



Gravity Is Heartless: The Heartless Series, Book One

Sarah Lahey

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The futuristic science fiction novel Gravity is Heartless is a fun trip through a climate-changed world.

Sarah Lahey's realistic science fiction novel *Gravity is Heartless* is set in the near future; it involves a mystery, political intrigue, and romance.

Thirty years from now, humans have passed the climatic tipping point. What few measures were taken were too little, too late. Earth is hot, with temperatures regularly in the mid-100s; it never rains, and most people are grouped into five megacities after rising sea levels submerged island nations and coastal areas.

A deadly and adaptive virus rips through the population; war breaks out. Quinn, an electromagnet scientist studying clouds on one of the few remaining islands in the southern Indian Ocean, prepares for a trip to Antarctica, dreading her wedding to Mori. On the day of the wedding, she tells him that she doesn't want to marry him, but they should still have the party. During the event, a stray cloud stream dumps a torrent of rain on the artificial cloud venue, leading to an evacuation. But in this new world, clouds only exist at the North and South Poles. Quinn has to figure out how the cloud stream drifted so far from its home, where her ex-fiancé disappeared to, and why her almost brother-in-law is after her climate prediction model.

There is familiarity in this dystopian world, which draws on current climate change models with minimal intervention. The story extrapolates this information to posit a future where weather patterns and rising temperatures drastically change the way humans live. This realistic scientific foundation makes the political and technical climate of the book more plausible.

Still, the book's backstory is clunky. The story is told mainly from Quinn's point of view, and related information is delivered in large chunks of internal monologue. The method is efficient when Quinn is alone, as when she's marooned on an atoll, but less so in action scenes. Questions of what will come next, how the characters will avoid violence, and whether or not Quinn will make a momentous personal decision move the story forward.

Supporting characters help to build Quinn's world up more. Tig, Quinn's love interest, is a cyborg with a robotic arm, robotic leg, and bionic eyes; through him, questions about who's really human arise. Further, Tig is Maldivian, and explanations of the destruction of the Maldives, and the displacement of its people, are introduced through him. Also significant are Geller, an assistant at an underwater medical facility with a hard-to-parse Irish accent, who has skin so pale that it's almost alien; and Planck, a gender-neutral boat captain and a Knowledge Keeper, through whom nonstandard neutral pronouns are introduced and who's important to several of the novel's last scenes.

Launching a new trilogy well, the futuristic science fiction novel *Gravity is Heartless* is a fun trip through a climate-changed world.

DONTANÁ MCPHERSON-JOSEPH (April 24, 2020)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to

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