



The Complex

Cathy E. Zaragoza

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The Complex Cathy E. Zaragoza
The Complex - a young adult novel

Helena Linx is dying. Isolated and quarantined for over a decade, sixteen-year-old Helena lives in a virtual utopia run by a council of doctors bent on saving the world from a fatal and almost incurable disease. The pandemic has been contained, but she and hundreds of others are still waiting to be cured. Helena dreams of returning to the outside world and leaving behind the heavily regulated world of the Eyam Complex, a place where everything runs according to plan...until one fateful morning.

Things begin to change in the complex. And after everything dear to Helena—her father, her brother, and her boyfriend—is taken away, she finally gets what she wants.

But life on the outside isn't what Helena expected. Never in her wildest dreams did Helena think that she'd leave Eyam only to become so desperate to get back in.

The Complex Details

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Author : Cathy E. Zaragoza

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Cathy says

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Leah Perkins says

This was such a page turner! It is a very well paced, fast, easy, and enjoyable read! It features a great cast of characters, each with their own quirks. I really enjoyed meeting each of them, and trying to figure out if they had any underlying agendas. I enjoyed the witty remarks and humor throughout the book too. I was often laughing with the snarky remarks.

The ending was so satisfying. Unlike other trilogies, there is no cliffhanger. It wraps things up nicely, with a few questions opened to continue on the next story. I am curious to read the next book, not blinded with frustration! And at \$2.99 on nook, this read was a deal!!!

Jen says

I received this book free in a First Reads giveaway on Goodreads, and it was excellent! It was a very interesting dystopian novel, incorporating government and pandemic issues. I read it in two days. I couldn't put it down! I highly recommend it!

James says

My girlfriend read this and then asked me to read it too because she liked it. I ended up loving it. Then we shared it with a friend of ours and she wasn't into it. Hmm Well it's definitely up my alley. I think it's smart and it's sarcastic and it's almost a little bit satirical. My friend who didn't like it said that it wasn't poetic enough for her. It's slightly below a 5 but higher than a 4.5 for me. I've seriously never laughed out loud at a

dystopian(ish) book before so for that I love this book. Funny dialogue that doesn't ever get cheesy or take itself too seriously. I'm going to preach my love for this book because I feel like one day after more people have read it I can go back and say that I liked it before anyone else did. I genuinely do think this book is special. Read.

Gemma Bennett says

The Complex is one of the better dystopians I've read this year. The premise was unique and Ms. Zarazoga totally delivered on the expectations of the blurb and the sample. The twist to the story was foreshadowed enough that it made sense, but not so much that it was totally obvious.

What else I loved:

- The action picks up from the beginning, and sets the tone for a novel that is extremely well paced. The Complex opens with a prologue that was interesting, but didn't completely catch my interest because it focused on a minor character (I like to jump right into the swing of things from the main character's POV); however, the next chapter more than made up for it, swiftly presenting a mystery. Ms. Zarazoga has a good feel for when to ramp up the action, and just as you're starting to feel like something needs to happen, it does. The twists and turns in this story are many and varied, so if you're a fan of action, you will not be disappointed.

-One of the most impressive things about The Complex is that it contains, not one, not two, but three unique and detailed worlds. I've seen many authors master plot and characterization, but struggle at world building, and that is certainly not the case here. Each world is detailed, deeply thought-out, and unique, but they still fit together and make sense in the storyline. Showers are the sort of thing that normally get left out of a story – conventional wisdom says that sort of detail should be omitted because it's boring. But Ms. Zarazoga masterfully uses little details like personal hygiene routines to highlight the differences in the lives of people from each area.

-In addition to the thought that clearly went into world building, it's apparent from reading this book that Ms. Zarazoga has fully immersed herself in the world of her characters. Small details are foreshadowed and then revealed in ways that will have you saying "Ohhhh. I barely noticed that, but now it makes so much sense!" For instance, the things with the neighbors is SO something a dystopian govt. would do! Like hunting for Easter eggs, you will be rewarded with literary treats for paying attention. You can tell that she visualized the big picture going in, because the story progresses in a logical way and later action builds on what was established earlier.

-It has a real ending. Not a -cliff hanger wait a few months and pay me more money if you wanna know what happens- ending. It leaves some questions open for another story, but it answers the main questions presented, and as a reader, I really, really appreciate that. I often don't read next installments of cliff hanger books, just on principle because I think that's an awful thing to do to a reader.

What I didn't love:

WARNING: THIS PART IS A LITTLE BIT SPOILERY!

I thought it was only fair to be specific about my feelings in this part of the review, so I discuss two plot points.

- The relationship between Helena and her initial love interest didn't make sense to me. The first time we meet him, he and Helena are arguing and she mentions that "their world was so small that a conversation about coffee beans might lead to a serious argument and a break up." To me, she doesn't seem like a young woman in love. Later, there's a scene where they have better chemistry but their relationship is mostly described through backstory, so we don't see enough of them happy together for me to feel like he was an important part of her life. It seemed like she had more chemistry, and more time, with a platonic friend named Lucas. Because of this, I felt like it was melodramatic for her to be so crushed that he'd moved on after they were separated for months.

-There's a main character who starts as an antagonist and turns into a protagonist, but I never found him fully sympathetic. In his first scene, he tells Helena, "We're not going to kill you bitch, but if you keep shouting I will shoot you." After that, I really couldn't get onto this guy's side. Soon after, he promises not to hurt her unless she runs. Again, not sympathetic. Then, when soldiers came to rescue Helena, instead of running toward them or even just slowing, she runs off with her kidnapper. A reasonable person should be angry and want to escape. After this, I found it hard to fully get behind Helena because I questioned her good sense. And I was even more confounded when she wanted her brother to defend her kidnapper in court. Sure he had a tough life, but he went about the solution the wrong way. This irked me. However, it says a lot that I still enjoyed the book while being annoyed with main character. The story itself is just that good. And to my surprise, another character that I started out hating ended up being one of my favorites. So I haven't completely given up on Helena.

Overall:

I highly recommend The Complex to anyone who enjoys dystopians and/or action and/or good books in general. It's a steal at \$2.99. But I warn you, schedule your reading time well, because once you start reading it you will not do anything else until you finish. :)

Dærcie Lyons says

I chanced upon this book through an Amazon search, saw that it had gotten pretty awesome ratings, and decided to read it.

I AM SO GLAD I DID!

This is probably one of the better dystopians I've read over the last year. The characters were great, the world-building was fantastic, the concept was awesome, and I am running out of positive adjectives to describe this book.

I loved that the usual love triangle that is so popular in YA dystopias was done in a much better way than most others (save for *Partials*, *Pure*, and a few more). Helena was realistic and interesting. I liked that her whole plan wasn't to save the boy she loved all while being conflicted about another boy. Sure there was some normal human reactions to Devon and to Adam, but the whole plot didn't centre around a boy. She was a bit irritating at times, but she is a 16 year old girl, that is to be expected. I should know, I was one.

In any case, I absolutely loved this book and I am really excited for the next one. I hope there is a next one!
OH PLEASE LET THERE BE A NEXT ONE!

Brian says

This book was a great find. It's a story about a teenage girl in a futuristic landscape. Things start out interestingly and quickly escalate. There's action, romance, and because nothing is as it appears to be, plenty of mystery and suspense.

At times I find myself a bit suspect of young adult fiction, but novels like this one give me reason to explore the genre further. The book is well-written and avoids cliches. The story is original, the twists are compelling, and, at times, I couldn't put the book down. The characters are three-dimensional, likeable, and relatable. The protagonists are not caricatures, nor are any of the characters perfect; the plot line does a great job of highlighting each of the characters' flaws. Helena, the main protagonist, is funny and empathetic. However, when challenges are presented, it's very interesting to see what choices she makes. Helena develops very complex relationships with the other main characters that are very interesting to explore. Her relationship with Isaac is particularly interesting and enjoyable, as she's the only one from a complex capable of sympathizing with him. Isaac is an intriguing character in his own right; a refreshing outsider, both bitter and hopeful and truly an underdog that readers will root for.

The Complex is a smart book and asks many compelling questions about the present and the future, both personal and philosophical. While the questions may be serious, the novel doesn't take itself too seriously and is never overhanded. Definitely an enjoyable read.

L.H. Cosway says

I have to say I always love reading novels in this genre, because you never know what you're going to get. With stories that are set in the future the author has the freedom to create their own unique and intriguing world, and C.E Zaragoza pulled this off and then some. After a brief prologue, the novel kicks off in Eyam, a strange closed off community in a large complex building. We meet Helena who is young but intelligent, and we discover that she and every other person in Eyam is suffering from an illness known as Cavall. This illness is what caused the breakdown of society and the reason why Helena and her family and many others have spent more than a decade living in quarantine.

I loved the sinister undertones to this novel, my suspicions were initially piqued when it was mentioned how despite Helena having had Cavall since she was a child she has never really felt sick. It quickly becomes apparent that those living in Eyam are being kept in the dark about many things. The problem is, most of them accept their immediate reality without asking any questions. Several things happen to cause Helena to start wondering if all is truly as it seems. I thought it was great how the author was subtle in showing that for some reason whenever anyone began showing any signs of rebellion or individuality they would soon find that they were cured and could go and start their new lives in the outside world.

This book really sucks you in, I found myself sitting down to read for a half an hour but there was just so much mystery that I couldn't stop. By the end of each chapter something new happens that makes you want to continue reading into the wee hours of the morning. Eyam was like a pleasant sort of prison, you know that those living there have no freedom, yet their lives aren't particularly difficult and they have everything

they could ever ask for. Cuisines of all variety are served on demand in the dining area. Helena doesn't have to cook or do any other house work as it is all done for her. It will probably show my lazy side, but I really liked this futuristic aspect. All of the young people get to study for their chosen career, Helena studies art while her brother studies law.

My favourite character, aside from Helena, was Isaac Akhos, a sort of wild rogue living in the outside world who ends up kidnapping Helena to get the attention of the Medcouncil. I liked how he enlightened her as to the true nature of what happened to the world while she was living in Eyam, and how he affectionately nicknamed her Linx. Anyway, I'm hoping to see more of him in the next book in the series. I was amazed by how well written the novel was as a whole, as there is a large cast of characters, who are all given a good amount of exploration within the narrative. The best thing about the story was that it just kept you guessing all the time, and I found myself trying to figure out whether people could be trusted or not and if they had hidden agendas. Overall, this was a highly original story from a young and talented author who I have no doubt has many great books in her to come. I highly recommend this book if you are looking for a story that contains mystery, action and intrigue.

Ellie says

I probably never would have found this book, but a friend of my recommended it to me and told me to take a chance. This book is pure entertainment. It's sarcastic, the dialogue is witty, and its action packed. It's a nice new angle to the dystopian genre that's so popular right now, and fits right in with a lot of the great books that I've read since my post-Hunger Games kick. I really liked Helena and it was great to read about a heroine who isn't a weak, love crazy teenybopper or a coldhearted butt kicker. She was normal and easy to relate to (a little dramatic sometimes, but she's a regular teenage girl). I wish there was a little more romance, but that's just me.

I was so surprised at so many different times, and even though the book has a lot of action, it leaves a lot of room for character development. I just thought it was so much fun to read and the ending really made me excited for the things to come. SO SO SO excited to read the sequel!

Nicole says

I'm a young reader and this book is one of my favorites. It was very suspenseful, exciting, and compelling. There were many parts in the book where I felt like I couldn't put the book down. The book reminds me of The Giver and Hunger Games, both books I really enjoyed.

My favorite character is Delly because she's tough and fierce. Helena also becomes tougher by the end of the book, which makes the ending very exciting. I also think Adam is very sweet and a likeable character.

I'm really looking forward to reading the next book in the series.

****SPOILER ALERT --Don't read if you do not want specific plot details****

One of my favorite parts of the book was when Helena and Lucas are reunited. I really enjoyed that part because I didn't think they would ever see each other again.

Jess Mountfield says

I totally loved this book. I can't even remember where or why I found it as the sample was just sitting on my kindle to check out at some point but I got to the end of the sample and was so hooked I bought the rest then and there without even checking the price.

I kinda expected a few of the plot twists but didn't mind at all as I was taken through the story and it even made it hard for me to sit down and write myself as I kept wanting to just pick up my kindle and carry on reading. In the end I took it to bed with me and didn't turn the light out till I was done.

Helena was wonderful and I really hope she gets what she wants in the next book as I totally totally adore her.

MKat says

Very easy, flowing and hooking read! I gave it 5 stars even before I was 1/2 done, and still believe it deserves it! Love the story line, characters, and twists. Super GEEKED that the next book is coming out in mere days! I just can't get enough of this genre, and this book definitely delivers! A must read!!

Scott Snyder says

A nice addition to the YAF genre, The Complex is fast-paced and suspenseful. It offers a compelling look at a disturbing possible future, dealing with themes that are very relevant today. The sci-fi tech adds a nice flavor, and the plot develops and twists without revealing too much at once, demanding that you continue to turn the page. I look forward to see where the story goes in the sequel.

Neil Dolan says

This is my 1st review and its fitting that it should be a brilliant book by a self publishing author. I loved this book and was so happy i stumbled across it. It was the cheapest book i have ever bought off amazon and is definatly one of the best. Just before this i had read the 2 Divergent books and they were brilliant and it would have been tough books to follow. But this book is definitely in the same league as the Divergent books. Im eagerly amaiting the sequel. ps. im from Ireland and thats proof i feel that this book is starting to catch on over the other side of the atlantic.

Raphael Temple says

I would highly recommend this book for anyone interested in this sub-genre of YA Fiction - Dystopian

novels. In the vein of Hunger Games trilogy (Suzanne Collins) and Insurgent trilogy (Veronica Roth), The Complex features a lot of the same elements; a divided society, small pockets of controlled people, and of course -- rebellion.

The difference between The Complex and other major names is it's Pace.

-I really liked The Complex because it was very fast paced. The action kept me reading and it was very difficult to put it down, in the fear that Cathy E. Zargoza kept tricking me in the lull's of the story. I would think that finally it's slowed down, I think I can go do the dishes, but WAIT! SHE JUST SAID....! And I kept reading.

-Even though it's a quick read, I have every reason to believe that it's just begun. The adventure the heroine has departed on is a very big task. This opens up a wide berth for this world, and Cathy E. Zargoza can take us all over the continent taking and saving lives all in the same page.

-I liked the main character Helena because I felt her age was very well adapted. Helena is only 16, and unlike other YA novels she isn't 16 going on 40. She is 16, and experiencing emotions as a 16 year old does. It's been a while, but I can certainly relate to the chaotic, feeling-too-much-at-once emotion. Helena cries, she's stubborn, but she cares, and she goes with her gut, even if it's the wrong move. She takes experiences as she sees them, and doesn't over-analyze, and isn't overtly suspicious, which I find suits her well (given she's a 'Complex Baby').

All in all, I think this is a fun book, and if you enjoy Dystopian books, put this on your To-Read list.