



## The Venom of Vipers

*K.C. May*

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A supervirus threatens to wipe out the human population.

The only hope for the future is a cure hidden inside Ryder Stone. Created in a lab and brutalized, betrayed and hated by humans, Ryder yearns for freedom. On the outside, a group of human genetic purists want him dead.

When Katie Marsh, a brilliant young geneticist, discovers his secret, she must fight to protect Ryder, gain his trust...and convince him to save humanity before the purists destroy them both.

## **The Venom of Vipers Details**

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Author : K.C. May

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## From Reader Review The Venom of Vipers for online ebook

### **Jerry Hanel says**

I spent the entire day reading this book, not because it was laborsome. I was trying to read it among all of the honey-do chores on my list. I couldn't put it down. Hats off to KC. An amazing author. She was able to weave three or four subplots into one successful storyline, bringing each character to life in their own way.

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### **L.A. says**

Article first published as Book Review: The Venom of Vipers by K.C. May on Blogcritics.

In the year of 2023 humanity has come to a cross roads. With the human race slowly being eradicated by a disease known as molio, scientists are racing against time to eradicate the disease and save the human race. Part of their progress has been the engineering of a new race, close to human in nature known as saphers, Dr. Katie Marsh is the daughter of the Nobel Prize winning Dr. Marsh, the scientist responsible for this remarkable engineering feat. After the death of her mother from molio, Katie has grown up at the institution, playing and making friends among the sapher. Her best friend from childhood is a sapher named Ryder Stone.

The sapher were man's answer to the extinction of the human race, a engineering miracle immune to the molio virus. While they were somewhat human in nature and carried many of the human characteristics, there was still just enough that was alien about them that created controversy. There was a marked difference in their appearance, the claws on both fingers and toes instead of nails, the slitted eyes and the spinney ridge that ran down their back, made them stand out. They were still prisoner, albeit well taken care of ones in the scientific community.

Dr. Katie Marsh came back after graduate school to work with her father and try and find answers to the problems inherent to the sapher race. They were engineered to help save the human race, and yet there were problems inherent in their own genes. The young woman could not seem to carry a pregnancy past the seventh month and it was Katie's job to find the problem.

Along with just the every day issues, there were also control groups outside the laboratory, one side feeling that the saphers should be free as all men were, and the other side which felt they were an abomination.

When it is discovered that there are factions within the facility that are willing to risk anything to bring it down, it is up to Katie and her lifelong friend Ryder to find the answers before it is to late. Who can the turn to for help when it appears that even the good guys have a hidden agenda. When Katie finds that Ryder knows the answer that holds the secret to life for both groups will she be able to use the information in such a say to not create and cause the deaths of those close to her? Who will be able to aid her?

In The Venom of Vipers, by KC May, May has developed a world of the future, easy to foresee and disturbing in nature. This world is so much the same as that we live in and yet moved forward to a future in which mankind sets the stage for their own distinction. The characters are well written and the new race of the sapher are unique and believable. As in our time, different factions fight over what is right or wrong and neither is willing to give ground. Science is all that is left to help save the race, and May as developed a

interesting twist on the possibilities of genetic research and the possible outcome.

The sapher are an interesting race and in many cases more humane then the actual human race themselves. May has developed characters with depth and emotion, with abilities both unknown and unexplainable. While engineered to withstand and be immune to the molio that kills humans, there are secrets that even the most savvy scientist does not know. In a time and place in the future, smoke and mirrors are still the spotlight, as you are drawn down a dizzying spiral where all is not as it seems. Or is it?

This is a fast paced read with an interesting kick, the characters are exciting and the story unique. I really enjoyed the pace and the believability of a future time and place in our possible history. This is a great read, keeping you turning the pages, and following the characters. It is a interesting and bizarre twist in a futuristic thriller.

This book was received as a free e-book from the author. All oppinions are my own based off my own reading and understanding of the material.

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### **MG says**

I won this book in one of the "First Reads" contests and am really glad I did! I'm a high school biology teacher so I was delighted at how seamlessly The Venom of Vipers tied the real science in with the science fiction. You could almost even call it science future since the theory behind the concept is real (transgenic organisms). I was also thrilled with how the author incorporated the science content- the conversations were believable and the science was explained well enough that someone without a science background wouldn't be lost. I thought this book also raised several bioethical issues that will face society as we progress through this biotechnology era.

Science aside, the first half of the book was interesting and entertaining character development and backstory. The second half really sucks you in and becomes exciting and suspenseful. I had only planned to read another chapter at one point, but then got hooked and had to read it straight through to see how it played out! I was really happy with the way the book ended and particularly liked the last line :) I look forward to checking out more of this author's work!!

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### **Grace Krispy says**

Imagine a world where humans have created a new species, a species designed to be the saviors of mankind. In 2023, people are dying of the Moliomyositis at an alarming rate and the entire population will be killed off in short order, unless a cure can be found. Henry Marsh has engineered an entire species, the Homo sapiens heredis, or "saphers," in an effort to find a cure for Molio. His research is on the cutting edge and he may be closer than he thinks, but time is quickly running out...

The saphers live in a compound that offers them everything they could possibly want or need...except their freedom. Henry's daughter, Katie, grew up amongst these saphers and has developed a special relationship with one in particular, Ryder Stone. After several years away, Katie is back to take on the role of reproductive scientist. None of the sapher women can maintain a pregnancy longer than 7 weeks, and this inability to reproduce threatens their continued existence. As they are being groomed to take over if- or

when- humans become extinct, this is quite unacceptable. To complicate matters, there are activists on the outside clamoring for the destruction of the entire sapher species.

Together, Katie and Ryder work together to discover secrets and betrayals, as well as hope and possibility, as they battle for the continued existence of the sapher people. Can they find a way to guarantee freedom and the continued existence of the species? Is there any hope left for the human species?

K. C. May has spun another captivating tale. With this second novel, she once again proves that she knows how to string a story to maintain reader interest. The story flows along cleanly, and the transitions are smooth and do much to carry the reader along. The storyline itself is quite engaging. The idea that a virus could be slowly killing off the entire human population is not too out of the realm of possibility, and some of the ideas the author introduces in this tale are quite amazing, yet believable. It was a compelling read that was able to sweep me away.

The author crafts believable and intriguing characters, and I found myself rooting for some while feeling pity for others. As in her previous title, "The Kinshield Legacy," the characters are complex, without "good or bad," only shades of individuality. Although the character development was good, the conversations between characters didn't ring quite as true to me as the dialogue in the previous novel. This novel takes place in a time period more similar to modern-day time, so the language used by the characters is also quite different. Regardless, to me, the phrasing in the dialogue wasn't as rich and vibrant as I had come to expect based on the previous novel.

The ending itself was satisfying in terms of giving closure to the story (without giving anything away here!), but was a bit too "tied together" for me. I would have enjoyed a little more ambiguity, leaving room open for more varied predictive interpretation of the immediate and distant future of both species. That is just a personal preference; the actual ending works as it is written.

\*\*I received a digital ARC of this title, and it's possible that some changes have been made in the book since my copy. Small details I noticed: it seemed "ASP" and "ASAP" were used interchangeably to name the guards, and I never quite caught onto whether they could be called either. Another thing was that whenever Nelson is thinking of Katie, the narrative calls her "Marsh," which was a little confusing, as I immediately thought of her father, Henry. As the narration is third person and omniscient, being consistent in the names used in the narration to refer to characters would offer consistency for the reader, while still allowing the characters to call the other characters whatever they like in dialogue.

Altogether, a compelling and fascinating read. Just as with K. C. May's first novel, I found it really hard to put this book down. Recommended!

4.5 /5 stars @ MotherLode blog

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## Al says

The primary characters, Katie (a doctor/researcher) and Ryder (one of the saphers) were likeable. Although Ryder had many faults, his temper being one, this just made him seem more human. The fictional science was a big part of the premise and overall story, but not so far out as to be unbelievable – it seemed very conceivable by extrapolating current scientific knowledge out just a few years. Most important, the story revolved around the characters rather than the science. As with any well-told story, I found myself pulling

for the characters I liked and against those I didn't, regardless of if they were Homo sapiens or the sapher sub-species.

The latter portion of the book turns into a thriller. This part gets very intense, as you'd hope for a thriller. However, this is also the only part of the book where I had any quibbles. Specifically the head of security was a character that became less and less believable. His motivations and goals were clear; however, his actions seemed less than credible at times. Despite this I found *Venom of Vipers* an enjoyable and entertaining read.

\*\*Originally written for "Books and Pals" book blog.\*\*

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### **Arni Vidar Bjorgvinsson says**

I first heard of this book through the Amazon Kindle page on Facebook, where the Kindle alumni were constantly raving about how good it was. Since I love finding new authors and the price was only \$2.99 (that's \$0.99 for most of you), I figured what the hey and bought it.

It has been sitting on my Kindle since then, half forgotten, until just a few days ago when I decided to give it a go.

Since then, I have barely been able to put it down, even causing me problems at work (taking way too long breaks).

Only today did I get enough time away from life so that I managed to read the last 70% of it in one go.

I keep telling people to always keep their expectations on a short leash, because if you run into something expecting it to be great, it will almost always disappoint. That being said, and at the risk of causing some disappointment, I have to say that this book is fantastic!

Having forever been a Sci-Fi/Fantasy nut and a fan of great writing works in those genres, I must say that K.C. May is one of the greats! I never give books five stars unless I believe that they are the top.. the best.. as good as they could have been.

This is one of those books that meet my requirements, and fully deserves the five stars I've given it.

In fact, I think it's actually one of my Top10 favorite books of all time.

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### **Rachel says**

In this near-future biotech thriller, a deadly virus threatens to wipe out the human race. To ensure that the legacy of humans thrives, a virus-resistant sub-species of homo sapiens (the sapher) is created. But in order to save humanity, all homo sapiens must learn to live together peacefully. This is a marvelous book by an independent author. Generally when I read science fiction books, especially biotech books, I sit there and groan at the inaccurate science. This is the curse of being a scientist in an age when most sci-fi writers aren't. *Venom of Vipers* was a glaring exception. Although I paused a few times to deeply think about whether something was possible, I never passed the stage of healthy suspension-of-disbelief. Bravo May! I think it's doubly impressive that May managed to capture individual psychology of her characters to make them real

(with a healthy mixture of good and bad in each of the major characters). The exception was the heroine of the story who, when compared to the other characters was not quite as round. However, the only reason I noticed this exception is by contrast with the more developed characters. May also captured the sociological implications of the situation, making the varied responses of people to the saphers right on target. I found myself thinking “yes, this IS what would happen in this situation.” Venom of Vipers was imaginative and as realistic as a near-future sci-fi thriller can be.

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### **Cliff Ball says**

I thought the Venom of Vipers was a really good science fiction story. Great conflicts and characterization, and believable plot.

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### **Maralee says**

This book was great! I loved the storyline, and it was very well-written. Honestly, the only thing keeping me from giving it 5 stars is the amount of swearing (which I can't stand - especially f\*\*\*\*) It would have been just as good of a story (or in my opinion, better) without all the swearing. But it was great other than that! The characters were all well thought out, and it kept my interest throughout the whole book. I never wanted to put it down. Good work, KC! A sequel, maybe? :)

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### **Robert Duperre says**

Rating: 4.6 out of 5

Science fiction many times comes down to an exploration of what it means to be human. When done well, it serves as an organic metaphor, breaking down the societal systems we exist within and revealing, through conflict, the best and worst of us. Sometimes it shows how far we've fallen, how our creations have ended up stealing a bit of our souls, bringing us to the brink of becoming slaves to that which we've created or, worst of all, regressing into a form of pre-humanity that is both untrustworthy and violent. In other instances, these works allow humanity to rise above, to demonstrate the goodness and ingenuity we all know is possible. And then, we have those works of literature that accomplishes both. It takes a talented author to break through this final barrier, to approach their concepts with an innate balance that shows good and bad, hurtful and helpful, and brings us out on the other side with at least a modicum of hope.

With The Venom of Vipers, K.C. May has proven herself to be in that rare class.

This is the story of humanity on the brink of extinction. A terrible new plague has gripped the globe, called molomyositis (or molio for short). It is a disease for which there is no cure, and science has, in a way, resigned itself to the possibility that humans will cease to exist over the span of only a few short decades. To combat this, they have created a new human subspecies by splicing human and reptilian DNA. The resulting life-forms, dubbed Saphers, are immune to the virus, but they offer no magical solution to the outbreak. One might ask, if there is no help to be found from them, why did we create them in the first place and why are we keeping them alive? The answer to this I found most interesting, and philosophically poignant: to bring about a species that will carry on after we're gone, to have the memory of our existence, our legacy, live on

through them and, just maybe, they'll progress enough to bring humanity – regular humanity – back some day.

There is one problem with this theory, however. The Saphers can't breed on their own. When they try, the females' bodies reject the fetus before seven weeks is up. For a genus designed to carry on our legacy, this is obviously a huge problem.

Enter Katie Marsh, the daughter of the man behind the creation of the Saphers. As the story opens, she is returning to the center she grew up in. She is now a reproductive scientist, and she's been added to the team in hopes of finding a solution to the Sapher reproduction "problem". Her presence inside the facility is a tension builder in and of itself, for Saphers aren't considered viable people by the government, and she's had a lifelong relationship with one of them – albeit (mostly) platonic. The character in question is a hotheaded yet supremely bright and protective Sapher male named Ryder Storm. (Ignore the soap opera name. It might be clunky at first, but after a while it grows on you.) Their relationship, revealed expertly through tiny bits of flashback and simple character interaction, drive the story. This is a pair you can root for, even if Katie doesn't seem to realize at first how much they mean to each other.

There are so many conflicting plot points in this book. You have the disease wiping out the globe. You have the issue of failed reproduction. Yet even greater than that are the conflicts that occur outside the written word – we're told about them, but don't necessarily see examples until the very end. There are two warring factions fighting over the imprisoned Saphers. One is the Freedom for All Peoples, an organization much like PETA, who wants science to stop experimenting on the poor saphers and grant them human rights. The other is the Human Purification Initiative, a bunch of nearsighted bastards who want nothing more than to see these "perversions of science" wiped off the face of the earth. The opposing groups are examples of extremism. The fact is, both sides have a point, but they're too obsessive to look at what's going on around them with any sort of clarity. There needs to be a balance in all ideas, and May does a fantastic job of showing how unbalanced – and henceforth unstable – these people are.

Add to this a plot point where some of the guards at the center, who themselves have fallen to be less than human, scheme behind the scenes and pull off some rather perverse (actually, downright evil) acts, and you have a story so rife with drama and conflict that you want to hurry up and get to the next page, just to see if any of it gets resolved.

This book is such a satisfying read. It was emotional at times – especially when it comes to Ryder and his daughter – and the way author May delves deep into the subjects of sensuality, doubt, and survival instinct are fantastic. The characters – especially Katie and the chief guard, Nelson – are wonderfully fleshed out and believable. Ryder, who is a man of thirty who's never been outside the walls of the foundation he grew up in and desires the freedom that's been preached to him but never delivered, is successfully not presented as a cartoonish good guy. The way the author inserts snippets of morose metaphysical ponderings in to the text (Does humanity deserve to be saved? Do we have the right to play God? Are we fooling ourselves to think we've risen above our most base animal instincts?) is fantastic. I found myself wondering much the same things as I was reading, and I realized that the Saphers, themselves, were almost mirror for the people who cared for them. They feel the pain of losing a child, while their human captors treat them as just another failed experiment. To the guards, they're annoyances and sexual playthings, while they experience every moment of hurt and torment levied upon them.

Humanity is the monster, and humanity's creation is more human than we are. It's a common thread in science fiction, and here it's done beautifully.

I had only a couple problems with this book, and they're small, at that. One was the dialogue. At the beginning, it's stilted, as if the author couldn't get a grasp on a free-flowing conversation. This ends after a very short time, however, and doesn't miss a beat again for the rest of the book. The other is the (SPOILER ALERT) solution to the reproduction problem. It comes about by the end, but I didn't understand the explanation for how it was accomplished. This may simply be my own problem, however, so I won't let it hurt the rating much at all, and it shouldn't effect anyone's enjoyment of the story.

In all, I had a very, very good time with The Venom of Vipers. It's a poignant and fast-paced melding of science fiction, drama, and mystery. KC May solidifies herself as a writer to look out for in the future. She has something to say, she's not afraid to say it, and she's damn good at telling her story.

I highly, highly recommend it.

Plot - 9

Characters - 10

Voice - 9

Execution - 8

Personal Enjoyment – 10

Overall – 46/50 (4.6/5)

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### **Suzie says**

This book is starting out just terrific! I don't know why I'm surprised :)

At about the 50% mark now and I'm seeing stars - FIVE STARS! I kept waking up last night, which is what I do until I fall into a deep sleep, but each time, I grab for my kindle to read another page in this story. I see it as a movie!

I'm very pleased and impressed that the author didn't "kill the dog" in this book!!! Everytime I pick up a book and a dog or cat is mentioned, you just know it will meet it's end soon. I try to skip those parts. I won't even read some books because of the abuse talk, even though I know it's fictional...nor will I go see the movie. I think it's just uncalled for and makes images in my head that's hard to get rid of. Thank you!!! I appreciate that the author!!!

VOV really kept me turning those pages. The characters were real and some I loved and cared what happened to and others I hated and wanted their demise. This was a quick read and I'd love to read a prequel!

Can't wait to read K.c May's other books! She's refreshing. One more thing, the editing is superior.

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### **D.g. Gass says**

In the twenty-first century there is a virus that has no known cure. A virus that no vaccine can prevent. It's a virus that will eventually wipe out mankind if an answer for it can't be found. In an effort to try to save humanity, science, through genetic engineering, created the Homo Sapien Saphers. The Sapher, proving to be immune from this virus becomes the world's hope to continue on when the sub-species homo sapien sapiens become extinct. But there's one problem and Dr. Katie Marsh returns to the center of her childhood to help find the answer.

Ryder Stone is a sapher and a childhood friend of Katie Marsh. Ryder dreams of freedom, of being able to leave the compound that he's been restricted to for most of his life. But current laws and outside hostilities prevent this. There are people who want to see the saphers destroyed. Inside the compound, Ryder isn't safe either.

"The Venom of Vipers" was one of those books that once I started reading it, I found it difficult to put down. A virus with a deadman's switch that kills its host when the virus dies, making a vaccine against it unfeasible. Likeable main characters and despicable villains. Sub-plots interwoven in the main plot, increasing the intrigue. It grabbed my attention and held it till the end. A well written novel. Needless to say, I'm looking forward to reading more of author K.C. May's work.

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### **Scott says**

The Venom of Vipers is the second book I have read by KC May, both of them excellent. I don't typically read a lot of sci-fi stuff, but this book had me hooked early and kept me interested till the end. I finished it up in two sittings.

The plot is that there is a super disease that is well on its way to wiping humans off the planet. If the disease is cured it creates toxins that destroy the body, if it is not a terrible death waits. A sub race of humans mixed with reptile DNA is created to make them immune to the disease in hopes that studying them will translate into a cure for the human race. The sub race (Saphers) have some problems of their own mainly they are unable to reproduce without having a human surrogate mother.

Katie whose father is one of the head scientists at the compound where the Saphers are kept is brought in to help with their reproductive issues to make them a viable race in the event that humanity is wiped out by the disease. Katie grew up with a Sapher named Ryder as her best friend and wants nothing more for them to become recognized as citizens and afforded basic rights.

I really enjoyed this book because it has a great feel of reality to it. There are 2 major groups that protest at the Sapher compound one group that wants them to be released as free people and one that thinks of them as abominations and wants them wiped out. The characters are very easy to understand with a few of them being a little over the top, but I think that is what makes a thriller. Overall this book was fantastic and I will continue to read what KC May has to offer.

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### **Maurice Alvarez says**

This was a very enjoyable tale that had me hooked from the start.

The characters are written very well, each with very unique personalities and agendas that play into the twists and turns of the plot.

While the idea of creating a new subspecies of humans as a means of saving us might seem a stretch, K.C. does a fine job of making it seem like a natural course of action. After a while you almost forget the implausibility of it. But the saphers are great characters, and Ryder Stone's vibrant energy is a perfect counterpoint to Katie Marsh's subtler, though no less driven, persona.

Where she excels is in creating a world stricken by an incurable virus, with its nearly empty neighborhoods. And despite it all, the slowly vanishing humans continue with their petty special interests. While a simpler story than *A Canticle For Leibowitz*, I still couldn't fail to draw that parallel between K.C.'s humanity and Walter Miller's; humans will be humans until the end of their days.

The story flows smoothly and makes for quick reading.

I look forward to reading more of K.C. May's work in the future.

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### **Jaidis Shaw says**

The *Venom of Vipers* by K.C. May is a futuristic look at the lengths that humans are willing to go to in order to secure our future. A super virus, Molio, is quickly spreading through the human race and turning the world into a barren wasteland. With the humans quickly dying off, scientists have created a new species by combining human and reptilian DNA in hopes of finding a cure. It soon becomes evident that by the time a cure is found, if one even exists, that the humans' time will have run its course and so scientists decide to further the new species so that they may take over once humans become extinct. But as with all scientific experiments, you have some people who agree and others who disagree. The new species, the Sapher, is forced to live within an enclosed facility since humans are having a hard time accepting that they are anything more than lab rats. That is when Dr. Katie Marsh comes into play when she gets a job at the facility as the new reproductive scientist. Her job is to figure out why Sapher women are having such a hard time carrying a baby to term. Until this problem is solved, the outlook for both species looks bleak. Little does Dr. Marsh know at the time, but her childhood friend and Sapher Ryder, just may hold the answer to saving humanity, along with his race as well. K.C. May does an amazing job of setting up the story line and moving it at a pace that keeps the reader intrigued and wanting more. I personally could not put the book down once I started. Just when the reader begins to think that everything has been revealed, new twists come into play which set the hook that much deeper into the reader. Will the Sapher race take their new knowledge and help humanity, or would taking over be more beneficial? The only other thing that I can really say about *The Venom of Vipers* without giving too much away is to do yourself a favor and get your own copy to read today. Seriously! You won't be sorry! *The Venom of Vipers* could easily be one of the best books I have read so far this year. I will definitely be getting a paperback copy of this book to add to my bookshelf as I can see myself reading it over and over again.

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