



Diaspora: A Novel

By Greg Egan

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Diaspora: A Novel By Greg Egan

A quantum *Brave New World* from the boldest and most wildly speculative writer of his generation.

Since the Introduction in the twenty-first century, humanity has reconfigured itself drastically. Most chose immortality, joining the polises to become conscious software. Others opted for gleisners: disposable, renewable robotic bodies that remain in contact with the physical world of force and friction. Many of these have left the solar system forever in fusion-drive starships.

And there are the holdouts: the fleshers left behind in the muck and jungle of Earth—some devolved into dream apes, others cavorting in the seas or the air—while the statics and bridgers try to shape out a roughly human destiny.

But the complacency of the citizens is shattered when an unforeseen disaster ravages the fleshers and reveals the possibility that the polises themselves might be at risk from bizarre astrophysical processes that seem to violate fundamental laws of nature. The orphan Yatima, a digital being grown from a mind seed, joins a group of citizens and fleshier refugees in a search for the knowledge that will guarantee their safety—a search that puts them on the trail of the ancient and elusive Transmuters, who have the power to reshape subatomic particles, and to cross into the macrocosmos, where the universe we know is nothing but a speck in the higher-dimensional vacuum.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

In the 30th century, few humans remain on Earth. Most have downloaded themselves into robot bodies or solar-system-spanning virtual realities, escaping death--or so they believe, until the collision of nearby neutron stars threatens life in every form.

Diaspora, written by Hugo Award and John W. Campbell Memorial Award winner Greg Egan, transcends millennia and universes in the tradition of Poul Anderson's *Tau Zero*, Bruce Sterling's *Schismatrix Plus*, Camille Flammarion's *Omega*, and Olaf Stapledon's *Last and First Men*. *Diaspora* is packed with mind-bending ideas extrapolated from cutting-edge cosmology, physics, and consciousness theory to create an astonishing hard-SF novel inhabited by very strange yet always believable characters. *Diaspora* is why people read SF. --*Cynthia Ward*

From Publishers Weekly

By the year 2975, humanity has wandered down several widely divergent evolutionary paths. "Flesher" life is that which resides in a basically human body, though genetically engineered mutations have created communication problems throughout the species. In the "polises," meanwhile, disembodied but self-aware artificial intelligences procreate, interact, make art and attempt to solve life's mathematical mysteries. Then there are the "gleisners," which are conscious, flesher-shaped robots run by self-aware software that is linked directly to the physical world through hardware. Throughout, Egan (Distress) follows the progress of Yatima, an orphan spontaneously generated by the non-sentient software of the Konishi polis. Yatima gains self-awareness, meets with Earthly fleshers and, when tragedy strikes, becomes personally involved in the greatest search for species survival ever undertaken. Though the novel often reads like a series of tenuously connected graduate theses and lacks the robust drama and characterizations of good fiction, fans of hard SF that incorporates higher mathematics and provocative hypotheses about future evolution are sure to be fascinated by Egan's speculations.

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From Library Journal

By the end of the second millennium, the human race has evolved into three distinct groups: conscious software programs known as citizens, sentient robots called gleisners, and unaltered humans or fleshers. When a cosmic accident forces the evacuation of Earth, these three groups form a tentative alliance to explore the known universe in search of unknown and perhaps unknowable possibilities. Egan's (Distress, LJ 6/15/97) remarkable gift for infusing theoretical physics with vibrant immediacy, creating sympathetic characters that stretch the definition of humanity, results in an exhilarating galactic adventure that echoes the best efforts of Greg Bear, Larry Niven, and other masters of hard sf. A top-notch purchase for any library. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Shelly Sampson:

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