacts Ima before she shuts him out and they go running for the hills. There are some other events, like an artistic battle royal that nets the group millions of clout to spring their leader from jail, a showdown with the rival hash, a run-in with the Big Bad Corporation, and an attempt to infiltrate the dome and rescue Dash.

If it sounds like a mess, that's because it is. I understood where Leonelle was going with the whole thing, but the logic that gets the reader from A to Z skipped about fourteen letters in the process. That's the major flaw in *Socialpunk*—the huge, gaping plot holes that threatened to swallow you whole at every turn. For instance, how the hell did Ima and Nahum manage to get out of the dome undetected? There was the equivalent of a Jedi hand wave ("These aren't the droids you're looking for") in the form of a gadget that neutralized their tracking devices, but they had to bumrush the portal, dodging security robots along the way, and then walk out with a bunch of other VR testers that surely would have noticed something was up. And then the whole black chip thing really confused me. I like to think I'm pretty good at following complex plots, but this one was just over my head.

It also doesn't help matters that the character rationales and motivations are wackier than the Redbull Flugtag. Friendships, crushes and rivalries develop at the drop of a hat. Every guy worth naming (seriously, every male character worthy of a name in the narrative) either likes Ima, is interested in her for some reason, or is liked by her. Character development is extremely accelerated, lacking the appropriate time and attention for realistic evolution of character traits and inter-character relationships. Speaking of which---for the first half of the book Ima is stricken with something I like to call "Bella Swan Syndrome." She's a totally passive character. She doesn't undertake any actions on her own, is dragged through the events of the plot, and has to be rescued multiple times. But then midway through the book she turns on a dime, takes the reigns, and leads her little hash while the original leader is in the slammer. And everyone else follows her! The only thing more annoying than a Bella Swan is a Bella Swan that inexplicably transforms into a go-getting ass-kicker.

On the flip side, Monica really does have some great ideas for her setting—the world cataclysm, cybertechnology, the art-meets-extreme capitalism society. The ideas themselves are intriguing; that's why I picked up the book in the first place, but everything else in the story seems half-formed. If you want my honest opinion, what *Socialpunk* really needs is a skilled editor to rip it apart, rearrange the guts, and stitch it

back together again. It has promise, but it lacks focus.

Like I said, maybe I'm just not cut out for YA. *Socialpunk* simply didn't do it for me. If I'm way off base, someone please tell me. Monica's a really nice lady, and I hate to do it, but I gotta go with my gut. I can't softball it. So therefore I'm going to bite the bullet and just say it: two stars. Sorry, Monica.

<http://readabookonce.blogspot.com/201...>

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## **Tammy says**

This review originally appeared on Books, Bones & Buffy.

This is a hard review for me to write, because there is so much to like about *Socialpunk*. It's creative, engaging, and filled with clever ideas that make it a unique read. It has also received lots of great reviews from the blogging community. But my overall reaction after reading the book was that it felt unfinished, like a first draft that had potential but needed a lot more work before it was ready to be published.

*Socialpunk* takes place in a future Chicago under a dome, where the "Scorched Years" have resulted in an entrapped life without access to other cities. When the story begins, Ima and her friend Dash are on their way to a concert in downtown Chicago. After managing to ditch her abusive father, they arrive at the concert where Ima meets another boy named Nahum. When an explosion suddenly erupts in the middle of the concert, Ima and Nahum are rescued by a mysterious hooded figure named Vaughn, but in the confusion Dash is left behind. Although Ima and Nahum are confused and panicked, Vaughn convinces them to leave the area on a train. He explains that he is a "virtual reality tester" and that the Chicago that Ima called home was nothing more than a fabricated existence.

As Vaughn leads them into Silicon City where he lives, Ima and Nahum discover a world filled with odd realities. Food is consumed in pill form, the city is ruled by artists, and everyone has been upgraded with bionics to make them super strong and agile. Vaughn introduces them to Nasser, the leader of the Socialpunks, and proclaims that Ima and Nahum need immediate surgery if they wish to join the group.

In a strangely rushed few pages, Ima is drugged, taken into an operating room, and altered from a flesh and blood human into a cyborg. She emerges taller, faster and with enhanced vision and a very convenient GPS interface. Before you can say *Six Million Dollar Man*, Ima and Nahum have not only joined the Socialpunks, but Ima has (oddly) changed her name to Cinder. (I'm still puzzled over this, having just read *Cinder* by Marissa Meyer. It's probably a coincidence, but the similarities between the two characters are eerie.) She convinces Nasser to help find Dash, and what follows is an exciting and dangerous race to get Dash out the dome before everyone there is destroyed.

One of the most fascinating aspects of *Socialpunk* is the world of Silicon City. Art is the main form of currency and everything revolves around the artists and those who profit from them. Citizens literally create the world around them by spray-painting buildings into existence or creating a hole in the ground by drawing a circle. In one memorable scene, Ima/Cinder competes in an "Art Smash," a contest between two artists who create art with their minds and project it onto a screen while a crowd watches. I didn't really understand the concept completely, but I loved the idea. I also loved the futuristic creation of pixel skin grafts, which are tattoos that move across the body, and "mergers," people with hair in which each strand is a different color. Leonelle clearly has no shortage of creative ideas, and even though I was reminded of *The Matrix* and

*Battlestar Gallactica* in places, *Socialpunk* has a unique feel all its own.

The relationships among the characters were confusing, mostly because there were so many of them. Ima might love Dash, but then she meets Nahum and falls for him. But then Vaughn comes along and falls for her, and then Ima falls for Nasser. In the end, Ima decides she really loves Dash the most. Mixed up in all this is Ember, a beautiful young Socialpunk who is jealous of Ima. The variety of hook-ups in *Socialpunk* made my head spin, and in the end I lost interest in all of the relationships because there were just too many.

The writing throughout was fairly solid, but some individual sentences were just awkward (“Vaughn’s eyes twirled towards the back of his head.”), and tense problems and lots of editing mistakes were distracting and kept throwing me off the story. Parts of the book seemed rushed, like the scene where Ima has surgery. If the author had expanded that section to include details of what she was going through, it would have added a wonderful layer to the story. There is a gleefully horrific scene in China Mieville’s *Scars* that describes a complex surgery in which a human character acquires gills so that he can live underwater. I couldn’t help but compare that scene to this one.

The bottom line for me: *Socialpunk* is wildly creative, but lacks focus and polish. With so many details, it’s a story that needs more pages to expand on its creative ideas.

Thanks to the author for supplying a review copy of *Socialpunk*.

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### **Gwynn White says**

Monica Leonelle provided me with a copy of *SOCIALPUNK* for me to review as part of her blog tour. She did this because my blog reviews are a bit different to most. You see, my blog is written and managed by the characters of my novel *Cursed*.

So this eighteen-year-old, fictional Seth's take on *Socialpunk*:

Word has got out into the blogosphere that I like to read Sci-Fi. The result? Monica Leonelle has asked me to review her book *Socialpunk*. Cool title, by the way.

And the cover? Hmm . . . Sorry, but it doesn't set my heart on fire. To be honest, I wouldn't have given it a second look. That's a shame because this book screams out for something more compelling, but I guess that's the designer in me talking. Anyway, the story kept me reading, and I suppose that's what counts. I read it in one sitting, not wanting to put it down.

*Socialpunk* is a Sci-Fi with an *iRobot* feel. That, by the way, is one of my favorite movies, so although *Socialpunk* was a little predictable, I really enjoyed it. I'm not saying the ending is *iRobot* because this is part of a trilogy, so who knows how it will end? But I'll definitely be reading on to find out.

So what's it about?

Ima (subject 3281) is a teenage girl living in The Dome. She would give anything to escape and to learn what's beyond its barriers, but the Chicago government has kept all its citizens on lockdown ever since the Scorched Years left most of the world a desert wasteland. When a mysterious group of hooded figures enters the city unexpectedly, Ima uncovers a plot to destroy The Dome and is given the choice between escaping to a new, dangerous city or staying behind and fighting a battle she can never win.

So what did I like about it?

The characters. Ima starts off as a very shy, browbeaten kid who grows – with the help of some really hot bionic technology – into a believable heroine. And I like Vaughn, the main male protag. He also develops from a tool of the enemy to a pretty caring revolutionary. Cool. My kind of guy. The minor characters – Nasser, Dash, Ember and Nahum - are also well-fleshed out. I would like to have known more about Nahum, but again, maybe all my questions will be answered in book two - Socialmob. The story hints at a complicated love-setup in the coming books, which will no doubt have every teenage girl on the planet shouting and waving team colors. As a guy... yawn. Give me more action and more ingenious technology.

Which brings me to world-building. I could clearly see the world Leonelle was creating. And I loved that everyone's eyes perceived the city differently, decorating it in their own unique way! So cool!

My complaints?

I struggled with some of the time-lines. Not to give too much away, The Dome has been in existence for only about ten years, but people have lived there long enough to have teenage kids. I didn't get that. Maybe Socialmob will make that clearer for me. Also the girls names!!! Ima changes to Cinder. No, please no. And we have an Ember and a Smolder. That just didn't do it for me.

Finally, like most of my school English essays, Socialpunks could have done with Erin giving it a once over to check the editing. I noticed some gaffes... and if I saw them, then it would be worth sorting that out. Overall? I loved the futuristic tech stuff. Gripping story and I'm looking forward to Socialmob (July 2012), and Socialhood (October 2012).

For the rest of Seth's reviews see: <http://todayinshenaya.blogspot.com>

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### **Lady Krishna says**

This review was originally posted on my blog  
Journey with Books

Socialpunk is the first work of Ms. Monica Leonelle I've ever read and I must say that I had a very nice time reading this. Socialpunk is a book that is full of excitement and futuristic ideas that is pretty much surprising.

The plot of the book was very unique. I must admit that I'm not good with Sci-fi Futuristic fictions. I rarely enjoy them because usually, the futuristic and scientific terms dominate the whole book which just confuses me. Ms. Monica Leonelle balanced it all out. Although, I was confused at first but the author wrote this book in a way that most of us would definitely understand.

I love the whole mystery of the world Ms. Monica Leonelle created. I could see it clearly inside my head that those things that were described and shown inside this book could possibly happen in the future.

The characters are very complex. I won't say that they are likable because there were times that they weren't. I can say that Ima, the heroine was definitely a character you would see as a person. She's just a girl who craves to be accepted and be loved by the person she cares about the most. I must admit that at first I couldn't understand her and she frustrated me so much but as I read further, I slowly learned to like her. You can definitely see her character growth which is really fascinating and intriguing at the same time.

This book was really fast. I read in a few hours because it was really exciting and intriguing. The mystery and the action would keep you in tune.

Although, I liked this book, there were a few typos but I think it won't bother you much because you can hardly see them. Another thing that bothered me was the ending. I don't really see how it could have ended that way. It was totally out of the blue and so random. But I hope the second book would be able to fix that.

**Overall, this book is a very nice and fast paced read. If you want and action packed, sci-fi futuristic that is full of intrigue and mystery with a little bit of romance read then I definitely recommend this book because you will surely enjoy it.**

This review was originally posted on my blog  
Journey with Books

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### **Lilian says**

I loved the prologue, which made me eager to devour the book. However, to my disappointment a bulk of the story never mentions the prologue again. Instead of an sci-fi with a mad scientist acting "God," creating and observing his artificial human creations, I get a young adult love, action, "dystopian" story. Don't get me wrong, it is a fun read, but I still can't help being a bit cheated. While fast-paced and entertaining, it falls slightly short in almost every aspect. Nonetheless, it was an intriguing read that I easily finished in two sittings.

**Short Summary:** 17 year old Ima/E/Cinder (obviously, she has an affinity for pseudonyms) lives in 2052 Chicago with a loving mother, an abusive father, and a best-friend/lover. Later she is told **her world is a big lie, done for a virtual reality experiment.** She escapes to the "real" world with two strangers, Vaughn and Nahum, which even further in the future (2198.) There's an abundance of technology, but food has become a scarce; most people only eat pills. She joins Socialpunk to save her best friend, knowing that her world would be destroyed soon.

#### **Futuristic World-building:**

To Leonelle's credit, she has built a fascinating futuristic world of mindblowing technology. The technology is the reason why I would refer to the story has a "dystopian" vibe, though not entirely explicit. There's nothing wrong about these futuristic people, they are just enhanced with bionics, which basically is a computer in their brain...hooked up to Google and instant messaging. Very convenient, but at the cost of human-to-human communication.

#### **The Heroine:**

Not sure where Leonelle is going with her heroine to be honest. If I put my life in Cinder's hands, I am pretty sure I would be dead in five minutes.

Leonelle constantly reminds us that Cinder is "strong" and "special" by having the minor characters praise her making it seem way too forced, especially since her actions say otherwise.

She is not strong, she is just blessed with bionics and overnight steroids. It seems they could just pull any other person off the street to do the same job.

Rather than being the heroine, Cinder loves to be the damsel in distress. She needs a guy carrying, saving, or at least next to her at any given moment. At one point she declares "Love is everything...It touches every aspect of what you do. How can love not be of concern to you?"

Love is definitely her thing, her world pretty much revolves around saving her crush, Dash.

She loves to compare her lack of beauty with every other girl she meets. Does she have self-esteem issues? Hey, why do looks even matter when you have a love pentagon going on? Every male character has some sort of romantic relationship with her. And the other girls see her as a boyfriend-stealing threat.

She is impulsive, it the worst possible way. She literally does nothing right.

She screws up her first Socialpunk mission, causing their leader and her friend held hostage.

To redeem herself, she goes and participates in this "Art Smash," a digital role-playing/reversi game for artists to battle with the characters they create. She wins...because she used someone else's work.

She doesn't know when to apologize. She apologizes when this lady bumps into her, but doesn't when she causes two of her groupmates to be held hostage...out of pride. You need to get your priorities straight. She complains when Ember, one of her teammates, glare at her for ruining the entire plan and getting their leader thrown in jail...I think it's nice that she didn't slap Cinder, because I would.

Ok, I get that heroines can't be perfect; it would be boring that way. But Cinder seems to be a bundle of flaws with no redeeming qualities, expect an impeccable talent for getting herself tangled in love pentagons. I hope I would like her better as I got on, but that moment never came.

At one point she calls herself "a self-absorbed narcissist." BINGO! Girl, what took you so long?

**The Good Guys:**

The Socialpunks? Their name sounds rebellious, so I am not sure if they are even the "good guys." For the most part they seem to deal within the black market, their leader, Nasser, also gets himself in jail pretty often. However, Nasser seems to be a happy-go-lucky guy. I was expecting Socialpunks to be a lot more impressive...but the only thing impressive seems to be their name. They can't even fight and get caught during their mission easily.

The army that joins Cinder?...they seem like a mindless mob to me. You were inspired by...A COMIC BOOK? And you are putting your hopes on some random girl who only cares about saving her lover (who doesn't even love her back)?

I guess one of the few "good" things Cinder does is agree to be their leader, which seems to be inspired by peer pressure rather than a product of initiative.

**The Villain**

**The "bad guy" is a filthy rich guy whose name is too long to remember.** (Alkzar?) He is also the head of the FACE corporation. He is not really described in detail, and his intentions are blurry. Apparently, he wants to be even more filthy rich and to do so **he needs to mind control the entire city.** He is supposed to be smart and calculating, but what kind of smart person would want to brainwash people in his own city? Unless he has a severely twisted mind and feels like interacting with mindless drones. Or maybe he wants to punish them for opposing his plans for world domination. For the most part, **he is the mysterious big boss you want to defeat in a video game because he is filthy rich.**

Oh, and he is a politician. We all hate them too, right?

Leonelle describes his smile to "a politician, slightly insincere, and took no notice of the fact that several

people in the crowd tried to assassinate him." Well, that makes Leonelle's stance on politicians pretty blatant.

He only needs to be morbidly obese with a cigar, and we have the perfect villain mold right here.

#### The Whole Art Thing:

The "real" world thrives on art. Everyone either makes, sells, curates, or influences art. As part of his world domination plan, the bad guy wants to free copyright in other cities "rejuvenate their economies." Or that's what he says, but he what he really wants is to **"ban international copyright" and reap all the profits for himself.** Confused? I am too. This copyright fiasco hardly seems to matter if you are going to mind control everyone anyway.

#### Themes:

There are a lot of themes; the ramifications of technology, the exploitation of artists, realization of reality, the superficiality of politics, and drug usage.

I am not sure Leonelle's stance on several of these issues.

I thought she was all for preserving copyright (since her villain wants to eradicate it), but then she has her protagonist *stealing* her friend's art to win a competition.

The technology which is supposedly the cause of human decline ends up being the reason why Cinder is a "hero."

#### The Not-so-evil Villians

Declan and Kaiser. Nobody cares about them. Sure, they kidnapped Nahum...but he is pretty useless anyway and pretty much disappears in the middle of the story (pitiful actually.)

#### Emphasis on Action Over Love:

**One of the reasons this story redeemed itself;** I am not a big fan of reading pages upon pages of lovelorn, teenage girls declaring some guy as their eternal soulmate. If you like that stuff, this book is not for you. But it's pace is prefect for action.

#### Errors

I hope it's because I read a review edition that there are more glaring errors than I expected (especially in the later pages, as if the writer rushed towards end.) I am starting to suspect it didn't even do through spell check for I found city written as "CIty."

#### Writing

**Pace was fast, with an abundance of action,** making it an easy read...but I wish the story would slow down to flesh out some details. There's a lot of description dedicated to what people look like, mostly because Cinder loves caring about appearances. Sentences are generally short and simplistic. I was surprised when Leonelle threw a triple metaphor at me at one point.

Some sentences sounded choppy and awkwardly read like an afterthought, especially this one: "A booming voice vibrated passionately through the crowd, crisp and clear, **like it streamed through a microphone--it didn't though.**"

Instead of describing appearances, I would've appreciated more emphasis on explanations.

#### Ending:

Oh. Unexpected. But makes me wonder about Cinder's observation skills.

Surprisingly, yes. But not exactly an effective cliffhanger.

Overall, a fun read. I would **recommend it for anyone looking for a light, sci-fi/dystopian read full of action and fascinating world-building**. If you like love triangles, this is your book: tangled relationships galore. But don't try to over-analyze lest you be disappointed. I am slightly interested in reading the sequel...we'll see.

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### **Melissa says**

Like every other first installment in a trilogy there was a lot of build up. Unlike every other first book, Monica Leonelle was actually able to give the reader the back story in pieces while still providing lots of action, a new world setting, and a splash of romance. The prologue gives us a look into this new world and its creator. We learn that he has created a son who he intends to give to one of his creations to make her happy in her last months of life. Then we meet the that creation, the main character Ima (aka "E"). She's just like any other girl who struggles with abuse and confusing crushes. She sees herself as weak and an outsider until later when she is forced to acknowledge her strength and finally embraces it. I loved watching her grow and develop into a powerful female lead. Since this story was very mature for the YA genre I was glad that despite Ima's abusive father and neglectful "boyfriend" she was still able to channel her strength in the end. Young girls need a role model like Ima.

The plot took so many twists that I didn't see coming. It seemed like every other chapter something big happened and I was holding my breath hoping the characters would make it out of whatever bind they were in. I also liked that this dystopian was very subtle and unlike any other I had ever read. I didn't even realize it was a dystopian at first.

I'm excited to read the next book in this trilogy because the first book was left on a cliffhanger and I simply need to know what Ima will face next. I can't wait to watch her grow even more and see what happens with the few romantic sparks she had in book 1. I also can't wait to see what happens with Dash and the epic twist Monica laid on us in the very end of the book.

I will be honest, this wasn't my all time favorite book in the world, but it definitely was a lot more intense and inventive than I had expected it to be. I liked the actual writing style of the author and the characters so I would definitely suggest it to friends. Lucky for you guys Monica is hosting a giveaway where you could win a copy of her book or you know...AN IPAD 3 OR KINDLE (where you can then buy her book and read it on your new tablet!)

<http://harleybearbookblog.blogspot.co...>

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### **Kim says**

I really, really liked the concept and the world, and wanted to love the book. However, I found the writing to be incredibly unpolished. There are numerous typos, weird sentence structure, gaping plot holes, too much to just gloss over. Leonelle's next two books need solid editing, because whoever did this one just does not cut it.

I didn't like Ima/Cinder's complete 180 from being this meek, abused follower to suddenly being the biggest BAMF resistance-leader around in this completely new, unfamiliar world. I mean, I get that this is trying to ride on the trend created by the Hunger Games success, and I keep comparing it to HG (perhaps unfairly)—but Katniss is a badass all along. She's always been how she is, but the events of the books force her to apply her nature and her everyday skills in a public arena and for a political cause. Ima, on the other hand, turns into a completely different person, physically and mentally. I get that the changes are supposed to parallel each other, but while there is a catalyst for her physical changes (i.e., you must undergo this surgery or you will be left in the scrap heap of humanity and ultimately die), there doesn't appear to be a catalyst for the personality changes. I think that needs to be there.

There's also a lot of unclear motivation for the characters' actions. Perhaps that is the byproduct of the virtual world they live in - is there free will? Do they know why they're doing what they're doing, or are they just doing it because someone else is in control? Maybe I'm justifying this too much?

Ima's singleminded romantic motivation doesn't sit well with me, either. It all comes down to Dash - a guy who's really not all that great to her, in the end. He ignores her after they sleep together and then starts going out with this other girl. That's some shitty boyfriend material right there, Ima. Don't risk your life for a shitty non-boyfriend. And the other guys in the novel are presented as rejected love interest after rejected love interest. Again, gratuitous Hunger Games comparison - when you're fighting for your life, love \*might\* not be the first thing on your mind. But then again, if you're a hormonal teenager, who knows!

Ember is another sticking point. I don't understand Ember or her motivation for anything. She starts off as Cinder's enemy (oh, hey, look, teenage girls hating each other for no good reason), but actually just snaps and agrees to follow Cinder to the ends of the earth. What just happened? Does Ember have any personality of her own? Does she just have to cling to a leader, is that all she is? In a universe with precisely two female characters (and that waitress that's never seen again), I expected more. Sure, pit them against each other if you must, but give a good reason for it (a boy = not a good reason).

And the ending "revelation" - you know what, I'm not going to go too into it, but it was a bit of a let-down. As far as cliff-hangers go, that may have been one of the most unintentionally hilarious ones I've ever read.

Will I read the other ones? Maybe? Probably not? I feel like I'm invested at this point, otherwise I would have put down Socialpunk after the first few chapters and lamented the tiny bit of money I spent on it on Only Indie.

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### Ivana says

\*more accurate, 3.5\*

Review originally posted at Willing to See Less

Socialpunk grabbed me with its prologue. I read it when I was first contacted for the blog tour, and I really wanted to read more. It was well written, had a dark atmosphere and nicely set the foundations for a mysterious and exciting futuristic read. Even though the POV shifts, it doesn't lose the freshness in voice, and only picks up speed as we follow Ima, Dash, Nahum and the rest of the gang on a journey that will shake up everything they knew about the world they live in.

I loved Ima and Dash from the first time we meet them. They were energetic and lively. Isn't it great when you feel that kind of excitement about the characters from the beginning? When the run starts, I was

propelled to run with them and find out what happens next. Even in that first chapter, Monica gives just enough background to make us sympathize with them without revealing too much. In every chapter you learn something else that makes you care more about the characters.

I have to admit that I couldn't completely understand some of the character's motivation. I couldn't see why Ima was so desperate to save Dash. Eventually that becomes clear, but for some others I'm still unsure whether their intentions were completely believable, and it tired me a bit. There are characters that remain a mystery for the rest of the book, and there was no way to understand what was behind those furtive glances and encrypted sentences.

One of the things that fascinated me was how Monica tackles the art/money/copyright /idea infringement issue. It's a rather minor detail (though art plays an important role in the world building), but it imposes lots of questions and interesting observations.

Another thing that I'm not quite clear with was the time sequencing. The years don't add up and it confused me. But I let it slip, because it doesn't make that much of a difference.

The ending. Oh, that ending. You'll scream, that's for sure. It's a cliffhanger and a revelation that explains so much, but something I'd never see coming. It actually makes so much sense. I laughed out loud, trying to decide how I feel about it: laughing at myself for not seeing it earlier or out of sheer shock. Poor Ima, I can't even imagine what a bombshell it was for her.

Final verdict: I loved Socialpunk. It's a fast paced read, with likeable characters and an interesting story. If you scrutinize the world building, you might find a gap or two. And if cliffhangers are not your thing, brace yourself -this was a shocker.

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### **Alysson says**

I wasn't sure what exactly I was getting into when I received an email to take part in a blog tour for a cyberpunk novel. I don't think I've ever read a cyberpunk or even a steampunk book before, and I hated The Terminator. So, I was extremely surprised at how much I ended up liking Socialpunk.

Socialpunk was slow to start, and it took me a couple of tries to finally get sucked in. But waiting at a salon that made me dizzy from the polish and dye fumes for over two hours for a friend gave me the perfect opportunity to finally get started on what was actually a fast-paced and really good story. In fact, I finished Socialpunk sitting in the waiting room that day.

I loved the world Monica created. Girl's got world building skills. Each time the cast entered a new place it actually felt like we were following them through to a different city or to a different time. There are things in her city that I couldn't even dream about yet they are so easy to picture. And let me tell you, I wish some of these things were real. See, art and creativity rule in 2198. Being able to erase and create things, having art plastered across buildings, besides all the running these people do, I think I could get used to living in Socialpunk's time. What's scary is that I can actually see a lot of the things in this world happen in our future.

I'm usually able to predict a few of the twists and turns in what I read, but this one kept me guessing. As did the characters. I didn't feel like I had a good grasp on who they were, which was my biggest complaint about the novel. Focusing on Ima, the main character, I didn't connect with her. She has a horrible home life, is

picked on by the more popular kids, and has only one friend in a boy named Dash. So I understand that she's going to have a few issues. But she is SO dependent on Dash for everything at the beginning of the novel that when we find out she's pretty much in love with him, I couldn't even swoon! The girl was weak and needy because Dash always took care of her. Now, that being said, Ima eventually became the strong and brave character I wanted to read about, but there was still something about her that didn't mesh well with me. Now Vaughn, ahhh... Vaughn. That boy made me sigh. :)

Overall, Soicalpunk was a really great novel. It's pretty short and a quick read, I finished it in about three hours. But it takes a bit to pick up the pace. Leonelle's writing is polished, with a few minor typos. There is plenty of action in this one folks, and if you're into books with biotic/cyborg elements, definitely pick this one up.

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### **Nicole says**

**DISCLAIMER:** I received this book free to review on my blog, so this post has also been posted on this blog link: <http://theworldofmyimagination.blogspot.com>

I haven't read many books that dealt with futuristic Earth worlds (no, I haven't read Hunger Games), and in fact, I read a blogger recently who compared this book to Hunger Games. And from what I've read about the book Hunger Games, he is probably right. The only comparison I can make with this book and more recent ones I've read is Player One by Douglas Coupland, a book about the world coming to an end and five people stuck in an airport with each other.

And the idea of world coming to an end for the book SocialPunk isn't too far from the truth. The characters that we meet initially live in a "domed city" created to protect the citizens from the damage having taken place in the outside world as a result of global warming and ozone layer damage.

One thing to remember for this type of book that it does follow a standard "sci-fi/fantasy" trend of the hero not ready to "save the world" but learns how to "accept the task at hand." I shouldn't judge too much, because I have used a similar theme in the book I'm writing at the moment. An aspect of this book, though, that goes away from standard science fiction/fantasy is that there are a variety of races and cultures referenced throughout the book and that is a refreshing thing to see.

Now my only major complaint -- the ONLY real complaint -- that I have to warn you about is that the character's name changes in the middle of the book. That did bother me. But, in reality, after a few pages, it made complete sense as to why this was done and you do get used to it, especially because this is a growing/changing point for the main character. So, it's fitting.

I was pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed this book. I'm not usually a fan of books I have to e-read, especially considering that I have an iPhone and the book isn't all the fun to look at when you have only 100 words per page. But I did enjoy this book - it is quick paced, exciting, and at times, also reminds me of a book version of Final Fantasy VII, especially with the hi-tech advanced world that comes into play, the idea of an "underground" world, and the splashy, tech-y art that gets introduced a bit later on in the book.

Overall, I really enjoyed this book, and if you get the chance to pick this up and read it, you will love the ending. Sort of a shocker. Not the usual shocker either. Hee hee. Just, an ending I can totally see happening to me. But I won't give it away. Nope. I won't.

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## Alex says

Socialpunk was a fun read, I didn't want to put the book down while I was in the middle of it. I haven't read any "cyberpunk" style books before (that I can think of off the top of my head), but I did enjoy this one. It seems to me to be a fairly traditional, post-apocalyptic, sci-fi novel and love story. I can see a lot of parallels to other sci-fi stories spanning the years from Logan's Run to The Matrix, including an almost verbatim reference to The Terminator movies. I have nothing against formulaic stories, I mean six out of seven Harry Potter books had exactly the same story with a slightly different cast and minor details, but I and most of the world still love them. Socialpunk follows the line of girl meets boy, boy takes her from the fake world to the real world where she breaks out of her shell of a sheep to become the leader who will save her friends and the world.

Ima/Cinder is a great character, I enjoyed watching her story develop. I thought it was a little unfortunate that instead of really learning to change and growing out of her shell, she is "upgraded." That area alone leaves so much room for character development, love story development and just more story. I realize the characters are supposed to be working under the time frame of something like a week, but still. She is a character who I found interesting to explore and who I cared about. I have definitely met characters in other books who I really could have cared less about, but Ima/Cinder was not one of those.

One of the other interesting references that I noticed that seemed out of place to me was one to Jane Austin's Emma. All things considered, had I not just recently worked on the stage adaptation of the book, I probably would not have got the reference. I only question if the target audience of Socialpunk (and even the character who makes the reference) would really know Jane Austin. She wasn't required reading when I was in school, is she now?

I also noticed a host of little technical issues with the book. To an avid reader you would probably look at them and go "huh?!" and then figure it out and move on. They really amount to a handful of typos, some pronoun and name inconsistencies and a few other small things. My hope is that I was just reading a preview copy that was going to get at least one more once over by the author or her editor before publishing. It didn't detract from the story at all, but it is something you don't expect to see in published books.

The last thing that really struck me was length of the book and the ending. Amazon says that the paperback edition is 400 pages. I read it on my Kindle, so pages are kind of meaningless. It took me less than a day to finish the whole book, and then it ended in a place where you might expect your favorite TV sitcom to end. I realize that this is supposed to be the first book in a trilogy, but given the length, I felt you could probably wrap all the books into one and still be happy. On the other hand, I guess maybe I am feeling this way because I was attached to the story and I want to find out what happens next. That is a great way to set up a cliffhanger, if your audience is wanting more!

Overall, I would recommend the book. If you like any of the genres or similar stories that I mentioned before, you will probably like Socialpunk. If you are looking for a fairly fast read (at least until the sequels are ready) then this is also a good book for you. The story has likeable characters with a plot line that is pretty easy to follow, and the story is fun.

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## Jo says

### Originally posted on The Tiny Book Nook

Last week I posted an excerpt from this book on my blog. It was a mysterious prologue and when I read it, I was hooked immediately. I could not wait to immerse myself in this new book.

My overall impression - it's a good read.

Leonelle delivered an interesting plot. It's not lacking the element of mystery and it's exciting.

At 275 pages, Socialpunk is a quick read. It's well paced, there's a great balance of background info and adventure. I found that there was something happening on each page.

I also like that the author did not leave the readers in the dark. Yes, the plot was mysterious, but as the story progressed, there were answers. For the most part, this book seems well thought-out and carefully constructed.

Although the idea of The Dome and The Scorched Years, doesn't exactly sound original, I think there was enough going on to keep things interesting.

As for the characters, they're not bad. Their personalities are not exceptional and their relationships are kind of typical of young adult novels. To be more specific, there's a boy who likes the protagonist, there's a girl who is kind of jealous of this, and the protagonist is in love with another boy who for some reason is not in love with her.

Maybe they will be more developed in the second book. I'm hoping something a little bit more original will happen when it comes to their relationships.

Moving on to the ending of the book, I did not like it. The last chapter of the book was okay and I think the one before it was more interesting. If only it could have ended on that note, I think that would have been much better. It would've left the reader much more excited for the next book. But instead I feel kind of blah about the ending. It was lacking something.

I'm not saying that I thought the last chapter was strange. I'm sure it was well thought-out and important for character development. But it was definitely not a thrilling way to end a book, especially the first installment to a series.

Personally, I love a good, exciting cliff hanger. The kind that evokes different emotions, makes me excited to just talk about the book, and makes me long for time to move faster so I can get the next book.

Despite that last chapter, I recommend this book to those looking for a well-paced, interesting read.

\*Thank you to Monica Leonelle for giving me a copy of this book.\*

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## **Adriana says**

Ima lives in The Dome. You can't leave The Dome. She doesn't remember her younger years-the years she wasn't at Dome. Her best friend in the world is Dash and it's become awkward between them. See she loves him but can't tell him. He even sets her up with Nahum who is new to The Dome.

Her father is controlling and hurts her if she goes too far while her mother decides to do nothing while her daughters in pain. She runs away to go to a concert- her father hot on her trails but she makes it there with Dash which is where she meets Nahum and another boy... One of the boys with black hoodies grabs her just before an explosion kills a mass of people. But no one seems to notice. It must be the drugs the black hoodies were giving them so why is this one helping her?

She discovers the impossible. Her home is a simulation. The world is completely different. The real world with artists and people who are immortal. There body is basically technology and there is no love. She must decided now if she should stay and start over or save everyone from her home because there is a conspiracy going on and she's the hero that they need.

Yay! Finally got to review Socialpunk. I thought Ima was kind of hopeless in the beginning. Only because she was being carried around everywhere by guys which I know girls wouldn't mind that much but still! She did grow out of it even though she's completely oblivious to the guys mooning over her and of course how beautiful she is. She takes the lead and I respect her for it.

The beginning again I had a problem with because it moved to fast. I couldn't get into the characters and what was going on but it transformed from there and I was able to see the vision of the author's creation. It was quite excellent-- the plot and how the world was. Artists everywhere. Who would have thought that was the future? But it did say that was just the industry there so there's that. I would love to have so many artists everywhere though. I'd stare at all the art all day.

I ruined the ending for myself because I found it weird that it said on Goodreads that it was like 200 pages and it ended being much less. It was a face palm hit to the forehead moment. Oh well... It was a pretty shocking ending to say the least. I know that the two others are supposed to come out soon too so I would like to see Ima's/Cinder's reaction.

She kind of accepted it all pretty fast. I would not have changed like that if I were her. I love how they run everywhere though. That's fun. I don't like how they all aren't really them. Their bodies are made and aren't real... it's pretty creepy. This is of course is one of the things that draws me in. I completely loved the whole city. I can't wait to see how the whole story enfolds. Thank goodness for indies!

<http://shesgotbooksonhermind.blogspot...>

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