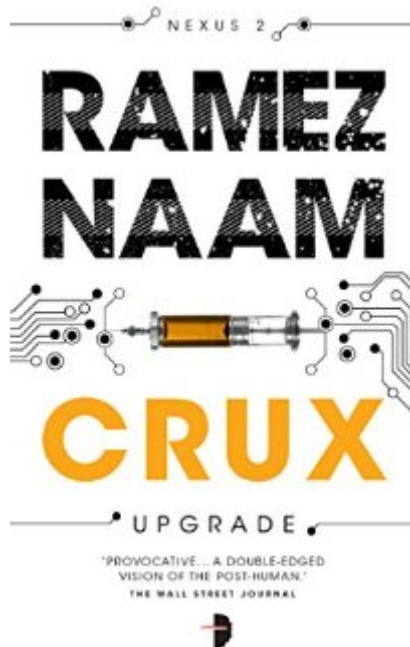


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Crux (The Nexus Trilogy Book 2)



Synopsis

The stunning sequel to NEXUS Six months have passed since the release of Nexus 5. The world is a different, more dangerous place. In the United States, the terrorists - or freedom fighters - of the Post-Human Liberation Front use Nexus to turn men and women into human time bombs aimed at the President and his allies. In Washington DC, a government scientist, secretly addicted to Nexus, uncovers more than he wants to know about the forces behind the assassinations, and finds himself in a maze with no way out. In Thailand, Samantha Cataranes has found peace and contentment with a group of children born with Nexus in their brains. But when forces threaten to tear her new family apart, Sam will stop at absolutely nothing to protect the ones she holds dear. In Vietnam, Kade and Feng are on the run from bounty hunters seeking the price on Kade's head, from the CIA, and from forces that want to use the back door Kade has built into Nexus 5. Kade knows he must stop the terrorists misusing Nexus before they ignite a global war between human and posthuman. But to do so, he'll need to stay alive and ahead of his pursuers. And in Shanghai, a posthuman child named Ling Shu will go to dangerous and explosive lengths to free her uploaded mother from the grip of Chinese authorities. The first blows in the war between human and posthuman have been struck. The world will never be the same. File Under: Science Fiction [Upgraded | Closer Than You Think | Upload | Civil War]

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Customer Reviews

REVIEW SUMMARY: Frighteningly plausible cyberpunk. BRIEF SYNOPSIS: Following the events of the first book, Kaden Lane is on the run with bounty hunters in hot pursuit. Sam, having gone rogue, has finally found inner peace in the presence of special children born with Nexus connection. The Post-Human Liberation Front has found a way to weaponize Nexus in a frightening way and the United States government is taking drastic steps to fight such emerging risks. MY REVIEW PROS: Expands on the foundation of the original in a big way, continued character development, lots of character diversity, super-cool tech, moral ambiguity, intense action, lays the groundwork for future entries without coming across as filler. CONS: A lessened presence of the Buddhism I found so cool and interesting in the first novel. BOTTOM LINE: A worthy sequel that reads like a mash-up of Michael Crichton and Tom Clancy, Naam's cyberpunk thriller is even better than the original. I loved Ramez Naam's Nexus, an amazing science fiction novel that bombards the senses with espionage, philosophy, action, and a frighteningly plausible future. It's a novel that got me considering the implications of trans/post-humanism in a way I never have before. Fortunately for me, I did not have to wait a second to get started on the sequel, Crux, because I missed reading Nexus at its 2012 release. I started into Crux with a level of apprehension I reserve for sequels of books that I love. Would Naam be able to deliver a novel as exceptional as the first or would he fail to rise to the challenge? I need not have worried, as Crux is every bit as compelling as its predecessor and then some.

I really enjoyed Nexus, and was eagerly waiting for this sequel. But while the result is pretty decent, it doesn't quite measure up to the original, and Naam made some disappointing decisions. In particular, I think Crux may have been the victim of its predecessor's success. Nexus was praised for its thrills and action, and I believe the movie rights have already been sold. Naam seems to be trying to build on this, and as a result Crux reads like a screenplay draft for the kind of action movie that gets reviewed as an "edge of your seat thrill ride," where the action cuts rapidly between scenes and things like "THE WHITE HOUSE -- 18:30 GMT" are displayed in a quasi-military font at the bottom of the screen. That's fine as far as it goes, and obviously the other reviewers here love their suspense, but it comes at a cost. Most of Nexus's subtleties have been smoothed over to keep the action pumping. All governments are corrupt and evil, the villains are

unsympathetic caricatures, and philosophical differences are most often resolved with missiles. It's really a shame: one of the more intriguing subplots made it seem as though the CIA was trying to save Kaden from the less trustworthy branches of the DHS. Since the CIA in popular fiction is almost always a bunch of scheming lunatics, giving them the moral high ground would have been a nice touch. Unfortunately, Ramez Naam has already written a novel in which much of the U.S. government is corrupt and evil, and the easiest way to ramp up the suspense is for the entire government to be evil. So it turns out that, of course, the CIA was just plotting to control Nexus like everyone else.

In his first novel, Nexus, Ramez Naam burst onto the science fiction stage with a terrific book filled with credible augmented humans set in a fascinating future. Nexus was a thoughtful thrill-ride that came to a very satisfying, action-packed conclusion. In his latest novel, Crux, Naam takes his readers further into a world changed by Nexux, the mind-linking, mind-enhancing technology combining nano-technology, pharmacology and software. Crux is a thoughtful thriller. While the book is filled with gunfire, assassinations, fist fights, carbon fiber and nano drones, once again it is the very human struggles that propel the story. Crux is fundamentally a story about power, the powers of the government and the powers of the individual. The events in Crux take place six months after the events that made up the story in Nexus. Naam vividly describes both great good and great evil made possible by Nexus enhancement. Some people are empowered, some are addicted, some are enslaved. Naam is very good at writing conflicted characters, showing how evil can come from good intentions, how good people can fail and how hard choices can be. Naam never lets philosophy get in the way of a good story. While his characters do battle with their consciences, they are mostly busy trying to stay alive and the story zips right along. Naam does manage to find the time to add small bits of humor to his tale, including a great scene where an enhanced Chinese clone and a grizzled CIA operative compare battle scars. Another great running joke are the repeated scenes where the reader is shown that running Bruce Lee software in your head doesn't make you Bruce Lee.

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