



Book Review: *Se7en Second Delay*

Written by Tom Easton

Holiday House, 220 pp.

ISBN: 9780823432097

*Another box opened on the other side of Mila's IDS. A header at the top read WATCHERS: 0. It quickly changed to WATCHERS: 1 and a message popped into the box. Adam: UR now being Watched (p.34)*

Mila, seventeen-years-old and not a citizen of the Utopian Isles, finds herself detained at one of its Centers when she tries to enter illegally by crossing over the top of the entrance bridge. Her traveling companion Julian fell to his death, alerting authorities of their presence. After interviewing her, Center personnel decide to give Mila a limited phone implant so she can communicate and work in the Isles to prove she is able to live peacefully with the citizens. Once the implant is imbedded, Mila has a screen within her vision that allows her to communicate, but also allows others to view what she sees. Given a "seven second delay," Mila's implant allows her to block what she is currently viewing or doing so as to delete any embarrassing situations from her viewing feed. As she is getting ready to leave the Center, however, she is scanned and the Center medics find a small device in her head that they identify as a bomb. Deciding she is not harmless, Center personnel know what they have to do, and so does Mila. She has to escape.

Filled with intensity and edge-of-your-seat action, *Se7en Second Delay* is a fast-paced science fiction thriller with a teen protagonist who is not only smart, but resourceful. Mila knows she only has the seven second delay to think through situations with the Center that could easily end her life. And as she tries to stay alive, she is also trying to convince not only the Center personnel, but the Utopian public who are now attached to the feed, that she is not a terrorist. While mainly a science fiction narrative, this book also contains a burgeoning romance that will attract readers across multiple genres.

This science fiction narrative would make a great companion to M.T. Anderson's *Feed* (2012), Tom Hoyle's *Thirteen* (2015), and Patrick Ness' *Chaos Walking* series as well as the *Lorien Legacies* series by Pittacus Lore. All are science fiction thrillers that keep teens anxiously reading for what would come next. Additionally, *Se7en Second Delay* complements text sets that address dystopian realities, fighting for survival, or attempting to change the world. This story has the potential to engage readers in discussion about how their current realities compare to futuristic stories about survival, being misunderstood, and the effort it takes to change thinking that allows others to suffer at the expense of the privileged. The book leaves the readers with an opening for a sequel as Mila and Alex continue to wrestle with their

plight and the exclusivity of the Utopian Isles. Somewhat similar to *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2010) in respect to the ability for others to watch participants as they face danger, *Seven Second Delay* is a great next read for dystopian and science fiction fans.

Tom Easton lives in England where he works in the publishing industry and has written numerous books for children and teens. *Seven Second Delay* is now shortlisted for the Portsmouth and Lancashire Book Awards. Writing under both Tom Easton (for science fiction/thrillers) and TS Easton (for his humorous books), he is the author of *Hav3n* (2013), *An English Boy in New York* (2014), and *Boys Don't Knit* (2014), all of which have been honored in the United Kingdom. More information about Easton and his work can be found on his website.

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