



# Distress: A Novel

*Greg Egan*

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Greg Egan

**Distress: A Novel** Greg Egan

**“All right. He’s dead. Go ahead and talk to him.”**

It is the year 2055, and the battle of the sexes has seven combatants rather than two. “The illusion of empathy” has been dispensed with, and a few idealistic souls try to create a utopia with pirated technology.

But a wired journalist, Andrew Worth, doesn’t want any part of the pop “Frankenscience” regularly dished out to the masses. Burned-out after completing a documentary on controversial developments in biotechnology, he turns down a chance to report on a baffling new mental disorder known as Distress and instead takes an assignment covering the Einstein Centenary Conference on the artificial island of Stateless. There, a young South African physicist, Violet Mosala, is expected to unveil her candidate for a Theory of Everything.

But the assignment is not the tropical respite Worth was expecting. Unfortunately academia’s facade of civility is dangerously cracked with a seething maelstrom of plotting, assassination attempts, and rebellion, and Worth is dragged down into the nightmare. The world’s only hope for survival lies in Violet Mosala’s development of a final Theory of Everything, but whether it will lead to the total destruction of life as we know it or the complete remaking of the universe may be a risk too dangerous to take.

Greg Egan’s audacious voice and literary scope create a fragmented futuristic world where technology and bioengineering threaten humanity’s very existence.

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