

Title: *The Loop*
Author: Ben Oliver
Genre: Science Fiction

Reviewer's Name and Grade: Benjamin W., 9th Grade

Date Reviewed: February 6, 2021

This book takes place in futuristic Earth after World War III. The world is now ruled by one government and a computer program named Happy. The wealthy humans (Alts) have gotten modifications that perfect their looks and fitness. The poor ones (Regulars) have been pushed into the slums and forced into a world of crime and drugs.

Luka Kane is a convicted murderer, sentenced to spend his teenage years in the Loop. Life in the Loop is one continuous loop. Every day is the same, with each day ending in the harvest and a rainfall. The harvest draws energy from an inmate's body which is then used to power the prison. The only allowed exception to this routine is a Delay. Delays are contracts that offer each inmate a chance to live for 6 more months. In return, the inmate must participate in an experiment that tests new modifications for the Alts. If one is lucky enough (or unlucky enough) to survive every Delay, they get sent to the Block at age 18, where Delays come every 6 weeks. Luka is used to this routine by now. However, when the scheduled rainfall fails to occur on time, whispers of war begin to circulate. A new girl named Kina arrives bringing more tales of unrest. The routine is broken again when Delays are offered early to every inmate, splitting them into Group A and Group B. Luka decides not to accept the Delay right away and instead waits to talk to the warden Wren. Wren has been more of a friend than a guard to Luka. She gives Luka books every day and lets him out of his cell when possible. Wren tells Luka that everything is fine and to accept the Delay. But when the first test group comes back suicidal, Wren tells Luka that he must escape. On the day of the test, Luka attempts a failed escape and ends up getting tested on. The tests don't kill him or anyone in Group B so they are sent back to the Loop. Wren comes back with tales of war and decides to let the inmates out. However, a virus infects her and turns her into a mindless murderer. She attempts to kill Luka but he is able to escape. Luka heads for the outside world and finds out that everyone has been infected. He goes back to the Loop to release his friends and together, they go look for their families. They must survive murderers, the weather, and the government to gain their freedom. Their only allies are Ebb-addicted Regulars who somehow were not infected by the virus. When the government gets ahold of Wren, a final battle will have to happen because Luka will not leave friends behind.

Now, I will answer some questions about the book:

Did the plot keep you interested? - This plot definitely kept me interested. There was a lot of suspense and plot twists that kept me wondering what would happen next. The book had a lot of action and mysteries that made me not want to put the book down.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right? - I think the pace of this book was just right. Life in The Loop can be boring and repetitive so the author does a good job of not repeating himself. There is always action to keep the pace up. Especially at the end, things can move pretty fast but it just adds to the excitement.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for? - I think this book is appropriate for kids in grades 7-12. There is a lot of cursing, drug use, and violence in this book that wouldn't make this appropriate for younger kids. Older kids will better understand the plot and enjoy it.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to? - I would recommend this book to readers who like a suspenseful, action packed story of the future. I would really recommend this book to anyone, just not younger kids.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book - This book is part of a trilogy. The second book is called "The Block" but it hasn't been published yet.

I would rate this book *5 stars*. The plot was really good and pretty easy to follow. The beginning can be a little confusing as the author doesn't fully explain what Delays are until later in the book. All the characters were well developed and most things were well described. The book is a mix between human modification and artificial intelligence making it one of a kind.

Reviewer's Name and Grade: Owen M., 9th Grade

Date Reviewed: February 19, 2021

The Loop is a maximum-security death row for children under the age of eighteen that's almost fully automated by a robot named Happy. Because of the advancements in technology, people have created this huge schism that divides the rich and the poor even further than ever before. Rich people or "Alts" as the rest of the world calls them have been physically enhanced, and genetically modified to be perfect. "Regs" or regulars are normal people, they are poorer and usually don't have physical enhancements and make up most of the inmates in the loop as well as the majority of the earth's population. Luka Kane is a regular who was imprisoned for the murder of an alt, a crime that he confessed too, but reading the book he doesn't seem like a murderer. The idea of the loop is a way for Alts to become more physically enhance by experimenting on these death row inmates. Experiments include everything from harmless vaccines to chopping off limbs and injecting drugs to see if it may help regrow the limb. If you chose to accept this gamble you get a six-month delay on your death sentence but undergo the daily torture of energy drain and no human contact except for the warden. Once you turned 18 you got sent to the block, where you have no choice but to take the delays which come every six weeks, not every six months. Luka's life is a living hell with minimal human contact and the same routine every single day. His only friend was killed from an experiment gone wrong and his only connection to the outside world is a prison guard who brings him books such as Lord of the Rings and Harry Potter. Everything is the same monotonous routine until one day he wakes up and there is a delay message there, oddly enough the message was three months early. As it turns out, everyone in the loop received the delay at the same time so they were split onto two groups; A and B. Group A was shipped out the next day while group B, which Luka was part of waited.

Will Luka be able to survive this? Or is this where his story ends.

Did this book keep you interested? Yes, this was an absolutely riveting book that I had a ton of fun reading and made me look at the world a different way. It also made me abandon the idea of testing experiments on death row inmates.

Was the pace of this book too fast, too slow, or, just right? I feel like the book was paced oddly. It really sucks you in and makes you angry at the way these kids are being treated, it keeps you wondering what will happen. But the pacing was off a bit it was slow for a good portion of the book but there were points where the pace is going to fast for some to comprehend, but I think that was the idea you aren't supposed to fully comprehend what is going on. You need to ride the wave and let the story unfold.

What grade level is this book appropriate for? I think this book is good for anyone over the age of 14 you can read this beforehand and I would certainly encourage it, but it depends on your maturity level.

Who would you recommend this book to? I would recommend this book to anyone since it has multiple genres. It's a young adult book, it's a sci-fi book but it also deals with stuff some adults could enjoy. One thing to be aware of though is a big portion of the book deals with substance abuse and this book took on some crazy conspiracy theories you see today but taken further.

Is there any additional information that you can think of to benefit other teens reading this book? Besides the drugs and conspiracy's this book is pretty straightforward action.

What would you rate this book? I would rate this book 5 stars its amazingly written and well done, it shows all these different problems with different ideas as well as being a cool Sci-Fi Terminator thing.

Reviewer Name and Grade: Yujay A., 10th Grade

Date Reviewed: October 30, 2021

The Loop takes place in the future after the Third World War, and a single government rules the world under the leadership of an artificial intelligence named Happy. Each region is ruled by an Overseer, and the Overseer of the region where the novel takes place is Galen Rye. Luka Kane is a 16 year old boy who lives in The Loop, a high-security prison. Every day in the Loop follows the same schedule, and Luka's only bright points of the day are when he gets to talk to the warden, Wren. Wren is kind and brings Luka books to read, and allows the prisoners out of their cells once a week in the middle of the night to socialize. The only time where the prisoners are allowed to leave the compound is for Delays. Delays are contracts where the prisoners have to choose between death or going through experiments which test new technology. The new technology is usually body enhancements or modifications for the Alts, or the high class citizens who are perfect due to alterations to their body. If the prisoners accept the Delay, they are allowed to live for six more months until the next Delay, unless they die due to the experiments. When prisoners turn 18, they are sent to the next prison, the Block, which has more frequent Delays and worse living conditions. One day, a new prisoner arrives, which is a rare event, and Luka begins to befriend her. Slowly, unusual events begin to occur in the Loop, such as the government-issued rainfall coming late and Happy not responding to prisoners right away. There are rumors that war is coming and the inmates begin to grow hopeful that they can leave the Loop soon. A few days later, a sudden Delay is offered to all the inmates, even though it is not the scheduled time for the Delays. The Delay assigns each prisoner to group A or group B randomly, although it is not specified what the groups mean. Luka accepts the Delay and is assigned to Group B. Group A leaves the following morning for their trial. When they return, Wren sends a secret message to Luka saying that the prisoners of Group A have begun to change. The prisoners have been silently stalking their cells, banging their heads against the floor, and have been killing themselves, all while widely grinning. Wren tells Luka that he needs to get out and that the trials are suspicious. On the day of Luka's trial, he attempts to escape, but is caught and is tested on. The test is only a couple shots and Luka feels normal after receiving them. Luka is sent back to the Loop with no repercussions. However, again, the rainfall does not come and the Loop loses power. Luka begins to panic when Wren opens his cell and explains that the entire city lost power, and there was gunfire in the streets. Wren says that the trusted prisoners might need to leave the Loop and that the early Delays, crazy prisoners, and the blackout are all related somehow. However, just as Wren is about to free everyone, she becomes deranged just like the prisoners from Group A, and kills many inmates. Luka realizes he has to leave the Loop, and when he ventures to the outside world, he discovers that the streets are full of deranged infected people. Luka goes back to the Loop to explain what he saw in the outside world. Luka and his friends must escape the Loop and find out who and what caused everything, and must stop them before the entire world becomes infected.

Did the plot keep you interested?

The plot definitely kept me interested, as there was a lot of action and suspense. The book had many plot twists and cliffhangers that kept it interesting.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

The pace of the book was just right, as there was enough action and suspense to keep it interesting, but also enough time to process and understand the developing plot.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?

This book is appropriate for grades 8 and up, as there is strong language and violence throughout the book.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend this book to anybody who enjoys dystopian novels or very suspenseful and action-packed novels.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?

This novel is told from the point of view of Luka, and contains three sections, In the Loop, Outside the Loop, and In the Block. This novel is the first book of a trilogy still being written.

I would rate The Loop 5 stars because it has a great plot full of action and suspense, and was very fun to read. The novel was paced well and there were many plot twists. I think this book is very interesting as it shows a possible dystopian future for the Earth and shows the issues with artificial intelligence. Overall, I enjoyed reading The Loop and would really recommend this novel to anybody looking for a good science fiction book.