

The Intriguing World of Severance Novel: A Dystopian Masterpiece



Severance, the debut novel by Ling Ma, takes readers on a gripping journey through a post-apocalyptic world. With its intricately woven plot and thought-provoking themes, this dystopian masterpiece has captivated

audiences worldwide. In this article, we will delve into the fascinating world Ling Ma created, explore the key elements that make *Severance* so compelling, and discuss the impact it has made on both the literary and cultural fronts.

The Plot: A Tale of Survival and Identity

Set in the near future, *Severance* follows the life of Candace Chen, a young Chinese-American woman living in New York City. As a diligent employee of a publishing company, Candace finds herself one of the few remaining survivors of Shen Fever, a pandemic that turns its victims into mindless, repetitive beings stuck in their past routines. With the world crumbling around her, Candace embarks on a journey westward, seeking the hope of a better future, encountering obstacles, and facing her own internal struggles along the way.



Severance: A Novel by Ling Ma(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 6877 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 297 pages



Throughout the novel, Ma expertly combines elements of dystopia, satire, and dark humor to provide a sharp critique of consumerism, capitalism, and the modern pursuit of a passionless existence. As Candace navigates

through abandoned cities and deserted towns, the contrast between her memories of the past and the chaotic present becomes a haunting exploration of identity, isolation, and the human desire for routine.

The Characters: Complex and Multidimensional

One of the remarkable aspects of *Severance* lies in its complex characters, each with their own distinct struggles and motivations. Ling Ma skillfully develops Candace Chen, infusing her with depth and vulnerability that makes her a relatable and compelling protagonist. Candace's inner conflict between her desire for connection and her instinct for survival mirrors the broader themes of the novel, providing readers with an emotional anchor throughout the story.

Other characters, such as Bob, a fellow survivor who joins Candace on her journey, and Jonathan, Candace's boyfriend and former colleague, add complexity and nuance to the narrative. Ma's ability to bring these characters to life in such a vivid manner further enhances the readers' engagement, as they become invested in their triumphs and failures.

The Themes: A Critique of Modern Society

Beyond the captivating plot and characters, *Severance* tackles profound themes that resonate with readers long after they finish the novel. Ling Ma's work explores the monotony of everyday life, the corrosive effects of consumerism, and the societal pressures that lead to conformity. Through the lens of a post-apocalyptic world, she crafts a narrative that invites introspection into our own lives and compels us to question the choices we make.

This thought-provoking examination of society has struck a chord with readers worldwide, generating discussions about the nature of work, routine, and the pursuit of happiness. The novel's ability to transcend genres and connect with readers on a personal level is a testament to its profound impact.

The Reception: Critical Acclaim and Cultural Significance

Since its release, *Severance* has received widespread critical acclaim, earning Ling Ma various prestigious literary awards and nominations. The novel has been praised for its originality, incisive social commentary, and powerful storytelling. Ma's seamless blend of genres and her unique voice have established her as a rising star in the literary world.

Beyond the literary realm, *Severance* has also made an indelible mark on popular culture, sparking conversations about societal norms, the perils of routine, and our collective obsession with nostalgia. Its presence on bestseller lists and its growing fan base is a testament to the novel's ability to resonate across diverse audiences.

Severance, Ling Ma's debut novel, immerses readers in a gripping post-apocalyptic world where themes of survival, identity, and societal critique intertwine. Through compelling characters and an intricately woven plot, Ma has crafted a dystopian masterpiece that keeps readers on the edge of their seats while reflecting on the world we live in today.

As *Severance* continues to garner critical acclaim and captivate readers worldwide, it serves as a powerful reminder of the potential of literature to provoke thought, challenge societal norms, and amplify diverse voices. Ling Ma's novel stands as a testament to the enduring power of storytelling.

and reminds us of the importance of maintaining our individuality, even in the face of a world determined to strip it away.



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Maybe it's the end of the world, but not for Candace Chen, a millennial, first-generation American and office drone meandering her way into adulthood in Ling Ma's offbeat, wryly funny, apocalyptic satire, *Severance*.

"A stunning, audacious book with a fresh take on both office politics and what the apocalypse might bring." —Michael Schaub, NPR.org

"A satirical spin on the end times-- kind of like *The Office* meets *The Leftovers*." --Estelle Tang, Elle

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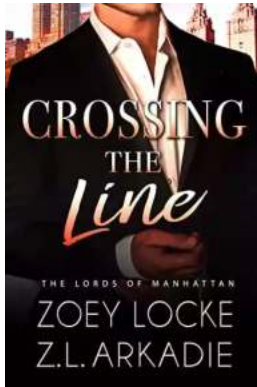
Winner of the NYPL Young Lions Fiction Award * Winner of the Kirkus Prize for Fiction * Winner of the VCU Cabell First Novelist Award * Finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Novel * A New York Times Notable Book of 2018 * An Indie Next Selection

Candace Chen, a millennial drone self-sequestered in a Manhattan office tower, is devoted to routine. With the recent passing of her Chinese immigrant parents, she's had her fill of uncertainty. She's content just to carry on: She goes to work, troubleshoots the teen-targeted Gemstone Bible, watches movies in a Greenpoint basement with her boyfriend.

So Candace barely notices when a plague of biblical proportions sweeps New York. Then Shen Fever spreads. Families flee. Companies cease operations. The subways screech to a halt. Her bosses enlist her as part of a dwindling skeleton crew with a big end-date payoff. Soon entirely alone, still unfevered, she photographs the eerie, abandoned city as the anonymous blogger NY Ghost.

Candace won't be able to make it on her own forever, though. Enter a group of survivors, led by the power-hungry IT tech Bob. They're traveling to a place called the Facility, where, Bob promises, they will have everything they need to start society anew. But Candace is carrying a secret she knows Bob will exploit. Should she escape from her rescuers?

A send-up and takedown of the rituals, routines, and missed opportunities of contemporary life, Ling Ma's *Severance* is a moving family story, a quirky coming-of-adulthood tale, and a hilarious, deadpan satire. Most important, it's a heartfelt tribute to the connections that drive us to do more than survive.



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