

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

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

Date Reviewed: February 24, 2022

The Block takes place right after the events of *The Loop*. Luka Kane is imprisoned once again after escaping The Loop, this time in a prison called The Block. When Luka escaped The Loop, he discovered that the artificial intelligence Happy has taken over the government, has been taking over the brains of human “hosts”, and plans to eradicate humans. The artificial intelligence has already initiated the first two phases of its three phase plan. In the Block, Luka suffers through the same routine every day. Luka goes through the painful energy harvest and is then immobilized. In order to prevent prisoners in The Block from going insane, a technology called the Sane Zone is used. The Sane Zone is an advanced simulation which either shows scenes from a prisoner’s past or life outside the prison. However, for Luka, the Sane Zone is an advanced interrogation where Happy tries to trick Luka into revealing the locations of his friends who escaped The Loop with him. One day, Luka tricks a naive guard with compassion for Luka into letting him out of his cell. Luka tries to escape with Kina, a girl who escaped The Loop with Luka. However, they are stopped by a group of Alts controlled by Happy. Alts are humans with technological modifications. Luka goes through the same routine for weeks, and almost goes insane. One day, Luka’s friends arrive at the prison to break him free. However, Luka is paranoid from the weeks he spent in The Block and thinks it is just one of Happy’s tricks to get him to reveal the location of his friends. The group convinces him that it is not a simulation and narrowly escapes the prison. They arrive at their secret base, and Luka meets Dr. Ortega, a mad scientist who Luka finds vaguely familiar. Luka’s friends and Dr. Ortega explain that they have been using old technology from the 21st century and a scrambler in order to stay hidden from Happy. However, Happy is close to finishing it’s plan to control or kill all humans. The group must find the Missing, hundreds of citizens who have been hiding from Happy, in order to have a chance at fighting Happy. However, Luka learns that two of his friends, Malachi and Woods, are having their brains taken over by Happy very soon, which will greatly help Happy. Luka must travel into the city to the headquarters of Happy to save his friends, and must find the Missing before Happy wipes out humanity.

Did the plot keep you interested?

The plot definitely kept me interested. There were many plot twists, and there was a lot of suspense and action.

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

The pace of the book was fast enough to keep it interesting but slow enough to allow the reader to understand what was happening.

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

This book is appropriate for grade levels 8 and up, as there is a lot of strong language and violence throughout the book.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend this novel to anybody who enjoys dystopian or science fiction novels.

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

This novel is the sequel to *The Loop* and is part of a trilogy which is still being written.

I would rate *The Block* 5 stars because it was a great novel full of action, suspense, and plot twists. The novel was paced well and was fun to read. The book was a good continuation of the first novel in the series, *The Loop*. Overall, I enjoyed reading *The Block* and would really recommend this novel to anybody looking for a good dystopian book.

Reviewer Name and Grade: Amanda L., 8th Grade

Date Reviewed: January 29, 2023

The Block is the second book in the Loop Trilogy. In the first book the main character Luka Kane escaped a prison called the Loop. In the Loop they did experiments on the prisoners and as a result, Luka and the other inmates gained the ability to heal within seconds. When the opportunity arose, Luka and his friends fled the Loop and joined a rebellion (called the Missing) against Happy. Happy is the name of an evil AI that wants to rid the world of humans. However, in a battle with Happy, Luka and some of his friends were captured and put in the Block, another prison where he is paralyzed and tortured.

In the beginning of the second book, Luka has been in the Block for about a month. Because he heals so fast, he is able to generate a lot of energy. Happy takes Luka's energy using a painful process called the Harvest. Soon, his friends rescue Luka and the others in the prison. They take him back to their base, and he finds out they have been separated from the Missing. No one knows where they have gone or how they have evaded Happy's trackers. After searching for many days, Luka finds them and realizes they have developed new technology that essentially "kills" them while preserving their minds in a virtual reality.

However when Luka stays in this virtual reality his mind feels clouded. Eventually he realizes that the leader of the Missing has been drugging all the rebels to prevent them from fighting Happy. Luka escapes the virtual reality but now he and his friends are exposed to Happy's tracking devices. Because the inmates have super healing powers, Happy wants to do more experiments on them. In order to save his friends, Luka volunteers to be held prisoner. The book ends with Luka being held captive by Happy.

Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for nonfiction) keep you interested?

Yes, it was a good plot and had many plot twists.

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

I think that the pace of this book is just right.

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

I think this is appropriate for middle schoolers, or grades 6-8.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend this book to anyone who likes books with a lot of action.

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

You should read the first book, called *The Loop*, before reading this one.

4 stars

I enjoyed this book, although there were too many side characters. However, I did like the action parts and the book was interesting and overall a good read.