

Under Lock and Key: The Experiment

Robin Geesman

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This fascinating and terrifying sci-fi thriller reveals sordid characteristics in bad individuals and sheer lunacy in the criminally insane.

Teetering on the brink of madness, this chilling psychological thriller delves into elaborate experiments that violate privacy and ethics while attempting to heal unimaginable injury to the human mind and body. The curious enter a frightening world where a doctor's vow to do no harm tangles with medical advancement in Robin Geesman's *Under Lock and Key*.

A respected scientist loses his sanity and becomes a brutal killer. As his children recover from traumatic injuries he has inflicted, they are kept alive by machines in a clandestine government program that seeks to integrate brain function and computerized communication, creating a realm that allows them to interact with other patients and uninjured family members.

Geesman develops her characters gradually, allowing action scenes to bring out their best and worst. Internal dialogue and dreamlike sequences come across with a sense of immediacy, vivid and mesmerizing. Fans of the medical drama can expect a high-technology twist in unforgettable moments that linger on the edge of a treacherous zone. Wired (pun intended) and strung out for maximum impact, the storyline veers off the circuit board.

Shocking description and preponderance for gruesome details give this book an ultra-commercial slant, emphasizing ghoulish entertainment:

The lunatic's grin took on the deadened, crazed look of twisted satisfaction and then the rifle went off with a boom. And both Michael and the man he once trusted as his father jerked from the impact as blood spattered against the wall behind them. And then Michael went limp as did the crazy man who's [sic] heart had gone so cold he reveled in the destruction of his own son whom he held in his lap.

Though the concept is somewhat believable, perhaps miraculous, the idea of an artificial yet emotion-rich environment based in a sterile laboratory is terrifying. A beautiful scenario can be an ugly nightmare at the mere flick of a switch or the imposition of an electrode, and a shuddering patient can remain trapped at the whim of a godlike physician—a horrific prospect.

Robin Geesman holds a degree in respiratory therapy with a specialty in long-term life support. This knowledge has informed her writing, lending authenticity to riveting scenes.

Far-fetched but incredibly fascinating, this first installment in a proposed series sets the stage for multiple stories. The prospects are virtually endless in Geesman's well-structured novel. *Under Lock and Key* dares to go where the average scientist does not want to venture. The brain is uncharted territory, and the computer is a vehicle used to traverse its winding pathways.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (June 29, 2015)

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