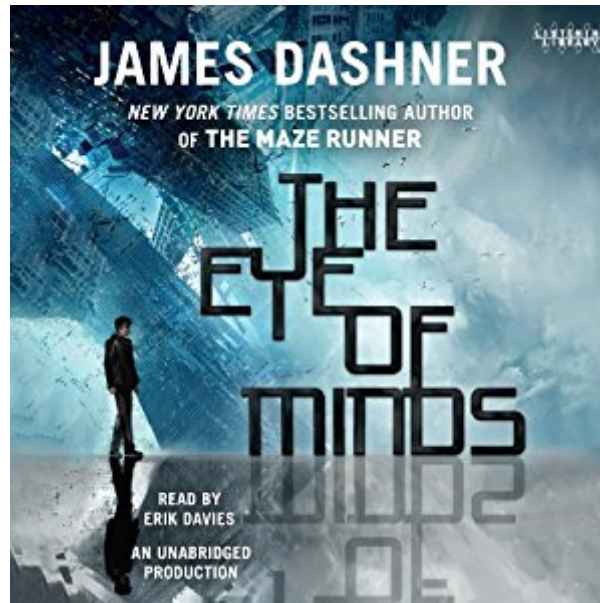


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The Eye Of Minds: Mortality Doctrine, Book One



Synopsis

From James Dashner, the author of the New York Times best-selling Maze Runner series, comes an all-new, edge-of-your seat adventure. Eye of Minds is the first book in The Mortality Doctrine, a series set in a world of hyperadvanced technology, cyberterrorists, and gaming beyond your wildest dreams...and your worst nightmares. Michael is a gamer. And like most gamers, he almost spends more time on the VirtNet than in the actual world. The VirtNet offers total mind and body immersion, and it's addictive. Thanks to technology, anyone with enough money can experience fantasy worlds, risk their life without the chance of death, or just hang around with Virt-friends. And the more hacking skills you have, the more fun. Why bother following the rules when most of them are dumb, anyway? But some rules were made for a reason. Some technology is too dangerous to fool with. And recent reports claim that one gamer is going beyond what any gamer has done before: he's holding players hostage inside the VirtNet. The effects are horrific - the hostages have all been declared brain-dead. Yet the gamer's motives are a mystery. The government knows that to catch a hacker, you need a hacker. And they've been watching Michael. They want him on their team. But the risk is enormous. If he accepts their challenge, Michael will need to go off the VirtNet grid. There are back alleys and corners in the system human eyes have never seen and predators he can't even fathom - and there's the possibility that the line between game and reality will be blurred forever.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours and 36 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Listening Library (Audio)

Audible.com Release Date: October 8, 2013

Language: English

ASIN: B00EZ5D7GU

Best Sellers Rank: #87 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Boys & Men #167 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Science Fiction #310 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Children's Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy

Customer Reviews

When I read THE MAZE RUNNER, I was pulled in from the very first page, and couldn't put the

book down. So, I eagerly picked up *THE EYE OF MINDS*, hoping for - and expecting - the same result. Did that happen? Not so much. I'll start by saying that, even with the above in mind, this is not a bad book, and in all fairness, I had let my expectations rise a bit too high. As other reviews have mentioned, it does have some shades of *READY PLAYER ONE* (an excellent book), in terms of the gamer culture, references to the various games being played, the point of playing them, and all the wonders of the virtual reality in which all of it takes place. Just as is the case with the aforementioned book, one does not have to be a gamer to understand and/or enjoy the plot, the characters, or the book, as a whole. The amount of exposition given is enough to explain all of those things and give readers an understanding of the world-building, while not straying too heavily into boring recitations of information that would make one's eyes glaze over and seek to skip any number of pages devoted to nothing but rote explanations. All of that was fine. My problems with the book started with the pacing. Initially, even though the story doesn't get bogged down in unnecessary details, it does take awhile for the action to really get going, so my interest was not captured right off the bat with this one. That may sound odd, given what transpires when the book begins, but after that first situation is resolved after a handful of pages, nothing much happens until Michael is given his mission (which is mentioned in the book's summary). After that comes the preparation for the mission, and it is only after Michael and his friends begin that particular journey that things really take off. From that point on, the suspense grabs you and doesn't let go until you turn the final page - it just takes a little while to get there. (Pacing is also something of an issue at the end, though, as the climactic event(s) for which readers have been waiting since the first page just sort of happen and then they're done. For now. It seems like a lot of build-up for not too much pay-off. I suspect that that's largely because this is just the first installment in the trilogy, though, so it's not a huge problem.) Then, there is some of the dialogue. Though this tapers off as the book progresses, when everything begins, a fair amount of what is said is just so stilted and unnaturally phrased that it doesn't resemble actual conversations, and serves to take the reader out of the story a bit. Things do get better in that regard, but when the conversations begin in earnest between Michael and his friends, another issue - albeit a small one - rears its head. Yes, they are teenagers, and yes, they are prone to sarcasm. However, when they start to take the time to get snarky and quippy when time is of the essence and their lives are in danger, well, it got a little irritating. In terms of Michael and his friends, Bryson and Sarah, they are not only typical teenagers, they are typical teenagers in a young adult novel. By that, I mean that each fills a relatively stereotypical role, and that's about it. Bryson is the fun and funny best guy-friend who comes through when he's needed, and Sarah is the smart, responsible girl who keeps the boys in line, and whose existence is necessary for the

requisite hint of romance. Michael, the main character, is exactly what you would expect him to be: a very good gamer/hacker, alternately scared and incredibly brave, who is tasked with a giant responsibility. And is always hungry. It is easy to root for all of the characters, even though there is not a huge amount of character development - the roles they play/fill at the beginning are basically the same ones they play/fill at the end, with one notable exception. The government agents are cliché who play small roles, and the people/gamers he meets along the way are basically more of the same. As for the villain of the piece, well, he's somewhat cartoony; an evil genius, sure, but cartoony. Again, I expect that we'll learn more about him in subsequent installments. As for the twist that other reviewers have mentioned: it is a good twist, I'll give it that. It's not a totally unpredictable one, because clues are given throughout the story, but it does set things up nicely for the sequel(s). The bottom line, for me, is that this one isn't as good as James Dashner's first book, and it does have some flaws, but once it really gets going, it's imaginative and suspenseful, and it really does make you wish that it was Fall 2014 so that you could pick up the next book.

The Eye of Minds is an action-packed and edgy cyber adventure with plot that revolves around the concept of virtual reality, otherwise known as VirtNet. Sporting an intriguing, futuristic premise and highly imaginative vision, this book is a treat for all fans of science fiction thrillers. Suspenseful and twisty, The Eye of Minds blurs the line between what's real and what's not, making the reader question everything that transpires within the pages. It's a great mind-bender written in signature Dashner style - gripping, intense and stimulating. Michael, the lead character, is a gamer addicted to Lifeblood Deep. Lifeblood is a game mimicking real life - realistic and gritty. And it's the most popular game in VirtNet. And what is VirtNet, you may ask? Why, VirtNet is a cool concept in itself! It's a vast cyber world, with games and hangouts for gamers of all ages. In VirtNet, you can experience just about anything you wish to - from physical pleasure to pain - and it's a whole body, full-stimulation experience. You can eat, but you'll never get fat in the real world because the Coffin (which is what most people call the NerveBox that allows them to connect to virtual reality) feeds you pure, healthy nutrients, even if you think you're eating some high calorie junk food. You can cut your hair, take a shower, even pee if you want to, and the Coffin will provide your brain and body with stimulants that will make the experience feel real. It's all extremely cool and entertaining, until someone decides to turn it into a nightmare. A cyber-terrorist named Kaine is somehow trapping people inside the Sleep, not letting them wake up. And not being able to get back to their real lives, some of them end up killing themselves. And not just in the virtual reality, but in the Wake, too. While playing Lifeblood Deep, Micheal witnesses a girl dig into her own skull and pull her Core out

and then jump off the bridge (the Core being a piece of code preventing you from getting hurt/killed in the real world, even if something happens to your virtual self). He then gets kidnapped by masked men who, as he later finds out, work for VNS (VirtNet Security). Turns out, the government need his experience and hacking skills to find Kaine. His friends from the virtual world, Bryson and Sarah, agree to join him on his new quest to find the cyber terrorist (a quest that he is practically forced into), despite it being extremely dangerous and potentially deadly. To find Kaine, they'll have to go through a lot, including finding the path to the Hallowed Ravine first, and by the time they reach their destination, they'll be regretting ever getting involved in this case at all. This book will appeal to fans of science fiction interested in virtual reality, gaming and innovative technologies. Especially to teenage boys. The action packed plot is full of surprises and changes in scenery, making this a hold-on-tight-to-your-pants kind of read. The virtual world of VirtNet is well developed and described in a way that makes you wonder what it would be like to visit there one day and experience it all for yourself, but it also has a darker, more sinister side to it. And that's what makes this book so thrilling. The character development is on a decent level, though I personally didn't feel any deeper connection with any of the lead characters, perhaps because they seemed so young and different from the kids I grew up around. And, of course, it's totally understandable, considering the futuristic setting of this book and how incredibly technologically advanced their world is. That being said, I think teenage readers would not have any problem relating to the characters at all. I guess I'm just a bit too old for that ;) Overall, this book reminded me a lot of the movie *The Matrix*, and it's really no wonder, since Dashner himself admits it was one of his inspirations. The mystery behind Kaine's persona plays a big part in this book; discovering his motives is what keeps you turning the pages. And they're plenty of surprises along the way. Ultimately, *The Eye of Minds* is a promising beginning to a new, exciting series. It's not a perfect story, it has its shortcomings, but they're small enough to be easily overlooked, and Dashner's highly captivating writing style makes up for all of them.

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