



The Firefly Code

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Mori and her friends live a normal life on Firefly Lane in their utopian community, Old Harmonie. In a world this safe and perfect, they've never had to question anything . . . never had to wonder about how their lives came to be. Until a new girl named Ilana moves in. She's *so* perfect that Mori and her friends are curious . . . Where exactly did Ilana come from, and why does she act so strange sometimes? When Ilana's secret is revealed, the kids on Firefly Lane must decide: is it finally time to start questioning the only world they've ever known?

The Firefly Code Details

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Author : Megan Frazer Blakemore

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From Reader Review The Firefly Code for online ebook

Valerie McEnroe says

This book is a true dystopian novel in the same vein as *The Giver*. It's set in the future in a utopian town called Old Harmonie. The characters live in a planned community on a street named Firefly Lane. Everything is cookie cutter and hints at perfection like *The Stepford Wives* which is an adult book. This book is an introductory look at the dystopian science-fiction genre. It doesn't have all the teen drama that YA dystopian books have.

The gist is this. Everyone appreciates living in a perfect utopia. There's no disease. Everyone eats healthy. All houses are the same. Everyone is environmentally conscience. Helicopter parenting is the norm. Kid's brains can be tweaked at any time to make them closer to an ideal. In short, everything that society is aspiring to today, happens in the future. At age 13, kids learn their "latency." They take a skills test to determine their talents and then get a surgical procedure to further enhance that part of their brains. This solves the problem of talents that never get discovered due to lack of exposure. For physical imperfections, they can be enhanced up to, but no more than, 30%. Whoa! That's a lot to process.

Main character, Mori, senses a loss in all this structure and perfection. She dreads having to choose her latency. She secretly hopes there is an undiscovered artistic talent, but so far nothing points to that possibility. She is instinctively drawn to nature and loves spending time alone in the woods. Then a new, mysterious girl, Ilana, moves to town and has the same interest in nature. Mori is thrilled with Ilana, but her other friends aren't so sure about her. The truth is revealed when they sneak into the abandoned house of Old Harmonie's founding scientist. Mori is torn over how to react to this information, but eventually realizes that friends help each other at all costs...and that's the Firefly code.

The topics in this book are a direct hit at what's going on in the world today. Helicopter parenting is rampant. Parent's push their kids to be perfect. People sanitize everything. They live in suburban homes with 5 floorplans and know which floorplan it is as soon as they walk into a neighbor's house. There's a race to be the first to clone a human. I get the sense this author is mocking all of that. I also detected a hint of a discussion about the haves vs. the have-nots. This would be a great book for a nontraditional middle school teacher to use to lead into a unit on debate. Many topics to debate here.

Julia says

This book is a five-star book. It holds great themes such as listen to your heart and support your friends. I couldn't put it down. The plot is a little slow at first but it is worth reading because it picks up pretty quickly and from there on you can't help but hold your breath. I would recommend this book to people who liked "The Giver" or anyone who likes science fiction.

Laura says

The idea that there's a "utopia" (or, more accurately, several) that is, in reality, more Big Brother and dystopia is not new (think *The Giver* or *City of Ember*). So there's a lot in this book that feels familiar, yet the

children here feel a little realer than in those books - they could almost be kids playing on your block, swimming in your neighborhood pool. And for some reason, the ways in which they question Old Harmonie and what's going on also feel more real, more natural than elsewhere, probably because the town is presented as being rather natural and familiar. The problem is the pacing and some of the Big Discoveries (what's in Number 9, for example, could have been more than it actually is); the ending is so abrupt, again like in *The Giver* but here there's less ambiguity and more "get ready for Book Two".

ARC provided by publisher.

Nichole says

If first impressions were everything, I would tell you that I knew that this book was going to win me over just based on the cover. I know. I know. You should never judge a book by its cover. I can't help myself. Look at it... The Firefly Code has one of those covers just feels magical and sparked a wonder in my heart.

Actually, the whole truth is that I initially sought out The Firefly Code because I had the awesome opportunity to read an advanced copy of its sequel Daybreak Bond. And yes, Daybreak Bond also struck my curiosity with its own beautiful cover. But really, I didn't want to be at a disadvantage with a continuing story. So, what's a girl to do? That's right. I started at the beginning.

So, we know I love the cover. But did the book really win me over?
In a word – Yes.

The Firefly Code is a middle-grade, science fiction story written from the perspective of a 12 year old girl named Mori. Immediately, Mori and the rest of her friends are very like-able. They have the normal amount of banter but there is a special kind of closeness that is unmistakable. Our protagonist, Mori, has the purest sense of eagerness about her but she is also careful and kind. I loved reading from her perspective! Mori and her close-knit group of friends live on Firefly Lane and their little world is just perfect. Utopian. And though they are kept separate from the outside world, there is very little that Mori and her friends question about their lives on Firefly Lane. Why would they? They are perfectly safe just as they are...

All is fine until... Enter the new girl on Firefly Lane. Ilana.

When Ilana moves in, Mori and her friends have an immediate curiosity about her. Ilana is a beautiful girl, almost too perfect but she also tends to act a bit peculiar at times. As the children spend more time with Ilana, they begin to question her strange behavior and the odd effect that she has on Firefly Lane. As secrets more revealed, more questions are raised but not just about Ilana.

The Firefly Code is a fun and easy read. The story moves at a nice even pace that never bores you and the world that Megan Frazer Blakemore has created is wonderfully fascinating. You will want to know the secrets of Firefly Lane, just the same as Mori and her friends – the Firefly Five. And the end? Well, let's just say that I've already started Daybreak Bond... I just couldn't wait!

I'm giving this book 4 very curious stars!

Andrea says

Great book for a book club. What is a human? When does genetic manipulation enhance one's original self, and when does it change the original being into a new/designed individual? These are the questions the Firefly 5 are faced with as they transition from 6th to 7th Grade, from 11 to 12 years old when they have to choose their "latency" which will determine who they become and what jobs they will take. All of this is done in a near future Utopian atmosphere reminiscent of "The Giver" by Lois Lowry.

This should be on every STEAM, STEM and social sciences teacher's bookshelf because the tech part of the story is enmeshed in the universal themes of safety without choice, or choice without safety. Taking responsibility for your life and actions, and above all this book is about friendship. A book kids will want to read for the characters and story, but one that will leave them with questions that address current events. Not sure it's the first in a series, which would be fantastic. But it could be more powerful left as a stand alone.

Miranda.S says

This book was similar to The Giver, but less action. Otherwise, this was a really great book!

Brandi Rae Fong says

I know lots of kids who liked it, but for a variety of pacing and plot things it just wasn't the book for me.

Izabelle Kafka says

loooooovvvveeeee it

Franki Sibberson says

Loved this dystopian novel. Perfect for 5th/6th grades I think.

Lori says

Really enjoyed this middle-grade utopian. It's been a very long time since I read The Giver but the community seemed to have a similar feel. In this one, a group of kids are growing up in a utopian community where everything is great and everyone works together and has their job and their community is safe from all of the dangers of the outside world. But then a new girl moves in. I really loved the friendships because they seemed very realistic. They were competitive, they got jealous, they had sleepovers, they played together almost every day, and they had fights. But they all come together when they need to and support each other and I really liked that.

Also, I really liked the questions it brings up in regards to AI and what makes someone human and acceptance. They aren't hidden deeply within the text but asked and addressed outright by the characters, though perhaps not as deeply as I would have liked. At this age, I think it works well and I would be interested to see what younger readers would think of those questions and if they'd agree or disagree with the characters in the book.

I do think the book ended very abruptly. I was not prepared for the end to come when it did. The first thing I did after turning the last page was to come here and see if this was a series. The end sets up perfectly for a sequel but there isn't one listed. Maybe it'll come later and we'll get a few more insights into the community these kids live in and what exactly the adults have done and a few more answers to some loose ends. Because my only other complaint would be that there's a lot of set-up and then a very quickly paced second half that doesn't spend as much time on those ideas above as I think it maybe should have. But otherwise I think this was a really good MG sci-fi book that can ease kids into the genre without having to jump to something like The Hunger Games, which is a little more violent than a lot of us parents want for our 4-6 graders.

Jeana says

Let's just say this book broke my heart. To be clear, I DON'T like dystopian books at all. But this wasn't exactly dystopian in terms of plot or feel. As the author described this is actually about a utopia where something simply goes wrong. So I enjoyed that the feel itself wasn't ever overly dark. But that's not to say this was a light read. No not in the least! This story really asked a lot of big questions about ethics and morality.

The characters were well defined and the connection of friendship the five of them share is the heart of this book. Honestly, I can't say too much without giving away something plot critical, but I knew as the remaining pages dwindled that there wasn't enough pages left to resolve all the issues that were raised. And sure enough, when I turned the last page and saw the acknowledgments staring back at me I knew this was going to be a heart cruncher. Again I don't want to give it away, but let's just say this wasn't a happy or unhappy ending. I can understand that there's a certain drama from ending it here, but honestly if I'd been writing this and just left it here I would have been nuts in 24 hours tops.

With that said I still really enjoyed this book, it was another chance to meet some awesome people from the realm of books. And like I said, for a story to break my heart means it did a lot right. But sigh... Still I just wish this didn't leave such a bittersweet taste in my mouth. Or such a feelings of incompleteness. But I guess that was part of the message they were trying to convey. Still a very heart felt book, so for that I recommend it. *lays head over on desk and cries*

Erin says

I love how this book makes you think about friendship and it has a great story line!

Maria Tag says

The Firefly Code was an amazing book. It will make you cry, it will make you laugh, it will make you think. The community in the book reminded me of the one in The Giver (I watched the movie, and I will

read the book soon! :D) as it is supposed to be a utopia where everyone plays the by the rules. Stays in the lines. Abides by the norm. But there's a lawbreaker who shatters that who little ideal into a million, tiny pieces to protect someone she loves. That lawbreaker would be the timid but curious Mori, trying to save her friend. And there's always the person needing to rescued, oblivious to it all. Alana. During the span of this book, Mori ad her friends Theo, Julia, and Benji find devastating secrets about what seemingly perfect Alana really is. And once they find out Alana's secret (which she herself doesn't know) they know they have to do something. Anything. Even if it breaks the rules. Enrages the authorities. Anything. Anything to save their friend.

I adored reading this book. It made me think, truly think- about ethics, friendship, and breaking the rules.

Very well done Megan.

Anya says

This is definitely a cute and fun read. However, I had a number of problems with how science was discussed since this is science fiction. I also found the friendships to be a bit unhealthy and the message strange for a middle grade.

Teresa says

A science based middle grade mystery revolving around 5 friends living in a utopian community. Very creative and already has a sequel in the works which is great, because I'd like to know what happens next.

School librarians should definitely add this book to their current collection.
