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Juvenile Fiction

The Prometheus Project -- Captured
Douglas E. Richards
DNA Press
978-1-933255-33-0
(April 30, 2007)

Adventure, suspense, and science make for a potent combination in this self-contained science fiction sequel to *The Prometheus Project: Trapped.* Both the original novel and the sequel revolve around the activities of a team of top scientists investigating the Prometheus Project, a secret alien city discovered deep underground in rural Pennsylvania. Ryan and Regan, the children of two of these scientists, have earned the right to visit this ultra-top-secret site. When a group of mercenaries, lead by an alien, takes over the city, the middle schoolers are the project team's secret weapon and hope of rescue.

Yet even Regan and Ryan's parents do not know about their newly acquired telepathic ability, which alerts them to danger and aided them in saving the alien city the first time it was threatened:

> *A thunderous burst of telepathy exploded into their minds!*
> *Ryan instantly forgot what he was saying and he and his sister barely managed to keep their bikes from crashing.*
> *WARNING. UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY. WARNING. UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY. WARNING. UNAUTHOR—*
> *Just like that, the immensely powerful telepathic message stopped.*

Thus they are the first to suspect that something is amiss at Prometheus—and are they ever right. Yet they know they cannot count on the Teacher, the city's super powerful computer, for help since it has been disabled. Regan and Ryan will have to solve the problem themselves.

Richards, a specialist in biotechnology, has written on scientific topics for adults and children (*National Geographic Kids* magazine*)*, including nonfiction and fictional works. After prefacing this book with a synopsis of the first novel, he takes readers on a new adventure. The

plot is fast paced and full of action. The children must use logic to try to find an important alien tool somewhere in the city before their hostage mother is killed. Even with the threat of violence, the plot is not gory, and it includes several humorous episodes of a non-derogatory kind. At the same time, Richards seamlessly incorporates into the tale scientific information from a variety of disciplines, such as medicine, nanotechnology, engineering, physics, logic, and military tactics. For instance, Ryan and Regan set loose a group of miniature robots to distract the mercenaries, and after they are captured they use their knowledge of the body's use of pain to send messages to the brain to escape.

The Prometheus Project: Captured is aimed at readers ages nine through thirteen, who will both laugh along with the characters and puzzle out the solutions to the many plot complications. At a time when Americans want more students to become interested in science, the books in this series will likely encourage their interest in a non-threatening way.

Jeanne M. Lesinski