

Must read

This amazing adventure blends science fiction and mystery with a frightening dystopian near future for a non-stop thriller of a story!

The Dark Court is the second book in Vyvyan Evans's spectacular mystery and suspense-filled science fiction series, Songs of the Sage. I was once again immersed in his imaginative near-future dystopian Earth, where language is no longer learned but streamed into the brain through implants, and an individual's future is determined by their IQ score revealed when tested at age 18. This book takes place five years after the events of the debut novel, The Babel Apocalypse, and features characters that played quick but pivotal roles then.

The main character is Lilith Errapel King, a woman in her early 40s who carries the emotional and physical scars of a traumatic childhood and young adult life. However, Lilith is more than she appears to be, with an unusual, mysterious, and shocking bloodline that is gradually revealed as the story progresses and supra-human abilities she is only now beginning to explore and understand. The author does an amazing job unveiling her past and giving an authentic voice to this woman's thoughts and feelings and the impact of what happened to her. Although Lilith struggled her entire life, she attained success and celebrity for her ability to solve cases. However, she maintained and nurtured her compassion for the less fortunate, such as the Unskills.

The plot reveals the aftermath of The Great Language Outage and the world governments' responses to the crisis. The whereabouts of Ebba Black and Emyr Morgan from book one are unknown to the current characters, but their ties to each other are established. The relevance of 'the sage' and 'the songs' in the series' name is introduced and foreshadows their coming importance. The author deftly keeps several intriguing storylines in play: Lilith's family origins, her special abilities, and her history with the head of Interpol, all while Lilith and Dr. Kace Westwood track the source of the mysterious Fatal Insomnia-like pandemic.

The characters travel in minutes to unique and interesting locations in pursuit of the cause of the baffling medical crisis. The author's descriptions of the settings are vivid and detailed, putting the reader on location alongside Lilith and Kace, especially as they descend into the catacombs of Paris or run for their lives through the rainforest of French Guiana. I also enjoyed the exciting technology Evans imagined for this future Earth and how he meshed so naturally into the story.

The author seamlessly incorporates enough backstory into the current novel so readers new to the series can easily step into and enjoy this latest tale, but, honestly, the first book is not to be missed either! With splendidly sympathetic main characters, atmospheric settings, and a well-paced plot full of twists and surprises, I recommend THE DARK COURT to science fiction readers who enjoy stories of action, mystery, suspense, and alien interaction and interference in the affairs of humanity.

REVIEWED BY

Karen Siddall