



## The Alpha Drive

*Kristen Martin*

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## **The Alpha Drive** Kristen Martin

It's the year 2055 and an anarchist organization has taken control with the aim to create a world-class society. Half of humankind is unknowingly living in an alternate reality called Dormance . . . and there are no plans to wake them up.

Sixteen-year-old introvert Emery Parker is one such dormant. An academic scholar who avoids ruffling feathers at all costs, Emery finds herself being transferred to a boarding school on the outskirts of Arizona. Little does she know, a family secret has the power to change the course of the future. When she's approached with an opportunity to free the dormants, she sees no other choice but to accept, even though failure could mean having her memory wiped clean.

But when tech-savvy Torin Porter reaches out to her from the other side, Emery begins to question everything she was told about Dormance. If her family's secret falls into the wrong hands, the world as she knows it will be faced with irreversible consequences. Now Emery must play both sides to uncover the truth about her family's past or risk leaving mankind to live in an unconscious reality.

## **The Alpha Drive Details**

Date : Published November 17th 2015 by Black Falcon Press

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Author : Kristen Martin

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## From Reader Review The Alpha Drive for online ebook

### Erin M says

Full review to come tomorrow!

Loved it! Need the second book ... yesterday. Gripping, suspenseful and full of unanswered questions that leave you wanting more.

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### Crazy4Books says

I wish I had a review copy of this. Sounds like so much fun and Ive been into scifi lately. I love reviewing underrated books on my blog.

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### Manda (The Glittery Nerd) says

I received a copy of this book as part of the loving dem book booktube tours in exchange for an honest review.

I have done a full non spoiler review on my booktube channel that will up on the 29th of May, i'll put the link in once it's live.

My actual rating for this book is 2.5 stars. I found this book really slow to start but around chapter 7 the pace of the book picked right up. I did read the vast majority of this book in one sitting, and for me that is a sign of book that is interesting enough that i need to keep turning those pages. I did love the concept of this book, it felt like the Matrix mixed with some Dystopian. Unfortunately, i found there were just too many world building, plot and character development problems in this book for me to give it a higher rating. I found that there were too many unanswered questions by the end of this book for me, and they aren't the type of questions that leave me excited to continue on with the series. This is the first book in a series so maybe these questions will answered in the next books, but i felt like there was nothing that left me understanding this world in even the slightest bit. Friendships felt forced or unrealistic, some characters felt unnecessary, the alternating perspectives in the middle of chapters confused me and very little world building.

\*\*\*\*\* THIS NEXT PART CONTAINS SPOILERS, CONTINUE AT YOUR OWN RISK\*\*\*\*\*

Now i want to get into some really specific things that i found in this books. Firstly Emery: i personally found Emery to be a really unlikeable character. She seemed to be unnecessarily angry alot of the time particularly when it came to Anthony. Emery was an insanely naive character in my eyes, she was so quick to accept that she was living in dormance (i feel like anybody would question this even just a little), within maybe 5 minutes of being told she had accepted this as true, and then when Torin came and told her that actually the FCW where the ones wanting people in dormance and the 7S where trying to save them, she was equally as quick to accept this as fact. Emery has this best friend Riley that doesn't really get mentioned and she only spoke to her once in the entire book, maybe she features more in the next books but it didn't seem to fit with this one.

While i've already mentioned Anthony, i'm not sure what he's character added to the story, other than Emery getting to experience the memory loss, i didn't see a what Anthony's character added. Why was Emery so angry at Anthony? Emery seemed to start a fight with him every time she seen him, or he would drive to the school and be told to go away. This just made me dislike Emery as a character, i wanted to understand her action, but without that explanation it just felt like she was being a bully. For example she accepted an invite to dinner, and almost instantly started a fight when she got there.

Emery and Rhea: Pretty much as soon as they meet they are besties. Instantly asking each other, who is texting you? But just as quickly as they are friends they are fighting, the first time again with no real explanation, it seemed out of place. Like when Emery spends the night at Warren's (only sleeping) she comes back really salty towards Rhea, i didn't really get why that was? at the point it didn't seem that Rhea had said anything out of place.

Dormance: This is the part where i felt like i had the most questions unanswered, some of which i felt should of been explained in the first book to help build the world. First where are the bodies of all the comatose people being kept? How is or was the next generation born? its made clear that Emery has been in dormance her whole life, so how was she born? What happens to their bodies when they die in dormance? The scene where Rhea dies, if she is truly only comatose in the real world, shouldn't she be able to return to dormance? if not, what happens to their bodies in the real world once they die? At the very end of the book when the members of the Alpha Drive go to the 7S world, how did they get there with their, what seemed, their real bodies? I mean people where injured or died, so it seemed like they were really there. And the serum that Emery released to save everyone, how can it work in both worlds? Isn't Dormance a VR type world? surely this serum shouldn't be able to work in both places, how did it work?

The Alpha Drive: that "training" really wasn't training, it was more like a trial to see if she was capable of surviving.

The next few things will hopefully be explained in the next few books but What really happened to Emery's Dad? and why is Emery's mum so scared? What is the family secret mentioned in the synopsis, was this actually mentioned during the story? I just really want to understand dormance but felt really unsatisfied at the end of this book.

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## Sarah says

\*For disclosure purposes I requested this book from the author & was thus sent this book to review, however that doesn't change any opinions I may hold on the content\*

3.8/5

Overall I would say that this book was interesting & entertaining and I read it in the tub in one go without stopping as the plot seemed to zip on and I couldn't put it down.

We have a host of characters, the main being 16 year old Emery Parker who was sent to a prestigious boarding school in Arizona where she becomes roommates with party girl Rhea. The school is actually quite dilapidated and thus hard to maneuver but she soon settles into a routine of school. Emery receives a phone call from a mysterious man saying to meet, where she is extended an invitation to join an elite task force to help free her people from their mass medically induced comas (alled Dormance) that no one knows about. Her whole life is a lie and Emery struggles to come to terms with it but decides to do her best to help her

family and friends.

When Tarver is introduced it adds an interesting new element to the dystopian, backstabbing, deceitful worlds they live in and I liked the build up to what he might do in the next story.

I feel that the overall world building could have benefitted from a bit more exploration and explanation but it was still fresh and interesting enough to grab my interest. I liked that there was barely any romance and that the main character was a flawed, and slightly unlikeable character. The plot was pretty original for a YA book and I am excited to see what the next book brings.

This book gives serious Matrix vibes and I loved the hacker boy, science loving girl, boarding school, and dystopian themes woven throughout the book. I hoped to get more information of why everything happened the way that it did, so I am really hoping more gets revealed in the next book because SO MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS.

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### **Montzalee Wittmann says**

The Alpha Drive is a great fantasy story that creates a world where people are in a coma like state but do not know it, Matrix like. Only a few know what is going on. They want to recruit Emery to help them stop the enemy from killing off the Dormants (coma state people). Torin, computer geek/hack, thinks that it is a different government group. Which secret op is really the good guys? The plot is well developed as well as the characters. Lots of action, imagination, twists, turns, guessing who is really on what side, and a fun read. Received this book for a honest review.

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### **Josh BookDragon says**

This book was alright. In no way was it spectacular or anything. I never really felt invested into the plot for one thing. It was interesting at times, but my mind always turned to different thoughts while reading. Another issue I had was pacing. The pacing felt very off. One second it was the first day of school then the next chapter it's 2 months later. I felt like we could have had some bridge scenes in between. The main plot twists were very predictable for me and the characters I didn't really connect with. I'm not saying that I hated this book, and at times I was actually enjoying myself while reading, but overall this book deserves 3 stars.

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### **archdandy says**

*The Alpha Drive* follows Emery as she goes off to boarding school for the first time and meets new friends, dumps her boyfriend and oh yeah, gets caught up in a fight for the lives of people who are 'dormant' (in a coma) and not really living in the world. Emery is a dormant so it's not really a surprise she takes such a quick interest in the cause. She has two opposing sides telling her they are both the good guys and that she should help them and she has to navigate her way through the intrigue and mystery while also getting herself through her first year in a new school.

I really should have just jumped ship on this book many times but I kept powering through because I hate not finishing books and I figured I should read the whole thing to be able to give it a proper review for

Netgalley. I did not like this book and I will not be reading on in the series to see what happens next. It had way too many problems and it definitely needed a strong editing. The story was written in third person and the author used the characters names way too often in sentences. Seriously, it felt like every other word was 'Emery'. "Emery did this and then she did this and then Emery picked her nose and wiped the boogers on her shirt"...

The characters were one dimensional and didn't act like regular people. For instance her roommate took to a weird obsession with Emery very quickly and they all believed in the whole dormance thing way too easily. A huge part of why I couldn't get in to the story is because I didn't connect with any of the characters. Everything felt very superficial and it was hard to care about anything going on.

I skimmed through most of this book so I wasn't even disappointed when nothing was really explained at the end. But it's annoying to read through a whole book and still not know what the f\*\*\* was going on. Like where was Emery's body being held? The rest of her squad and Theo's body were in the rooms all nice and convenient like but Emery's body wasn't there? Why wasn't she more concerned with who had her body and where it was? Like whoever has it could just do anything they wanted to it and she acts like she doesn't even care. Also I'm pretty sure the author just watched the 'Matrix' and decided it was a good plot for a book because the first half of the book is pretty similar to the first movie.

This book came off very amateurish and it didn't feel like a finished story. I'm actually pretty surprised this is getting published. I'm pretty annoyed I wasted my time reading it but I guess it was my choice to finish it and I gotta take responsibility for that.

*\*I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review from Netgalley*

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## **Chayse Sundt says**

I have to be honest when I say that this book was better than I thought it was going to be. I went into this book with no expectations, little knowledge of the book or the author and in all honesty that was the best thing I could have done. I sat down to read and well maybe I did have a little bit of an expectation since this was the first book I read in 2016 but I was quite surprised and really happy I clicked on this book to read.

As the synopsis says it is the year 2055 and I have a little freak out moment when I feel like the year should actually be 2015 with the way the technology and world is described. Then comes the part with the twist and everything is opened up.

We follow this girl named Emery who seems like every normal teenage girl. Has a sister, has a boy friend, going to some boarding school (that doesn't seem the prettiest by the description of it), and is good at school. However, within a day of being there she is told something that changes how she views her world and the idea of reality.

Emery was a good character. I felt we saw growth but it kind of just happened. I don't know if it was a little too fast or not but she was just good for me. And this is just the first book, the next book (which I hope to read) might have her become this amazing character as I see but for now she is just there. The supporting characters were there and I kind of wish we got to know them a little more but that is just my thing.

There wasn't much a romance in here as I thought there might be which is something different and I kind of liked it. We do see the tension and there is a twist in which it might hit you, but other than that it was pretty calm. Nice I think!

I fell into the story pretty easily and I never once got bored with it or have my mind drifting to something else. I am excited to see where the next book goes. I have some ideas on what it could bring but I will leave it to the author to surprise me. Fantastic start of the new year!

Happy Reading!

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## Stacy says

\*There are some minor spoilers included in this review\*

Although I was able to finish ALPHA DRIVE I found there were a lot of issues along the way.

THE ALPHA DRIVE lacked world building. If I hadn't read the blurb for the book, I don't think I would have known what the heck was going on and even after reading the blurb, I didn't fully understand everything that was involved in the world.

The friend relationship between Emery and her brand new roommate was weird. They JUST met each other yet the roommate is super obsessed with knowing everything Emery does and gets upset with her like they are best friends that have known each other for ages instead of a small amount of time. I also didn't understand the point of Emery having a relationship with Anthony in THE ALPHA DRIVE. She makes it clear that she doesn't feel the same way about him as she did when they first met and she is a total bitch to him. I don't understand how he came to visit her so often when he lived so far away—when her sister came with her to drop her off at school, she took a plane back home—and there wasn't much to his visits when they happened. It didn't move the story along in any way or develop Emery's character at all. There just didn't seem to be much point to her having a relationship in the book at all. On top of these two secondary characters, there were others that didn't add much to the story. Emery's childhood best friend is mentioned, but Emery talks to her like once throughout the whole book, why mention her at all?

After reading THE ALPHA DRIVE I am left with about a million questions and not in the 'I have to get my hands on the next book' kinda way. The last portion of the book was a jumbled mess and although I wouldn't mind knowing what happens after the end of THE ALPHA DRIVE, I don't think I will bother going out of my way to find out.

\* This book was provided free of charge from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

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## Maddie says

It's been ages since I've read a dystopian/fantasy a-single-girl-must-save-the-world book and I absolutely loved that aspect. If I'd have read this around the time those kind of books were popular, I don't think it would have stuck out as much, but because there's a lot of distance between that dystopian trend, I was really able to appreciate what made this one unique.

I loved the university style setting as that's something you hardly ever see. I liked the dynamic between Emery and Rhea as roommates and I really loved the pacing. One minute it would feel like a regular contemporary where Emery was out on a date and in the next chapter, she'd be thrown into a test-your-strength atmosphere that reminded me of the fear landscapes in 'Divergent'. It was unexpected and wonderful.

I'll definitely be continuing on with the series, and I'm just generally so inspired by Kristen's writing and publishing journey. I think it's silly to rate traditionally published and self published books the same way because self-pub has a lot less people working on a book to make it shine and Kristen deserves major credit for creating such a great story, editing and publishing it by herself!

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### **Taylor (Taylicious Reads) says**

I honestly hate not finishing books, especially when they are sent to me for review, but I honestly couldn't get into *The Alpha Drive*. Maybe it was the writing style, which for me was really hard to read, or maybe it was the fact that the book I finished before this was one of the best books I've ever read (*Summer of Supernovas* by Darcy Woods), but nevertheless I could not read this book.

It felt bland, I saw nothing that caught my eye when I started this book. It was hard to push through the first 50 pages I read. I just couldn't do it. I'm so sorry.

This book was sent to me through Booktube Tours, so if you are interested in looking for the book and people who might've enjoyed it you can look at the tour.

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### **Eve K says**

Welcome to my book rant.

Starting with the blurb of lies:

#### **The Alpha Drivel**

**It's the year 2055 and an anarchist organization has taken control with the aim to create a world-class society. according to the definition of anarchy, the FCW is NOT an anarchist organisation.**

**Half of humankind is unknowingly living in an alternate reality called Dormance . . . and there are no plans to wake them up.**

**Sixteen-year-old introvert *total bitch* Emery Parker is one such dormant. An academic scholar who shows no evidence of being academic avoids ruffling feathers at all costs, except when she's screaming at her innocent boyfriend in front of her friends and deliberately pursuing the guy her friend wants Emery finds herself being transferred to a boarding school on the outskirts of Arizona. Little does she know, a family secret that never gets mentioned once in the entire book has the power to change the course of the future. When she's approached with an opportunity to free the dormants, she sees no other choice but to accept, even though failure could mean having her memory wiped clean.**

**But when tech-savvy Torin Porter reaches out to her from the other side, Emery begins to question everything she was told about Dormance *nope*, she just instantly believes Torin without a second thought. If her family's secret that is never mentioned in the book falls into the wrong hands, the world as she knows it will be faced with irreversible consequences. Now Emery must play both sides *aka ignore it all and focus on the hot guy she wants to fuck instead* to uncover the truth about her family's past *nope* or risk leaving mankind to live in an unconscious reality.**

#### **CHARACTERS**

**EMERY** A revered, valuable asset that everyone wants on their team... for no explained reason. She's a rude,

stuck up, selfish, jealous bitch. She's supposed to be academic but shows no sign of intelligence. And all the males in the story think she's breathtakingly beautiful of course.

RHEA Her main character trait is stupidity. She forces a drunk girl to stand up in a wet shower and rolls her onto her back when she lays down so she's at risk of choking on her own vomit. Rhea attaches herself to Emery's hip the second they meet and other than that, has no purpose in the story.

MASON Seems to be a 50 year old in a teen's body, judging by how he behaves and talks. He's a completely empty shell.

THEO Doesn't like Novak. Has no other personality traits.

NOVAK Cardboard cutout of President Snow.

NAIA Has no personality.

List of pointless characters who don't impact the story:

*Warren*

*Cadence*

*Riley*

*Alexis*

*Anthony*

### **PLOT EX MACHINA**

47% into the book, Emery has joined a boarding school, been signed up to the Alpha Drive, had one completely uneventful training session and slept over at some random kid's dorm. Nothing else has happened.

The story plays out with no urgency. There is literally nothing driving the plot forward.

*Emery goes to new school.*

*Emery invited to join Alpha Drive.*

*Emery goes to classes.*

In 2054 they're apparently still teaching Latin. Why? OH... So that Emery can explain how she deciphered the easily decipherable Latin names the FCW adopts for literally everything.

*Emery has 4 boring training sessions which accomplish nothing.*

First one, Emery swims in a pool with an oxygen helmet on for a few minutes, then gets out. She sees her mother at the bottom of the pool which we find out later was not supposed to happen, so the entire point of Emery swimming in a pool for a bit was what? To see if she can swim?

Second one, Emery pulls her imaginary best friend out of fire. She's told not to, but she does anyway, so if the training session were to go to plan, she'd have just stood there? And then it would have ended?

Third one, Emery runs through the forest chased by some mythical creatures. She decides not to go in the water to escape them because the creatures are part snake and some snakes can swim. So she climbs a tree...

I thought a lot of snakes LIVE in trees. Anyway, she answers a riddle they give her, then it's over. Fourth

one, she's in some kind of wind tunnel and gets shot. So she's training to answer riddles up burning trees in a wind tunnel after going for a swim. Apparently.

After Emery thinks she sees her mother's dead body at the bottom of the pool in her first training session, she believes her mother is dead. Cue emotional breakdown and complete devastation? Therapy sessions dealing with the loss of her mother? Failing in her classes because of how distraught she is? Anger towards the Alpha Drive for killing her mother? Withdrawal from the Alpha Drive? NOPE. She just carries on her life as normal. No mention of it again.

Emery also doesn't give a flying fuck when she's led to believe that her oldest and best friend has burned to death.

*Emery has dreams.*

The plot is completely stagnant through most of the book and rather than making her protagonist do any investigating to prove her alleged intelligence, the author slowly drip-feeds her clues via dreams instead.

Then, when the clues become relevant later, she's all 'AHA! It's all falling into place!' as if it was some stroke of genius to plant seeds in the easiest way possible.

*Tumbleweeds roll past.*

*Emery pisses off her roommate by dating roommate's crush.*

While months pass and nothing is happening with the Alpha Drive, the author throws in a long stretch of pointless boy-trouble angst to keep the reader and protagonist occupied.

*Emery contacted by hacker from outside world.*

Faced with 'evidence' that 7S are the good guys, despite the fact that the evidence could be easily manipulated, just because Emery sees it with her own eyes, she believes it to be real. Even though she LIVES in a simulation which she sees every day with her own eyes and knows it's not real. But she's so smart.

*Emery passes boring training and morphs into the black power ranger and is sent to the real world.*

Emery is 16 years old and described as tiny, with no combat training but she can suddenly fight and behaves like a trained soldier as soon as she's 'deployed'. The Alpha Drive 'army' all go to the real world with no strategy being told to them either. They just start running through the streets of a city they've never been in, holding guns they've not been trained to use, with literally no idea what they're doing.

*Emery defeats the FCW using all the clues handed to her on a plate by dreams and other characters.*

During the climax of the book (at 92%), Emery still has no idea what the fuck she's doing. In order to solve all the problems, Emery says 'Get me back to the FCW common room' as if she has a plan. But that plan is not mentioned and it soon becomes clear she doesn't have one as she runs around blindly not knowing what she's doing, where to go or what she's even looking for. She had no reason to want to go to the FCW common room except for the fact the plot required it. Everything happens to her by chance and not by logical forward movement of a well structured plot.

Emery only found the pendant via the open-door-ex-machina which 'drew her inside' a building that meant nothing to her, which she'd otherwise have no reason to enter, as she's walking past it on her way to meet up with someone. Seriously, something other-worldly draws her inside, makes her walk through the whole massive empty building, makes her trip on a rug that's covering a trap door (that apparently no one else who frequents that building has ever noticed before), open it, climb down a ladder into unknown darkness and walk down a corridor underground to find a pendant sticking out of the wall.

Torin took months to hack into the FCW's mainframe (which only allowed him access to a tablet in the common room) but as soon as it's required of him, he's instantly hacking into the computers in the FCW control room. Of course.

Emery needs a T-Port to teleport from the real world to Dormance, even though there's no T-Port in Dormance for it to teleport her to (as you can only teleport between T-Ports) but she doesn't need a T-Port to teleport back from Dormance to the real world T-Port because ...reasons.

The vault holding the healing serum is protected by the MOST OBVIOUS PASSWORD FUCKING EVER.

*Emery is stupid.*

12 people on the roof of the 7S building... Must all be the same 12 people in the coma pods then! Just go cut the energy supply from all of them so that they don't wake up in the real world again after Dormance is shut down, without even CHECKING who's inside the pods first! Such genius.

Ta-dah! They saved the world from Dormance. Everything is good. No mention of Emery finding her real comatose body now, because that would shine a light on the massive plot inconsistency that is her now having 2 real physical bodies in the real world.

*The end.*

The ONE plot twist; Naia, was predictable pretty early on.

## CHAPTERS

Entire scenes and even at least 1 chapter were completely pointless. *Example:* In one of the chapters, Emery wakes up on Mason's bed. She walks around a bit and finds a note on the counter telling her to go upstairs to another dorm room. She gets there and sees Mason playing computer games with his friends. She sits down

next to him and asks if he wants to get breakfast. He agrees. End of chapter.

The first chapter relates to a time AFTER the first book has finished. So we never get back to that inciting scene in the first chapter, throughout the whole book.

Several chapters head-jump between characters with no scene break.

The entire hospital chapter was set up just so that Emery could discover Rhea's microchip and Rhea's memory be wiped, which is completely pointless now that Rhea has already been removed from the Alpha Drive and presumably already had her memory wiped.

## CONFLICT

Where?

79% into the book, nothing is happening. It should be well into the climax build up by now but everything is so static that the author tries to create conflict by making a previously unmentioned ex of Mason's turn up and claim to still be in love with him. This has no impact and we never see her again.

This book has no conflict let alone crisis or breaking point for Emery. Her family and friends don't matter to her. Emery isn't worried about anything other than how many boys are eyeing her up at all the college parties she attends. And trying to make her inconvenient boyfriend fuck off so she can date someone else.

## DIALOGUE

There doesn't seem to be a single line of dialogue without a follow up line of action.

**"Blah blah blah" Delilah picked out her wedgie.**

**"Blah blah blah" Spartacus blinked 15 times.**

**"Blah blah" Delilah exploded.**

The action between dialogue is distracting and unnecessary, as it's obvious who's talking most of the time, just by the direction of the conversation.

The dialogue itself is stilted, cheesy and formal - Emery's best friend unironically calls her *Pumpkin*.

Every character talks in exactly the same way.

## WRITING

Without exaggerating, The Alpha Drive reads like the first draft of a slightly precocious middle-schooler. Either the book wasn't professionally edited or the author ignored the editor's advice to get rid of all the clunky sentences and filler. Or the editor massively ripped the author off.

She uses so many cheesy similes and metaphors. - *The once empty lawn had suddenly turned into an enlarged mating ground for new students. ...So people are having sex on it?*

Over-use of the thesaurus often renders the writing nonsensical. - *"Wait, how do you two know each other?" Rhea asked, doing her best to mask the confusion in her voice. Why would you try to mask your confusion when asking a question? - Torin eyed the nearest T-Port and sulked over to it. Sulking isn't a form of movement.*

The author also seems to write by the notion that 'said is dead', taking the reader yet more frequently out of the story.

The e-book contains spelling mistakes, almost no introspect and almost the entire plot is told instead of shown.

## PACING

The pacing is all over the place.

*Example:* Emery and Mason go to an open day (or something) at their college, they leave early because Mason's ex turns up, they walk across the street back to Mason's dorm and sit on the couch, Emery gets a phone call from the hospital telling her to come there immediately, she gets there, fills out a form and the

clock says it's 1am. How?

We don't know why Emery is Rhea's next of kin, what actually happened to Rhea or how she got to the hospital in the first place. But we do get to read several times about Emery brushing her teeth and taking showers and the sound that chips make in her mouth as she chews them.

Emery starts school and has 2 training sessions within the first week. She doesn't have her third training session for another 6 months. And then her fourth, 4 months after that. In the meantime, nothing happens.

**QUESTIONS** the book left me with:

- Why recruit 2 roommates to the Alpha Drive when their chips flash constantly in each other's company, giving a 100% likelihood of either of them being figured out and putting the Alpha Drive into jeopardy?
- Why recruit Rhea who is clearly stupid?
- How do they recruit copious amounts of students into the Alpha Drive and schedule their training not only around each other's but also around their classes without anyone getting suspicious about where they're disappearing to or trying to follow them? No way would a roommate as obsessed with Emery as Rhea is, not figure out something is up, especially since she herself is in the same position having to sneak off at a moments notice. Her first suspicion would be that Emery is in the Alpha Drive too. Or she's monumentally stupid, in which case why has she been recruited to the Alpha Drive?
- If only members of the Alpha Drive can see the elevator in the lobby of Rosemary Hall, how does an AD member get into the elevator when there are other people present? Do they have to wait until the lobby is completely empty?
- They don't monitor the chips when the hosts are asleep? So how does the FCW know when the hosts wake up?
- How do you teleport yourself into a world that only exists inside peoples minds?
- Why put so much effort into creating a simulated reality for people who are your prisoners? Why not just leave them in a coma while you take their DNA (apparently that's the only reason they're kept alive) and not bother with all the extra shit? Or, why not just kill them after you've extracted their DNA and preserve it? Does 2054 not have that technology? But it can create a simulated reality and connect the brains of half of the entire world to it... Why not just kill everyone who's comatose and extract DNA from the rest of the living population? It wouldn't be that hard to come up with a reason for everyone to have to go give a cheek swab.
- Someone from the outside world hacked into someone else's simulated reality but this hacker can create simulated 'crystal dials' in his own world and insert them into the simulation so that they then become a simulation and not real anymore, but still have the power to transport the simulated person possessing them into the real world as a hologram... I can believe this could maybe be done by the original creator of the simulated reality but not by someone who just hacked into it and barely knows anything about the simulation itself. If the hacker knew enough about the simulated reality to be able to create simulations inside it, wouldn't he also be able to either shut down the simulation itself or create some other simulated weapon against the people involved in the FCW who are also living in Dormance?
- How do you cause an injection of serum into someone's simulated body via the microchip embedded in their neck, just by injecting that serum into a separate computer? How in the Hell does a liquid travel through a computer and materialise as liquid inside a microchip miles away from it?

- Pretty much the only rules established about the microchip are 1) The microchip sees everything the host sees. 2) The only time the microchip isn't being observed by the FCW is when the host is asleep. The first rule gets broken as soon as it's convenient as Emery nonchalantly communicates with Torin AND writes down all the information she knows about the FCW being the bad guys DURING waking hours and apparently the chip doesn't capture it, or the chip isn't being observed because no one finds out about it. So why establish those rules in the first place?
- How do you hack into simulated technology? If you're a real world hacker, you might know how to hack real world technology but surely simulated technology would be a whole other ball game? How do you hack into technology that's not even real?
- The Alpha Drive participants finish their training and then are immediately propelled 'through space and time' into the real world. So their simulated bodies have left the simulation and are now real, in the real world. Even though their REAL real bodies are all lying in a coma somewhere. So now they all have 2 real bodies each?
- Mason had nothing to do with Emery and Torin interfering with the FCW's plan and there was no evidence to suggest he did so why did Theo decide to beat him up and shoot him in the head?
- One of the 2 puzzle pieces that are completely essential to the control of all Dormance was just randomly stuck in a wall, visible and accessible enough for Emery to just 'pluck' it out and put it around her neck (apparently it was attached to a handy chain), but no one else has ever found it? It's IN the corridor leading to the control room. Not some obscure place no one ever goes. And why was it even there in the first place, just randomly stuck in a wall? AND why didn't the person watching her chip see it all?!
- How do simulated weapons work on people in the real world?
- If Naia sent Emery the password to shut down Dormance via the simulation of her mother during training, why the Hell couldn't Naia just shut down Dormance herself? And if she can't access it without the pendant and ring, how did she even know the password to shut it down? You have to give the password AFTER you access it, by placing the pendant and ring in, and why is there a place for the fish ring to go, if you only need the pendant to access the controls for Dormance?!?!?!?!
- So a serum that brings a simulation back to life, works in exactly the same way to bring a real human back to life too?
- Why take Rhea out of the Alpha Drive if they're still going to use her in the Alpha Drive? What was the point in wiping her memory? It makes much more sense to NOT wipe her memory, from the perspective of the FCW, at least then she already knows the cause she's supposedly fighting for. But of course the plot needed her to not remember who Emery was in order for Emery to shoot her and gain access to the control room lol.
- Novak now has her ring which he stole from Dormance, which is a SIMULATION, so the ring was a simulation, but now that it's in the real world, the ring is magically real and not a simulation anymore. How does that work?
- *"Reach into your left boot," he commanded. Too stunned to ask why, Emery bent down, her fingers grazing... a black spherical device the size of a golf ball.* How do you walk around with a golf ball in your boot without knowing it?
- And lastly and most importantly of all... Do people really still listen to dubstep in 2054?

## Alexandra says

I have a confession to make. I am a very picky reader.

But perhaps not in the usual way of picky readers. You see, if I'm enjoying a story for whatever reason I can continue in spite of various flaws. But if a story doesn't grab me it's quite a different matter.

The Alpha Drive is a prime example. It has flaws, things that if improved would have made it a much better book, but it still managed to keep me engrossed and interested. Truth is that once things started unfolding I really didn't want to put it down.

Objectively I can say there are things about this book that could have been better, probably should have been better.

The first issue I had, which may just be an expected conundrum for the main plot – was the logical problems regarding the fact that people in a coma living in a simulated world would have no physical presence, but be a form of avatar. For me there seemed to be much confusion between physical/non-physical, real/simulation that I just had to ignore. Similar to logic problems in some time-travel stories.

In addition to that it seemed to me many of the secondary characters were merely props, there when needed as a plot device (or sometimes even when not really needed at all), but not fleshed out, and not used to give more depth to the world, relationships, characters. The world Emery inhabits seems very sparsely populated.

There were many things that just did not make sense to me. For example, Emery is 16 years old, at a boarding school for kids in this age range. However there is a complete lack of adult supervision. Boys come into dorm rooms of girls even late at night, assisting someone who is apparently drunk, with no one supervising inside the dorm building.

I was also left with some questions that I expect will be answered in the next book.

The ending seemed a bit rushed, and again, had logical issues for me. The people involved had no real combat or weapons training, nor any training as a unit. I won't specify more to avoid spoilers, but that was very unrealistic to me.

I did like that fact that both sides of the conflict claimed to Emery that they were trying to assist those stuck in the simulated world, and that the other side was trying to control everyone. It made it interesting to have confusion and doubt about which side was telling the truth and who the real bad guys were.

And I absolutely loved the adorkable computer hacker Torin.

My e-book copy had some minor editing errors, such as occasional missing spaces between words, and in one spot a sentence with a missing noun.

Subjectively though I honestly enjoyed it. In spite of its flaws I found it an interesting and compelling read. For the most part I found it satisfyingly descriptive in the immediate, although I would have loved more world building, and more character development.

I plan to read the next in the series, and will be watching out for more by this author. I'm interested to see

how she grows as a storyteller, and in the story here she has to tell.

I received a free copy of this book via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Julia says**

I read and reviewed this book as I am one of the hosts for its Booktube Tour, created by Grace over at LovingDemBooks. I received the book for free in exchange for my review but all of my opinions are my own!

With that being said, I liked it! The premise of the book is that a girl named Emery discovers that half of the world (her half) is in a fictional reality and that their true selves are in a comatose-like state in the real (other half) world. She is recruited and trained to help bring her side back to reality and defeat those that are trying to permanently erase all of humanity's existence.

I enjoyed Emery as a character, I found her to be very intelligent and strong. My biggest issue with her is that she didn't show much compassion towards others and she was VERY trusting VERY quickly. She's also of course described as shockingly beautiful and every guy character she meets falls in love with her. Come on, a little rejection never hurt anybody! ;)

I loved the pace of this book, I finished it in a few hours! I do wish that there was a little more detail in the world-building as I am still trying to figure out the comatose vs. fictional reality aspect of the book. Since Emery has always been in this world, does that mean she was born into it? And if so, does that mean that her comatose mother on the "real" side had to give birth to her and then someone placed baby Emery into her permanent holding cell? Kristen if you're reading this I would really like to know!

Also, at first I found the ending to be WAY too convenient and resolved too quickly, but the last chapter has me thinking that was on purpose. ;) Overall, like I said, I really enjoyed this book and look forward to what the series holds for the future. A video of this book review will be up on Monday, so look for that!

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### **Carolina Godinho says**

Oh my! How hard it is to review this book. I requested at NG because the blurb was really interesting. But after a few pages the story becomes something so hard to enjoy. It is confusing, always alternating the POV, and one minute it says something and then happens the opposite.

Emery and Rhea's relationship is hard to grasp, they barely know each other, then they're friends and in the next moment they're frenemies.

And Anthony, Emery's boyfriend. One moment she says he's distant and in the next breath, she's the distant one and he's needy and clingy. And Emery has a "best friend" she barely mentioned her and much less talk to her.

The plot though interesting is full of holes, like the fact that half of the world is in dormance. But how are they in dormance? Who did this and how they did it? Where are this people being kept?

It felt like I was reading a fanfic of Matrix, written by a teenager.

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