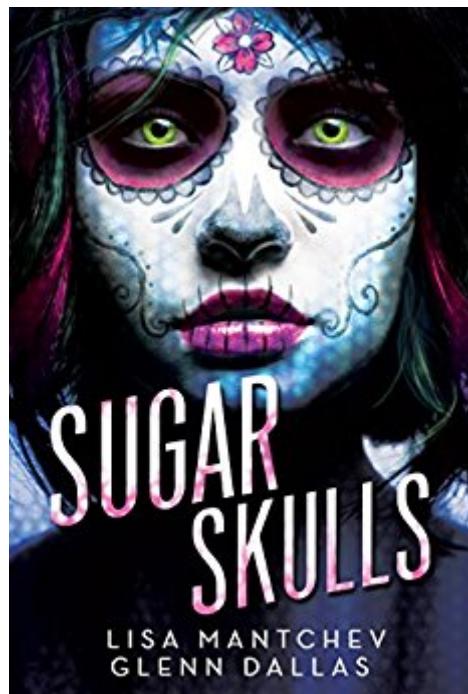


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# Sugar Skulls



## **Synopsis**

Welcome to Cyrene, a city where energy is currency and music is the lifeblood of its young citizens. Everyone lives on the grid, and the residents of the worldâ™s largest playground are encouraged to pursue every physical and emotional pleasure imaginable. Vee is the lead singer of the Sugar Skulls, an all-girl band that is Corporateâ™s newest pet project. Micah haunts the city like a ghost after an overdose of a deadly illegal street drug knocks him off the grid. When Micah and Vee forge an immediate, undeniable connection, their troubled worlds collide. Trading concert stages for Cyreneâ™s rooftops and back alleys, they have to evade vicious thugs and Veeâ™s possessive manager as they unravel the mysteries connected to their dark pasts. And before the curtain falls, Micah and Vee will bring the city to its knees in their desperate bid for love, home, and a future together.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I really enjoyed this novel. Even though it appears to be intended more for a younger audience, it certainly held my interest, and I often had trouble putting it down when I was supposed to be doing

something else! I enjoyed getting to know the characters, and their actions seemed believable enough given the circumstances. The pacing was great, it was an interesting setting unlike anything I've encountered before, and the authors did a nice job providing enough sensory information for me to feel like I was right there in the story.

Wow! What a ride! There are so many things about this book I'm truly high on. I love that it's set in a not-so-distant, but not-at-all dystopian future. It's so easy to follow along with the trends in writing and so difficult to forge new paths but that's exactly what happens here. Kudos to both the writers, Mantchev & Dallas and to the publishers and team they put around themselves for having the bravery to take a different angle. The bravery doesn't stop there though. These writers also show courage--and respect--for their audience by never dumbing things down and never faking it, despite what they must have known would be some objection from fools. This is a book likely to have a largely female audience, from YA readers and beyond and it features teens who aren't treated like children. They swear. They lust. They love. They live. And they do all of this unabashedly and without excuse. Again, more hive-mind philosophies in publishing surely would have toned these artists down, but the books vividness and verve come from it's reality and it's rawness and it's truth. The suspension of disbelief is easy because of how gritty and real the characters act. And thank the Maker for some realistic love scenes. Mantchev & Dallas managed to make things racy and hot without ever crossing over into cheese. They succeed where so many fail. They told a love story that wasn't contrived and sappy. They may be guilty of some love-at-first-sight treatment, but they respect the reader enough to sell it. They don't just gloss over it and ignore what they've done. They take the time to construct the content of the love and make the instant spark it begins with plausible and real. The pace is fantastic. The point of view switches between the two main characters, Micah and Vee with breakneck pace and expert precision. There was no feeling of a baton being passed between the writers, everything was smooth and careful and the result was a steady Hum that led to a Buzz and ended with all out Thrum. The characters are excellent and well drawn. One of my many issues with most first-person novels is that the writer(s) don't take the time to properly develop the supporting cast. That mistake is not made here. The supporting cast is excellent, from Treble and Trouble to the book's many antagonists, the time was taken to craft them with care and give them shape and reason and purpose for being who and what they were. Finally, the plot was spot on. It's an intricately written book with so many seemingly minor plot points and conversation topics coming back to be of absolute importance later in the book. The story is engaging and interesting and fun. And best of all, unless I miss my guess, while this book was complete with a very satisfying ending,

there was just enough meat left on the bone for the hint of a sequel. I certainly hope it comes about. I happily recommend this book and would be eager to read a sequel.

In a world desperate for new energy sources, Corporate has come up with the perfect solution: Harvest the energy generated by kids that are connected to the net with nanotech. What generates the most energy? Music, of course - along with chemical enhancements. Enter Vee, lead singer of the punk rock band Sugar Skulls, whose nanotech is so fried that she periodically has to be reset - thus wiping her memories. She's the biggest thrum generator Cyrene has seen. Her counterpart is Micah, who no longer has nanotech and has snuck back into the city to work as a runner, bringing in music from over the wall. Micah also has a mysterious past, and a mission: stop the dealers and the drugs that killed his friends. From their first electric encounter, the heat is on between Vee and Micah. Told from alternating points of view, this is a fast-paced, heady mix of sex, drugs, & rock-n-roll. New Adult genre means mature content - some parts may not be for the faint of heart (drugs, violence, casual sex). Will appeal to older teens/young twenty-somethings, and those who've enjoyed Neal Stephenson's Snow Crash and other cyberpunk novels. Amazing cover art!

I just finished reading Sugar Skulls by Lisa Mantchev and Glenn Dallas the other day. It's a young adult near-future action-romance set in a master-planned city where kinetic energy generated by humans is harvested by nanotech into electrical energy for the grid. Full of shadowy intrigue, memory wipes, and music clubs, this is the first book in a long time where I actually feared for the main characters' safety. The authors do an amazing job at putting their protagonists into impossible situations that they never quite make it out of. The world is so well-developed that every scene was not just believable, it was visible AND audible. I recommend Sugar Skulls highly!

I admit that the genre is outside of what I normally read and I felt slightly lost at the beginning, but I find that to be deliberate, setting the chaotic atmosphere of the novel. This book quickly captures you and is hard to put down. Perfect for a sci-fi/dystopian connoisseur, with romance and mystery all well-proportioned in a perfect knot. I've had this book in my possession for several months and I only wish I hadn't waited so long to finally pick it up.

There may be a lot of books similar to Sugar Skulls, but not that I have read. That was a bonus to begin with. The genre is a bit unfamiliar, but the heart of this book is a true love story. I enjoyed it very much.

This book is a serious thrill ride. Sexy dames, hot Street hustlers, and killer lyrics. Kind of hard to sum this one up, so I recommend reading for yourself. Fans of My Chemical Romance and Escape the Fate will like the scenery, guaranteed.

Like everything else that Lisa Mantchev has a hand in, the world of the story draws you in immediately and makes you want to go back and explore all the nooks and crannies. This sci-fi offering blends sweetly all of its various genres like a fine mixed drink in a bass-thumping bar.

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