Dystopian Fiction - Virtual Book Display [1]

Posted by: Sheldon Beach on Wednesday, November 18th, 2015

It’s the end of the world as we know it and I feel... like checking something out from the library. Okay, so it may not be the end of the world, but it is the end of the *Hunger Games* series at the movies this month. That got my co-worker Abby and me thinking about living in a world ravaged by war, natural disasters, robots, super villains, aliens, or any number of other things that would make a great story. Would you join the resistance and fight with the Mocking Jay or would you live in the Capitol and have a blue beehive hairdo? If you’re a fan of all things dystopian or post-apocalyptic and don’t know what to read or watch next now that the Hunger Games will be played no more, we have some great suggestions for you. Fortunately for you dear reader, when you go to the library in search of a good book, the odds are ever in your favor.

As their own sub-genres both dystopian fiction and post-apocalyptic stories have actually been around for a lot longer than people realize. Books like Jack London’s *The Iron Heel* [3] and H.G. Wells’ *The Time Machine* [4] were written over a hundred years before Katniss Everdeen’s name was ever published on the pages of the first *Hunger Games* novel. Whether it’s a political story of government tyranny, war, or a post apocalyptic natural disaster; stories of the end of the world as we know it have fascinated people since even before the book of Revelations.

**Adult Fiction**
Robopocalypse [5] by Daniel H. Wilson

Written by Oklahoma-born author Daniel H. Wilson and partially set in northeastern Oklahoma, Robopocalypse tells the story of the beginning of the robot uprising and the ensuing struggle to save humanity from being destroyed. After a sentient robot called Archos R-14 becomes self aware, electronic items ranging from deadly robots to everyday items like a car’s GPS begin attacking humans. The only hope to save the world comes from some very unlikely sources like a ten-year-old girl with robotic vision, a group of Native Americans on the Osage reservation, and a Japanese repairman as they band together to destroy the robots before they can upgrade the outdated humans by replacing them with robot technology.

Ready Player One [6] by Ernest Cline

Love nerdy 1980s pop culture references? Love video games? Then this novel was written for you. In the near future after a fuel crisis people are working, going to school, and practically living in an online world called the OASIS. When its creator dies leaving no heir to his fortune, a video is released stating that the first person to find an Easter egg hidden somewhere in this vast online universe will inherit his multibillion-dollar fortune. The entire world scrambles to learn
everything they can about the OASIS creator in an effort to be the first to find the treasure. A child of the 1980s, he has littered his online world with 1980s pop culture, video game, and music references. Eighties cover bands and movies become popular again. People study and become scholars of games like Galaga and Pacman. After five years and no progress, the world suddenly changes for a young man living in a trailer in Oklahoma City when he unlocks the first key to finding the Easter egg and his name appears atop the scoreboard and the race is on again. Filled with Monty Python quotes, Oingo Boingo lyrics, and vintage gaming, *Ready Player One* has everything any fan of the 1980s or video game enthusiast could ask for. And if you want extra nerd points, listen to the audiobook read by Ensign Wesley Crusher himself, Wil Wheaton.

**YA Fiction**

*Gone Series* by Michael Grant

Imagine you’re 14, sitting in your English class, and suddenly your teacher disappears. In fact, everyone over the age of 15 in your small town is just gone. Scary, right? Well, that’s what happens to the town of Perdido Beach. Suddenly the teenagers are in charge and left to care for everyone that is too young to help themselves. Sounds similar to *Lord of the Flies*, but toss in kids with magical powers and things get a little intense. If this sounds like your kind of book, you’re in luck because there are six books in the series!
Ashfall [9] by Mike Mullin

If you’re looking for a dystopia book where the United States has gone crazy due to a natural disaster then this is the book for you. Ever the teenager, Alex decides to forgo the weekend trip with his family to visit their relatives in Illinois. Unbeknownst to him, this is the weekend that the super volcano underneath Yellowstone National Park decides to erupt. The United States is plunged into cold weather, darkness, and ash. Unsure of the fate of his family, Alex decides to make the harrowing journey from Iowa to Illinois to find them. Along the way he encounters danger at every corner. Fast-paced and gritty, this is an exciting trilogy that you won’t want to put down.

Unwind [10] by Neal Shusterman

In the future, the pro-life and pro-choice camps have finally agreed to a middle ground. Children from the ages of 13 to 18 can be “unwound” should the parents decide that they no longer want their child. Legally, a child is still considered alive if 99.44% of their body is harvested for others that need those parts. Connor, Risa, and Lev are all “unwounds” that are thrown together after devastating circumstances. While trying to evade capture these three teens will disturb the
peace that the government has tried to instill.

J Fiction

Among the Hidden by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Luke is a third child. In the future, the government has deemed it illegal to have more than two children. If you break this rule, the Population Police will eradicate the child. Luke has only experienced the company of his mother, father and two brothers. This all changes when a new family moves in next door with a secret of their own. The revolution is coming, but will Luke have the courage to step out the front door?

Graphic Novels

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**Y: The Last Man** [12] by Brian K. Vaughan

Alas, poor Yorick and his pet monkey, Ampersand, have found themselves the last two living male mammals after all other mammals with a Y chromosome on the planet mysteriously die. Yorick and Ampersand suddenly find themselves on a journey during which they are chased by assassins and hunted by the military while scientists race to find a way to save mankind in this wonderfully written graphic novel.

**DVDs**

[13]

*Blade Runner* [13]

If you’ve never seen the movie *Blade Runner* (or read the book upon which it was based, Phillip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* [14]), then do yourself a favor and head down to the library to check it out right now. Set in the near future in a dystopian Los Angeles, *Blade Runner* tells the story of retired police officer Rick Deckard (played by Harrison Ford) as he is called back for one last mission to hunt down a group of rogue androids.

[15]

*Escape from New York* [15]

Who do you call when Air Force One is hijacked and crashes on a prison island run by the prisoners? Action anti-hero extraordinaire Snake Plisken, that’s who. Kurt Russell stars in this campy 1981 John Carpenter film set in the future (actually, it takes place in 1997, but bear with me) where Manhattan has been abandoned, surrounded by a wall and filled with prisoners. After escaping a deadly plane crash, the president has been kidnapped by prisoners who have threatened to kill him if their demands aren’t met. Fortunately for the free world, ex-special forces soldier turned scofflaw Snake Plisken has found himself in a tight spot where the only way out is to rescue the president... I know.

And finally, for further dystopian read-the-book/see-the-movie experiences check out one of the following:

- *Snowpiercer* [16] by Jacques Lob, movie starring Chris Evans
- *V for Vendetta* [17] by David Lloyd, movie starring Natalie Portman
- *The Maze Runner* [18] by James Dashner, movie starring Dylan O’Brien
- *Divergent* [19] by Veronica Roth, movie starring Shailene Woodley
- *The Road* [20] by Cormac McCarthy, movie starring Viggo Mortensen
- And of course there’s always the *Hunger Games* [21] by Suzanne Collins, movie starring Jennifer Lawrence.
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