

SYNC: THE STOLEN PROTOTYPE

同步戰紀：失竊的原型機

Set in Taipei of the near future, this suspense-adventure story blends AI, cyberspace, and cyborgs into a hero's journey injected with Cyberpunk.

Seventeen-year-old Kui works in a near-future Taipei speakeasy. She remembers only what's happened in the past year or so – all other memories of her previous life have disappeared, even her name. One day, several hoodlums show up at the bar and pick a fight. During the confrontation, she sustains heavy blows to the head that have the unexpected effect of restoring her shattered memory and her special ability to sync her consciousness with others.

After this incident, a man employed at a multinational tech company starts showing up in Kui's dreams and asks her to come find him. Meanwhile, she discovers that the bar owner, who has become a father-figure, is actually an intelligence agent, and the woman in frequent touch with him is a neuroscientist. Both are keeping secrets about her, and neither trusts the other. At this point, a group of mysterious people appear and chase Kui. While she evades her pursuers and searches for the truth about her memory, Kui can't help wondering what these people have to do with her new ability, about the man in her dreams, and who she can trust.

Virtual reality and AI are central features of this book, while contemporary social issues provide the foundation for a narrative setting in which a multinational corporate giant controls most of the resources. An exploration of humanity's struggles in the face of rapid technological development, the book shows us class conflict in a multicultural society of the future, each of the social issues explored being a present-day challenge. The author blends the near-future urban landscape with digital culture tropes found in cyberpunk novels such as *Neuromancer* and *Snow Crash*, while also



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interweaving the virtual and the real with cultural details specific to Taiwan, such as a hot, humid rainy season and immigrants from all over. Fans of this genre are sure to find something new to enjoy.

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Hsu Li-Leng is a native of Tainan who earned his master's degree in film and television from Falmouth University in the UK. Owner of the independent publishing platform Narrativesaw, he is a fantasy and science fiction enthusiast with multiple career identities, including author, film and television screenwriter, and filmmaker. He is currently writing more cyberpunk stories for his *SYNC* series.