



Gamescape: Overworld

Emma Trevayne

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The planet is dying. Centuries of abuse have damaged the earth beyond repair, and now all the authorities can do is polish the surface, make the landscape look pretty to hide the disease within. Two prominent yet mysterious businessmen couldn't fix it, either, but they did something even better. Together, they invented Chimera, the most complex and immersive virtual reality video game the world has ever known. The Cubes in which Chimera is played quickly became a fixture of this landscape: part distraction, part hospital, and almost wholly responsible for holding up the failing world economy.

Miguel Anderson is also dying. He isn't the only one who plays the game—everybody does—but Miguel has more reason than most: When players leave their Cubes for the day, the upgrades and enhancements they've earned for their virtual characters leave with them. New lungs to breathe poisoned air, skin that won't burn under the sun are great and everything... but Miguel, born as broken as the earth, needs a new heart—and soon—if he wants any hope of surviving just a little longer.

Then the two Gamerunners announce a competition, with greater rewards and faster progression than ever before, and Miguel thinks his prayers have been answered. All he needs to do is get picked to lead a team, play the game he's spent years getting good at, and ask for his prize when he wins. Simple, really.

At first, things seem to go according to plan. Mostly, anyway. Inside his Cube, with his new team—including his best friend—at his back, Miguel begins his quest. He plays recklessly, even dangerously, for someone whose most vital organ could give up at any moment, but his desperation makes him play better than ever. The eyes of the world are on him, watching through status updates and live feeds, betting on his chances. With greater rewards, though, come greater risks, and the Gamerunners seem to delight at surprising the competitors at every turn. As he ventures deeper into a world that blends the virtual and the real to an unsettling degree, Miguel begins to wonder just why the game was invented at all, and whether its stakes could be even higher than life and death.

Gamespace: Overworld Details

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Lucy.K says

The style of writing she used took me a while to understand, but other than that the plot, characters, and structure was great. Throughout this novel all I could think of were books such as Eye of Minds and movies such as The Matrix. I thought similarities such as having to believe that the game is real to actually die from it were extremely similar to The Matrix. The end half of the book seemed a bit rushed, but the ending made up for this factor. The fact that they had replaced the brains of real live people and that the real world was not the real world, but could be the real world made the whole universe not trustable. I never knew when they were in the game or in the real world.

Zippergirl says

Gamespace: Overworld turned out to be much more than just a walkthrough of some people playing a virtual reality game. First, the stakes are high--the winner can choose any bio-mech body part they want to enhance their chance of survival on a poisoned planet, and our hero Miguel needs a heart before his gives out. In fact, he might not even make it through the levels he needs to earn it. It's taken him his whole life just to get where he is and he needs to win at least three more levels which could take years--years he doesn't have.

Then the Gamerunners announce a new competition and the Cubes are retrofitted for team play and only the world's best players will be chosen to beta-test twenty levels before a global roll-out. It will take a summer to complete and there will only be one Chimera team on top. The players, some friends, some not so much, each have their own secret motivations. This is Mig's opportunity to get his heart replacement and get his life back.

This first book in a series is filled with explosive action, rich with descriptive virtual worlds, and characters you can't help but embrace, working as well in the real world as it does when following the gamer team deep inside the Cube. And the suspense and mystery surrounding the Gamerunners' motives are brilliantly trickled out--we know something the players don't. Will Miguel and his team live to discover the game behind the game?

Well plotted--and thankfully works as both a standalone and series teaser. This is a book I plan to share with my best friends.

I received this book in exchange for my honest review.

Raquel (Rocki) says

You can find a longer review on my blog: Raquel Gabrielle's Blog

It was not all about the game play. I of course expected that but I didn't expect how it went, I was thinking more of dystopia and not apocalyptic. I would have loved to read more about the real world the one that is dying the one they will have to put up with no matter if they can go into a virtual world to escape it or not.

I liked the characters, especially the mysterious Gamerunners, they definitely kept the players on their toes and the reader guessing for more. Miguel had some tough decisions to make because of one of those Gamerunners.

Perhaps in the next one we will get to see a bit more of the real world dystopia aspect instead of the virtual reality.

Louisa says

This book was so great! I loved the game and what its purpose was! So great, and I can't wait to see where it goes from here!

Susan says

Gamespace: Overworld is the first book in the Nova Project series. You can read this as a standalone, but it is clear that the story is just beginning. There is violence. Ultimately this is a story about good versus evil. About what we will each do in order to survive. I was surprised to find a decent story, though I think some of the major events were glossed over and should have been longer. I probably will read the next book to see what happens after the game is over.

((Silver O. Smith - "There's nothing more dangerous than a honest man." - Maroni (Gotham))) says

This is a wonderful book. The sci-fi ideas are out of this world. ((Is that a pun?)) And I love Chimera. There are two maybe three things that I did not like about this book. One is that there is way too much cussing. I am usually fine with it but the F words need to appear less. A lot less. Two: I am having a hard time picturing the Gamerunners, The Horsemen, and the monsters in the game. Okay, scratch that, I am having a hard time picturing everyone. The details on the places are pretty good, needs some work, but the details on each person is just not good at all. I like details, helps me to imagine each person and see the book play in my head like a movie but since the lack of detail, I had a harder time.

I am looking forward to the next book and might even pre-order it but there is another thing I am worried about. I am worried that two characters might have sex *cough*Miguel and Leah*cough*. I have read too many books with that and you don't need that to make a good book. Please Ms. Trevayne, don't include that.

Go Miguel! ((Don't hate me for this.)) Go Blake!

zoë ✿ (fallxnrobin) says

5/5 for plot, 4/5 for sass and 2/5 for emotions

4 stars

My thoughts kinda progressed from “*did I make a bad decision signing onto this blog tour*” to “*wait I think this is getting somewhere*” and finally “*oh this is pretty damn good*”.

The summary is quite long so let me (attempt to) summarise it for you: *The Earth is dying. Two people decided to invent Chimera, a virtual reality video game that rewards you with biomechanical parts with every level completed. Miguel was born with a weak heart. Weak heart = Early death. He has to earn a new heart through the game. He's running out of time. A faster solution is presented to him, in the form of a competition. He joins it. Things get intense. Questions are asked. Secrets are uncovered.*

Despite the story being set in the future, it draws inspiration from ancient myths, specifically Greek and Christian ones. Maybe I should have gotten the hint from the fact that the game is named *Chimera* but I didn’t expect more mythology references. There were also several aspects of our modern world integrated with it, for example, the prevalence of social media in our daily lives and the significance of digital footprints.

I actually really enjoyed this book, because it’s not what I had expected. Actually, I’m not sure what my expectations were. Maybe an over-powered character like Kirito from *Sword Art Online*? But Miguel is *nothing* like that. He’s good at *Chimera*, not because he’s strong, but because he understands the game better than anyone else, causing him to be able to progress through the game faster than the average player. He isn’t invincible. For one, his health is weak. He also understands that he can’t complete the game alone, that he must work with his teammates and work towards the end goal together.

The story was a bit dry at the start but it starts to pick up somewhere after the 25% mark, especially when the competition started. I loved reading about the interactions between Miguel and his teammates, the obstacles they faced, and how they progressed through the game as a team. The fact that *Chimera* is a game that combines both puzzles and fight bosses together also ensures that there is never a dull moment when we’re reading about the team’s adventures in the game. The puzzles the team had to solve at each level never failed to amaze me.

One thing that might put readers off is the writing ? it is passive, maybe even lacking in emotions at times. It’s like the story is told from a third party’s point of view who has access to Miguel’s thoughts, and decided to narrate them. There’s quite a lot of telling, instead of showing.

He gets the distinct impression that it's a good thing the gaming room is empty, their visors and sensors locked in their cabinets, because there's nothing handy to throw at him. But he also doesn't think she'd throw anything that'd hurt too much.

For the most part, once I had gotten used to the writing, I found that I actually liked it. It was something different. It made me think about what I had just read. There were all these subtle details added in here and there and the rich description really helped bring *Chimera* to life, easily helping readers immerse themselves into the game.

The sun isn't the only problem, but it's one of them, the biggest, and during the day it illuminates all the others.

While I'm a tad bit disappointed by the last chapter, overall, this was an enjoyable read for me. If the summary interests you, I think you should totally give it a go. You may like it, you may not, you may DNF it in the end, but it is worth your time.

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Thistle says

Set on a just-barely-future Earth, where the problems have progressed further in the direction they're already headed (the air is a lot more polluted, the ozone layer mostly gone so the sun is more dangerous, etc), a company created a VR game. It's an escape from all the problems that people have, so "everyone" plays it, from teens to adults. (There's a minimum age, 12 I think it was, before you could play. But everyone over that spends much to most of their free time in the game.) It's the most popular thing on the planet, in part because you can earn "real life" rewards from it -- non-game item rewards.

And what prizes those are! The rewards are basically cyborg upgrades, everything from a mechanical finger to eyes that can function as cameras to engineered replacement organs. That last prize is the important one to our teenage main character, because he was born with a bad heart and is dying.

Luckily he's very good at the game, and on track to win the prize he needs...if he lives that long. Then he's tapped on the shoulder by the gamemakers to enter a special beta version of a better version of the game, one with even greater prizes, and thus an even higher chance of him living.

What made this book especially interesting were the "cutscenes" -- very short chapters about the gamemakers. Twice in the course of this book I questioned the author's decisions. The first time was during one of these cutscenes. She described the gamemakers as "basically psychopaths" and I rolled my eyes and got frowny at that. Where's the sense in that? Why would psychopaths make a game for the whole world to enjoy? But not only was that explained, the cutscenes/reasons behind the game were the best element of the whole story. They kept me guessing until the end, and I loved the twist about it!

The second time I second-guessed the author was near the end of the book. The main character and his two teenage friends successfully hacked into the computer system of the biggest company on the planet. The kids had never once hacked before. I'm SO glad I didn't stop reading at that point, because like the first example of me doubting the author, this was fully and completely explained in a 100% believable way.

It's so rare to find an author I can trust. I've read so many books where the characters do utterly unbelievable things, it's wonderful that everything in this book made sense and was realistic.

This was one of those rare times when I went offline earlier than usual at night, just so I'd have more reading time before I had to sleep.

I can't wait to find more books by her to read!

Lexi Mcalister says

After reading this book I feel like it is merely an amalgamation of works like 'Ready Player One' and ancient myths that really has no solid foundation of its own. It is slow to develop in plot and takes way too long in explaining itself and revealing plot twists. This was such an excruciating read with no original thought or inspiration. Would not recommend.

Sheila Howes says

Not a bad book, but don't think I was the target audience. Recommended for anyone who likes computer gaming!

Sarah says

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to HarperCollins and Edelweiss.)

*“Win, and he gets anything he wants. The Gamerunners’ promise.
Win, and he gets to live. What could any of them need that compares?”*

This was a sci-fi story about a game in which you could earn biomechanical body parts.

Mig was an okay character, and it was sad that his heart was failing on him at such a young age. I did think that he should have been a bit more honest with his friends though, especially about his heart condition.

The storyline in this was about a game called Chimera, in which biomechanical body parts could be earned. There was a new challenge announced in which you could win even more prizes, and Mig felt like that was his only hope of getting a new heart, even though his doctors didn't want him to play. I did find the storyline a bit jumpy though, and I felt like I kept missing things, although this may well have just been me not following things correctly.

The ending to this was okay, although I found the explanation as to what the ideas behind Chimera were to be a bit weird.

Alexa says

Good story line, but the ending seemed kinda cheesy. R.I.P. Nick

Emily (Infinite Lives, Infinite Stories) says

I've been searching for a game based book for a while now. I thought for sure Gamescape would be the book that I was looking for. Unfortunately, it just wasn't my cup of tea.

Gamespace revolves around a boy and his friends who play a video game to earn new and improved limbs. Though I liked the idea, I just wasn't looking for that kind of a book.

I was very intrigued by the interface and the Storyteller. This isn't the first video game based book that I have read. So far, from what I've read, the takes on the actual game were very different.

The video game world building was fantastic. I wish that was all there was. I wasn't interested in the outside world. The reason why I picked up the book was the video game concept. As odd as it may seem, the outside world annoyed me. I didn't care for it and nothing worthwhile ever happened.

I wish I could've gotten to know the characters a little bit more. Honestly, if they were a little bit more interesting or developed I likely read the next book. Miguel is the main character, and even then we don't know a whole lot about him besides his heart condition. I disagreed with his actions and choices quite often, which could be another reason why I'm no interested in continuing to follow their journey.

Vanessa ?Queen Alchemy ? Novel Nerd Faction? says

I received this book for free from Fantastic Flying Book Club in exchange for an honest review.

This was one of the most interesting stories that I have had the pleasure of reading. Gamescape: Overworld displays science fiction in such an interesting way!

The most amazing thing about this book is that it surprises you. Going into it, I was expecting a hardcore gaming story with a science fiction baseline. What I got was so much more enticing! The plot is wholly original and very exciting! I loved the mythology and religious references in the book. (But don't be worried if you aren't into things with religious overtones, because this book is not one of those.) I was truly not expecting the plot to go in the direction that it did.

I really loved reading about Miguel and his team inside the game. The game time was a delight to read. I loved how the characters interacted during the game time, and I also liked the action scenes.

The book has some diverse characters, and I love that!

I enjoyed the look at social media and its relevance to individuals. People having a digital thumbprint is a big part of this story.

I felt that the characters had a nice start to them, but I felt that they needed more development. It felt like the author only scratched the surface with them. What I read of the characters I liked, but I felt like there was just so much missing from their personalities. They needed more depth.

The romance was hardly there at all, and it felt rushed. The romance needed more build up, and just plain more romance in general.

I would have liked more detailed information about this dystopian world. We get a little information about it, but it just isn't detailed enough.

I felt the story drag on a bit towards the end. I felt bored reading the second half. It didn't really go out with a bang. It just sort of lulled at the end.

Overall, this is a great story! It is a one of a kind story that explores an interesting premise. I would most definitely recommend reading this one!

More reviews on my blog: [The Alchemy of Ink](#)

Jillian Levi-Gunera says

I give it 4 stars as I loved the story up until the last couple chapters. Sci-fi, end of the world is what my mind was set on. And then we randomly jumped into fantasy in the end in a way I just wasn't prepared for. Loved up until that point though
