

SPECULATIVE FICTION REVIEW by Stephanie Young

TITLE *Superluminal*
AUTHOR Tony Daniels
PUBLISHER Eos
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It's not often that I find a book *unreadable*, and in case it's a slow starter I give it at least the first 100 pages to grab me. This book was at that point but I decided to stick it out and finish it because it has been a while since I read a stinker and I won't review a book that I don't complete - that would not be fair to the author. And in this case the book did get better - barely.

Superluminal is a follow-up to *Metaplanetary* which I admit I have not read. But I don't think it would have made any difference, the problems with this book are in its thin characters, thinner plot, and segmented story.

The story is set about a millennia in the future, earth is mostly abandoned and the solar system is connected by 'strings' which allow for everyone and everything to be connected by 'grist' - a nanoengineered glue that allows for a high degree of virtuality to exist. There are three types of people in this system: humans, converts and free converts. Most are converts which have a human base but exist in more than place as a virtual you, in order to more fully enjoy life, the two places at once scenario. Free converts are completely virtual with no human attached, they are just out there.

Over time a sort of racism has evolved and now a civil war is breaking out.

Daniels has put together an incredibly detailed world and a lot of thought went into the science and details (there are over fifty pages of appendices, notes, timelines, biographies etc.) but that does not make up for the uninteresting characters, mediocre battles scenes and dull plot.

The most interesting characters were a human who is stuck on Earth and an AI Jeep Cherokee that has wandered the planet for centuries. The girl finds the Jeep by accident and they strike up a friendship that is warm and powerful but they only appear in the beginning of the book and the end. In between was just - feh.

The Goodreads site had a lot of great reviews on the book and if you are into the tech of the book and such I guess you could excuse the weak writing but after reading great space opera and military scifi by Weber, Ringo, Bujold, Drake and others; this just doesn't cut it. I think it's safe to say I won't be picking anything up by Daniels in the future.

Rating 