



## What We Become

*Jesse Karp*

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Two years ago, teenagers Mal and Laura destroyed a corporate empire intent on controlling human thinking through technology. For a while, life was good. But now a new force has arisen: the Old Man. He's hungry for power and he knows who holds the key to getting it: Mal. Mal needs his beloved Laura's help to defeat the Old Man, but is he willing to risk her life in another battle to save humanity? *What We Become* combines mind-bending thrills with the hot immediacy of corporate greed. It will leave readers wondering who is really in control...

## What We Become Details

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Author : Jesse Karp

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## From Reader Review What We Become for online ebook

### **Brittany Hershberger says**

What We Become was different in some way from other books I have read. I am not sure what it is, but I really love this book and its characters! The bittersweet ending is interesting and I would definitely recommend reading this book. Side note, I did not realize it was the second book in a series, but the story still flowed smoothly. I definitely will read Those That Wake now.

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### **Guillermo Castello says**

What We Become by Jesse Karp is one of my favorite books because it is full of action and makes me think about life in general. It is a story about a futuristic world where corporations manipulate people to buy their technology. The way they do this is by using technology itself. In the book, the characters struggle with keeping their individuality and not giving into others' ideas. This book was interesting because I could connect with the characters and the writing was great.

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### **Rahkeeya says**

Very disappointing compared to the first book

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### **Becca Kostick says**

Mal and Laura are managing to negotiate daily life in a radically altered New York City that has been characterized by a heightened police presence, the absence of bookstores, and the invisible, controlling hand of the Old Man. This Old Man wants absolute power over everything and everyone, and he knows that there's only one person who can give it to him, and that one person is Mal. Though the two are separated by faulty memory, Laura and Mal both have companions to assist them as they work to recover their forgotten pasts. As the Old Man begins his mental maneuvering to seize a tool that will allow him to control every mind on Earth, Laura and Mal ascend the Lazarus Towers for a neuropleth battle. Mal's consistent ability to take punches and Laura's obsessive focus on interpersonal connections keep them from advancing as characters. Two other characters seem meant to be foils, but Rose's fragility and Aaron's blasé approach to social cues are too one-dimensional to be effective. Vanishing bookstores, cancer-causing cellphone implants and omniscient Librarians add a dusty-feeling paternalism to the straining prose that fights and sexual creepsterism simply can't overcome.

This science-fiction story is on my favorites shelf because of how unique it is. Middle grades will dive into it with a new eye and will quickly become obsessed with it. In the classroom, teachers can let students choose stories to read independently, this being one of them, and assign them different comprehension tasks to do while reading them. Students could be asked to predict before reading each chapter what will happen, they can be asked to question the text, then asked to summarize the story at the end by using sentence stems such as: This is about ; First , next , then , finally . Teachers can also have students create podcasts and e-books

that are similar to the stories they read, especially this one story.

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### **Ms. Yockey says**

HMH  
Feb 2012  
Ask Ellen

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### **Stephanie says**

My Summary: Mal and Laura have had their fair share of adventure. A few years ago, they saved society from a corporation intent on controlling human thought. You'd think that would be enough for a lifetime, right?

Wrong. Now Mal and Laura are back to put a stop to a new threat - the Old Man - and save the world as they know it (again) from being taken over by a lunatic. But can they possibly defeat this new threat, whose power seems to be increasing exponentially by the second? And can they do it without risking everything?

My Thoughts: This novel was fast-paced and didn't let up until the very end. You could really tell that our main characters cared deeply for each other, even if they sometimes tried to protect each other by doing things that I disagreed with. I liked that even with all the odds stacked against them, Mal and Laura refused to give up trying or give up hope. I really admired Mal's strength in particular, although Laura definitely had her moments.

There was also a great cast of supporting characters. I wasn't so sure about Rose, but Aaron was a great addition. I kind of wish the characters hadn't been separated for so long, or that the ending was a little more of a 'conventional' happy ending, but I can't complain.

Final Thoughts: I recommend this novel to anyone who enjoys fast-paced, action-packed plots as well as dystopian novels.

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### **Julie says**

This book was really good. Happily ever after. I wish 'mrs. Roosevelt' and Laura met up though :(

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### **Barbara says**

This sequel to Those That Wake follows the separate paths of teenagers Mal and Laura as they fight the ever-growing power of The Old Man, who seems to stop at nothing in his quest to control the world. The love Mal and Laura have for each other is deep and real, but sometimes they make mistakes as they try to keep the other one safe. The self-sacrificing Mal, for instance, has Laura's memories of their times together erased so she can forget him and remain safe. While her approach to going against the system is to fight it

with hope, his approach is to use brute force. As the odds against their winning grow ever longer, still, they refuse to quit. I liked both Mal and Laura and their determination to make a difference amid a world sadly dependent on technology. Because of that reliance on unsafe forms of technology, this could certainly be regarded as a cautionary tale as well as a modern-day love story. Some of the violence is completely over the top and sickening, but this title will have appeal for anyone with imagination or any reader who ponders the ubiquity of cell phones and various communications devices.

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### **Heather says**

I did not like this book, in fact I nearly abandoned it. (I would have abandoned it but I had nothing else to read)

#### 1) The characters sucked.

Mal was extremely stupid and seemed to enjoy getting his ribs, nose, and whatever other part of him very badly hurt.

Laura was annoying. She continually ran around everywhere crying that she lost her memory. When she had a stable relationship with someone she would break up with him because he couldn't understand what was going on with her.

Rose was mainly sitting in her own universe and whimpering about how Mal didn't love her.

Aaron in all aspects was a easily bored, constantly "texting" teenager.

#### 2) The writing was terrible.

It took *forever* before anything got anywhere. A huge part of the first half of the book was just about Mal being beaten up (very descriptively too). I did not really want to sit there and read over and over about how Mal got kicked in the chest, badly damaged his ribs and lungs, and so he spewed blood and vomit everywhere. The other part of the first half of the book was about Laura having problems with her boyfriend and discussing her past relationships, which had no relevance to the plot.

#### 3) The plot wasn't that great.

It took a long time to understand that there even was a plot and the book just wasn't about a boy being beaten up, and a girl crying about her memory. When I did realize there was a plot I got terribly confused on who the bad guy was. There was one obvious one (the old man) and then all these other people I thought were bad guys, but then they'd go "ha ha fooled you I'm not who you think I am."

The old man was the only good part of the book and there wasn't much imagination to him. The main part when I read about him he was basically It from *A Wrinkle in Time* .

This was definitely not a great book.

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### **Hannah Pajerski says**

What We Become was a really interesting book to read. This book mainly targeted the future society's many problems. I loved it as I have a strange fetish for sci-fi books, and this definitely covered it.

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## **Jennifer says**

Dystopian is my FAVORITE genre. That makes this an extremely difficult review to write. I'm very surprised that I finished this book, I was just hoping it would get better.

Summary:

After Mal and Laura destroyed a corporate empire, you would think things would be good. The problem is corporates don't stay down as easily as we would like. In this installation of the series (which I didn't actually know was a series), Mal and Laura have to battle another aspect of corporate greed.

My thoughts:

So, character development is a huge reason why I usually love dystopians. There is next to nothing within this book. I haven't read the first one. I didn't realize it was a sequel until after I began reading it; however, it isn't listed as a sequel anywhere. Are Mal and Laura developed elsewhere? Should I read about them in another book? Why do I care about their love affair? I honestly just didn't care about the characters, which made the plot line fall flat. Who wants to root for a character you just don't really know?

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## **Richa says**

Originally posted at City of Books - <http://ecstatic-for-books.blogspot.com/>

What We Become is an absolutely amazing sequel to Those That Wake. It's got incredible depth, fantastic characters, and a fast-paced and intense plot. I really loved this book, way more than I expected to! Those That Wake didn't rank too high on my favourite dystopians, but this one totally blew me away. What We Become is a novel about strength, loyalty, love and sacrifice, and it leaves you with a heartfelt message and, above all, hope.

The world building in this book as well as in Those That Wake is very intricate and detailed, and I loved the premise from the first page itself. Mal and Laura live in a world where technology has taken over. In Those That Wake, they defeated the Man in Suit and stopped hopelessness spreading all over New York City. This time, though, they have to stop the Old Man from taking over the minds of every single person in the city. There's a problem, though. Laura remembers nothing about the events that transpired in Those That Wake. She has no idea who Mal is, or Remak, or Mike. She's going to college, trying to enjoy herself and live her life. But she feels empty, like she knows her memories have been taken. Laura's quest to find answers and, eventually, Mal, is a remarkable and life-altering one.

I loved, loved, loved Mal in this book. He's a powerful fighter with unyielding strength, and he'll do whatever it takes to stop the Old Man. He's someone who will never give up, no matter what. Mal's resilience is amazing, and I honestly think he's one of the best YA protagonists out there. Mal's had it tough his whole life, and Laura was the one bright thing that happened to him. To have her not remember him at all must have killed him, but he knew he couldn't dwell on it, because he had to save his city. I think these lines from the book sum up who Mal really is throughout most of the book -

*There was so little left for him, so little to hang on to, to look forward to. He wasn't afraid to lose anything, because there was nothing left to lose. He battled life just because he wasn't willing to give up the fight.*

Mal is incredibly selfless, and even though he knows his brother, Tommy, doesn't remember him either, he still regularly sends him money so that he and his wife can have a good life. Mal is all alone initially, with the exception of Rose, a girl he meets on the streets. They stick together, but Mal's heart remains with Laura. I really admire his strength, and how he keeps going no matter how much pain he's in. There was a lot of graphic imagery of his fights and injuries, which made me kind of queasy, but it also made me open my eyes to how tough Mal really is.

Laura, as I've mentioned, doesn't remember anything that happened to her in the past few months. Her parents remember her again, after they had forgotten her in *Those That Wake*, and they find nothing amiss either. A few memories, or certain feelings and intuition, come back to Laura, and she desperately wants to find what she's lost. She breaks up with her boyfriend and drops college to set off and find answers. With her is Aaron, the son of the late founder of Intellitech, the company that makes all the tech gadgets that everyone is so immersed in. Together, they discover remnants of Laura's past and even meet the Librarian. But Laura only regains all of her memories the moment she sets eyes on Mal.

I was annoyed that Mal and Laura's reunion took so long (more than three-quarters of the book!) but I forgive Jesse Karp for that because the reunion was everything I expected and more. My heart stopped when they finally met, and it pounded throughout the whole chapter. Mal and Laura complement each other very well, and they're amazing together. They really do bring out the best in each other. I loved every second of the time that they spent together, but I just wish there was more. I really want to share part of a page from the book, my favourite one from the whole book, and the one that summarizes exactly what Mal feels for Laura.

*Through his eyes, she did not see the same Laura she saw every day in the mirror. She saw herself through the prism of Mal's longing. One facet glowed with his awe of her: her ability to feel so openly and earnestly, her connection to the world and the people around her, her willingness to give herself to them. Another facet shone with her fragility, which bred in Mal the fierce, indestructible need to protect her, to make sure her open and earnest heart was never, never tarnished or tainted or bruised, because, to him, it was the only good, true thing in the entire world.*

This is the final line of the paragraph, and I think it's the best line in the whole book -

*To him, she was the hope that real happiness of any sort could exist in the world.*

What We Become has a heart-wrenching ending that brought tears to my eyes. It's very bittersweet, and very unexpected. I understand why Jesse Karp wrote it, but I wish it was different. But I knew that this book wouldn't have a classic happy ending for everyone. Those last couple of chapters really were unforgettable, and I even lay awake the night I finished the book, thinking about Mal and Laura, the characters I fell in love with and the ones that just feel so real to me.

Of course, Aaron and Rose were both amazing supporting characters too. Aaron is amazingly well-informed and mature for his young age (he's only eleven!). And I think he kind of has a crush on Laura. I liked that he really grew to care about her, and made some great decisions in the end. Aaron's character developed a lot throughout the novel, and he becomes someone that his dad would be really proud of.

I wasn't a huge fan of Rose initially, I felt she was too whiny. And too clingy with Mal. I mean, okay you didn't have a great life, but Mal doesn't like you that way. So suck it up. Her jealousy of Laura was also quite annoying. She even wanted to change Mal's memories and replace Laura with herself! Talk about psychotic... But Rose really did step up in the end. She showed great courage, and actually stood up against someone. And later on, she becomes a nurse and helps people who were like her, which I really admire.

What I love most about this book were the characters. They really came alive to me, so much more than the plot did. Sometimes the plot was too technical for me, and I had a hard time understanding all the semantics. But I really connected with Mal and Laura, and even Aaron and Rose. All four of them are amazingly strong characters, and they're what makes this book so awesome. I'd definitely recommend this book and series to anyone who loves dystopia - the concept is intriguing and this book is just so emotional! I really didn't expect that, since the whole population of New York City is so detached in this series. But the last quarter of What We Become is intense and heartbreakingly exhilarating all at once, so the emotions you'll feel are overwhelming! I will definitely be re-reading this series when I can, just for this amazing book.

\*Thank you to Jesse Karp for providing an ARC for review\*

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### **Lisa says**

A compelling read, but I didn't love it. I have not read Those That Wake, so I'm reviewing this as a stand-alone book. I cared about the characters and wanted to know what happened. The exploration of free will, control, technology, and society was interesting and well done. But I don't feel the need to go back and read the first book.

There is a lot of violence in this book, in keeping with the setting. I don't think the violence is gratuitous -- it's part of what makes the authoritarian government monstrous -- but it might be too much for some readers.

(Note: I received a free advance reading copy of this book from the publisher at an American Library Association Annual Conference. I was not required to write a positive review. Thank you, Harcourt!)

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