



Blue Skies

Matthew Mather

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Olympia is a high-powered New York advertising executive with perhaps the chance of a lifetime when she lands the biggest account of her life - the new Cognix synthetic reality promotion. The stress, however, is killing her, and she desperately needs relief from the distraction of everything and everyone around her...

All of the Atopia stories begin at the same moment in time so that you can start by reading any of them, and then read the others in any order you choose to slowly reveal the mystery and terrifying danger that connects them all. Atopia is a near future world without borders that balances on the brink of post-humanism and eco-Armageddon.

Blue Skies Details

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From Reader Review Blue Skies for online ebook

Jennifer says

I thought this was an interesting premise. It's the first in a series and it's a short little read.

Set in the future, a woman who works in advertising and is suffering from anxiety, she takes a new drug, that interfaces directly with the brain. Don't like seeing bums on the street, just let your little brain-computer program know, and it'll filter them out of your life, anything you don't like? Consider it gone.

She tells it to remove everything that annoys her, and her world changes. It changes a lot. But is it really the world? Or just the world inside her head, and she can't break out of it?

I totally want to know too, that's why I'll have to read the next book :)

Jonny Illuminati says

What the heck is up with my constantly picking out short, novella length, books all of a sudden?

Any ways... So this book pretty much sets up the premise for the rest of the books in the series, which takes place in a plausible, yet not too distant future, where the planet is over crowded (especially in cities like New York) and nanotechnology is breaking grounds in reality filtering ways.

The main character is a bitch. She is supposed to be a bitch. She is a bitch who, through work stress and her hatred of damn near everything, ends up having a panic attack and is prescribed a new form of medication, that comes in the form of nanobots that can help her block out everything that annoys her. Of course, being a bitch, and a bit of a technophobe, she has one of her assistants set up root control to her "pssi", and then has him filter out everything that annoys her during a week off from work.

Again, what annoys her? Everything. Including her work, cat, everyone on the street, work, and of course... her assistant.

The series is on sale for \$.99 a book on amazon right now, but... I'm not sure if I'll be picking up the next one or not - I like the premise but I just don't care.

Jan Longstaff says

Overview:

The following book review will contain three themes; ecology, theology, and social commentary. The setting of the series Blue Skies is of a synthetic utopia. The futuristic scene is set in New York City. The description is of an over crowded, dirty, and polluted city. Advertisements and holograms along with masses of people and robots crowd the streets. In actuality the setting is dystopian. The main character Olympia is an

overworked advertising executive. She experiences large amounts of stress and anxiety. The stresses of everyday life lead her to experience an anxiety attack. This attack gave her cause to test the new PSSI system. Her doctor installed the system, and instructed her to review the instructions with her proxy. The PSSI system created a synthetic utopia, removing all things that stressed and or annoyed without changing the actual world.

Ecology:

The ecology of Blue Skies is of a world full of pollution, clutter, advertisements and of overcrowding. The story takes place in New York City. When I think of NYC I picture busy streets, public transportation, advertisements on every building and homelessness. The story has all these characteristics in addition to the futuristic technology such as robots and mood control implants. The PSSI system introduced to Olympia is a system that creates a synthetic utopia. After having used the system Olympia describes NYC as a clean, crisp, and quiet city without distraction and endless blue skies.

Theology:

I did not discern any inference of religion within the context. The context of blue skies may have hinted of a higher being. Olympia referred to the blue skies after having the PSSI system activated and again at the end of the story. I cannot help but to question whether this is still the PSSI system at work or was it her heaven? The system was being created to counteract because the greed we possess as humans for materialistic things. The story inferred that we were destroying our world with pollution as well as exhausting all of our natural resources. I believe the PSSI system showed the user what our world would be like without the greed.

Concluding thoughts:

Blue Skies is a futuristic science fiction series that touches on our greed for natural resources. The science fiction tropes that are shared with the reader are of nanobots, robots, the reference to all the languages used and the need for implants to interpret and speak those languages and of futuristic medical treatments. I enjoyed reading Blue Skies and plan to finish the series in the future. I would like to finish

Verditwist says

The Atopia Chronicles

Where to start? First, this is Science Fiction not Fantasy. The only vampires you are going to find are gamers, and the only trolls are the on-line variety. So get ready to concentrate.

On the surface skin of this first story in the series (The Atopia Chronicles) we have an artificial island, and impending man-made disaster (possibly to do with the weather wars), and a bunch of relatives and friends we tag as they give their views of developing events. A circle of events seen from many 'sides' that build a picture of the world and the characters.

Be careful what you wish for. One of the first characters we meet is Olympia Onassis (what a great name). Not someone I could sympathise with but I love the way she is drawn. Next comes Commander Rick Strong, an ex-military man who is fighting his past and losing the battle to understand his wife's depression. Then the main characters start to appear: a multi-millionaire dancing with Death on a minute by minute basis, a gamer/surfer and his (almost) equally wasted mates, a top scientist and her very much younger niece, all living in and between two different worlds – the real and the virtual.

What is the difference between one and the other? We have been here before, on the cusp of understanding something we can almost grasp. Between where we are and where we could be. Only we have never had so many options, never been so near to touching them. The Matrix, Tron, a chase through virtual worlds with

Tadd Williams, the neural net of Iain M Banks, all have offered explanations, glimpses of a world almost in sight. But tell me, what if you could merge with Google Earth, Facebook, Twitter? What if the next app you bought uploaded not to your phone, but to you? If you could have whatever you wanted virtually, would the real world be worth holding onto?

This story has heroes and villains, lost souls and lost bodies, human dilemmas, needs and desires. All changes, yet so much remains the same in the dark, hidden human heart.

Hang on in there. Look around you

Dave Higgins says

Although it is one of six interlocking narratives comprising the Atopia Chronicles, this novella is also a fully rounded story capable of standing on its own.

Olympia Onassis is an advertising executive in a world struggling between riding the wave of new technology and sinking beneath it. Diagnosed with media-overload-induced stress on the eve of her greatest triumph, she agrees to trial a new technology that will edit out the very advertising that provides her livelihood.

The story is written in a breezy style reminiscent of noir, not only allowing the plot to unfold at the rapid pace suitable for a story about a data-saturated world but also invoking a layer of grime which removes the need for repeated explicit references to the seamy side of the world. This stripped-down, amped-up delivery gives Mather more room to pack in the seeds of both dystopia and sublimation.

Olympia is almost the perfect caricature of an advertising executive. Filled with extreme opinions about everything but moving onto something else so fast that her anger becomes another hollow event leading nowhere. Even her acceptance of the experimental technology is shallow and arrogant; she is more concerned with the possibility it will give her an in with the manufacturer than with the possibility it could help her do her job better.

The supporting characters are rendered with broad strokes, sometimes leaving little evidence there is depth or real individuality behind their brief appearance. Rather than weaken immersion, this adds to the reader's understanding of how self-absorbed Olympia is.

Although the book is a full-immersion futureshock and can be read for pure enjoyment, it also raises questions of how much of our life is built from perception not reality and what unexpected impacts this might give as-good-as-life synthetic realities.

I enjoyed this novella greatly. I recommend it to readers fond of cyberpunk, the possible impact of altered realities, or powerful character sketches.

Carol says

Blue Skies is Book #1 in the Atopia Chronicles. This story is about a high-powered advertising executive in New York. All Olympia wanted was

to not deal with anything annoying. Requesting this from her pssi (Polysynthetec Sensory Interface), she finds her alone. This is a very interesting sci-fi adventure. Ready for story # 2.

Andrea says

What's not to like about Olympia? Okay, maybe that's a rhetorical question. She's definitely not perfect, and maybe she's an acquired taste. She's an ad exec trying to make her way in a cutthroat business, and she's having a bad day. Who could blame her for the path she chooses, who wouldn't make that choice too, given the option? Who hasn't wondered what it would be like to erase everything annoying about their life? Olympia reminds me a bit of myself at times. Not sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing, but I am definitely rooting for her, and looking forward to seeing what happens next.

Jenna says

I love this world setting!

Stachybotrys says

I was 10 or 11 years old when The Dark Crystal came out. I remember being really excited about there being a movie with muppets that wasn't just Miss Piggy and Kermit, but a real fantasy story. My parents took my brother and me to see it, and then I didn't sleep for a month. I was so traumatized by the whole stealing of a person's vital essence that I was actually distracted in school, and kinda creeped out in church, too. To make it all worse, my mom thought it was funny to pretend that someone had stolen her vital essence, and stare vacantly into the distance and refuse to respond to me for a few minutes at a time.

Disclaimer: my mother is a wonderful woman, and she really didn't know how badly the whole thing upset me. She meant no harm, and has since apologized.

Blue Skies is very much a Dark Crystal kind of book. It starts off with some creepy bits, and a lot of tech and science that's really interesting, but then it starts to go evil, and just keeps getting worse and worse. If you aren't bothered by the idea of losing your actual Self, or by the possibilities of what bad people could do to you if they had access to your very psyche, then I would still recommend it. The writing was good, the pace was quick without being rushed, and the ideas are absolutely fascinating. For me, though, I will not be reading anymore of the books in this series.

But still, "Comment Trolls" was comedy gold.

Jim says

Intriguing first entry in this series. A little "Twilight Zone-y"

Jennifer says

This is an interesting series, because essentially it is a series of short stories that will make up one big story arc.

This first one was pretty creepy, the main character is stressed out beyond belief (something I get big time) and has an implant placed in her to remove stress... so what happens when it starts to remove everything that stresses you out or annoys you???? Well you will have to read to find out.

Going to start the next one now... I love being able to listen to books while I work... this series is going to be pretty intense though

Gustavo says

This book surprised me several times, it's not perfect, it even has some characters there only to show some of the dangers and pitfalls of the new PSSU interface. It develops quite well several characters and solves some situations in creative ways, but sometimes I found it lacking just a little bit.

It uses a different character point of view in every chapter and that's good, but some characters are more interesting than others and those are not the ones that get a lot of chapter time.

All in all is a good novel, nicely written, and with interesting ideas, some of them even worth a lot more exploration.

Jlongstaff says

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Olethros says

-Conceptualmente interesante y muy desarrollable.-

Género. Relato.

Lo que nos cuenta. En un futuro lleno de aplicaciones prácticas de tecnología avanzada, Olympia Onassis es una persona poco agradable (por decir algo) y que trabaja como profesional del Marketing Publicitario (que en ese futuro es algo bastante invasivo en ocasiones) buscando una nueva cuenta y que sufre un colapso durante la correspondiente reunión. Su médico le sugiere usar un fármaco en pruebas con pacientes (¿clientes?) seleccionados y que mediante nanotecnología avanzada responde a órdenes orales y modifica la percepción. Primer volumen de la saga Atopia Chronicles.

¿Quiere saber más de este libro, sin spoilers? Visite:

<http://librosdeolethros.blogspot.com/...>

Craig Harris says

A note/preface on this review. I had read Cyberstorm by Matthew Mather a while back and enjoyed it. To my surprise (and delight) I was asked whether I would read and review his upcoming novel "Dystopia" when it came out. Sure! Well, I received notification that it was on its way, and number 2 in a series. "Is this something where one has to read number 1 in order to be able to fully enjoy/get number 2?" "Yup -- it's a series and you need to have read the first book." Annoying. Not all series require previous readings. Consider Lincoln & Childs' Agent Pendergast books. Jump right into the series with "Brimstone" and you are fine.

Grumble, grumble. OK, I'll buy number 1. So that having been stated...

Atopia #1: Blue Skies (on Amazon.com it is just Atopia). Imagine that there is a drug/program that allows you to be able to control your environment. You want to filter graffiti or bad smells in your neighborhood? No problem. Take it a step further. Maybe you want to splinter off a piece of yourself so that a little part of you can attend a work meeting while the rest of you goes to play golf. Easy enough. Or maybe you would like to create your own fantasy world filled with sensual pleasures and pink unicorns. (A strange combo, but maybe that's your fantasy.) Done. In the land of Atopia (a floating island/nation-state), the smarticles (think a cross between nanobots, gene therapy and drugs) are everywhere, infusing everything. You can swim with a dolphin, communicating with it and feeling all of its senses, sharing its thoughts. This then is the world of Atopia. Of course, not everything is sweetness and light.

Atopia is told from the perspectives of many of the main characters, so while one interlude may have Nancy Killiam referring to herself as "I," the next one may have William McIntyre in the first person, going back and revisiting some of the same timeframe from his point of view. It can be a good way of going back and fleshing out what was in someone's head when an event occurred. It can also cause the reader to go "wait, who am I at the moment?" But there is much originality at play, from Weather Wars to the game of ragdoll, where different children can each control a separate limb of the host child.

Overall, an inventive science fiction novel that keeps you wondering what is going to happen next. And in a multiverse where virtually anything can and may happen in the phuture, you will be asking yourself: "what is really going on here?"

So it came as no surprise that although one could stop at the end of the first book, it essentially ends... to be continued. I'm game.
