

***The Resistance* by Gemma Malley**

At the end of *The Declaration*, the stunning thriller set in a dystopian future world where people take longevity pills and live forever, casting aside the need for children, Anna and Peter, two Surpluses, have escaped and joined the underground movement. But they are discovered, and Peter, the grandson of the company CEO which develops the pills, is taken in by him to join the company, Pincent Pharma Corporation. But Peter and Anna cannot forget their pasts, and so their new lives are entwined with the underground movement and the detractors of the new order.

The sequel, *The Resistance* details their lives as they try to resolve what their next moves will be and work out who they can trust. Peter, working for his grandfather must sign the Declaration to prove his loyalty to the company. Anna on the other hand, at home caring for her baby brother, is befriended by a woman with photos of children, some of whom she knows. But where can they turn for help? Into this mix comes Jude, a computer nerd with attitude, intent on using his skills for the underground, but again, his plausibility wears thin, and even the underground movement does not trust him.

A creepily real world, the links to our world are everywhere; disenfranchised children, poverty of the underclass, age denial, women cracking the glass ceiling because they do not have to take time out for child bearing and rearing, disapproval shown to people with children taking up more resources, energy crisis, disapproval of refugees and so on. Molloy has cleverly tapped into the 21st century spectres, and used them to weave a tale wholly credible and convincing, one that is hard to put down.

The climax sees all strands of this startling story come together, as Peter has been blackmailed by his grandfather to sign the Declaration in front of an audience, but the underground is in the building, causing havoc, with Jude hacking into the system to close it down, and Peter and Pip searching for the girls imprisoned upstairs for their stem cells. With all the adrenalin pumping bravado of a fast paced film, this is a story not to be missed.

There is an amazing rash of books around this theme at the moment. Readers will love the ideas and notions presented in these books, questioning medical experimentation and the use of stem cells and body parts. Books such as *Unwind* by Neil Shusterman, the prequel to this one, *The Declaration* by Gemma Malley, as well as *The other side of the island* by Allegra Goodman all expose a misuse of medical science.

Fran Knight, SA

In this brave new world “Longevity” is described as “the latest invention in a long line of inventions – antibiotics, vaccinations, X-rays, even sanitation – all of which extended man’s life substantially. If you reject Longevity, then why not reject all of medicine?” If your spouse/child was dying, wouldn’t you want to save them? In this future there is also no need for religion anymore because people don’t die - “only through religion could humans hope to achieve some salvation and some sort of existence after death”. This is the enthralling sequel to *The Declaration*, the novel that introduced us to Anna and Peter and their fight to end the nightmare for “surpluses” (children illegally born in a world where everyone lives forever and children cannot be born without upsetting the balance of the world’s resources). Science has now “progressed” even further and the drug Longevity+, designed to stop the ravages of old age, has been created. At what cost though? Lives should be better, but are they?

This novel covers issues such as medical ethics, freedom of speech, ageing, the role of religion, death vs. eternal life, the use of propaganda and the corruption of power. Enough to keep any class debating what our future will be like. Pity about the male/female stereotypes (women still seen as the breeder of embryos while the males rush to save them) but then again that is worth discussing.

What would you do with the rest of your life if given the chance to live forever? Would it be “Groundhog day”?

Lynne Moller, Gleneagles Secondary College, Vic

In *The Resistance* by Gemma Malley, Peter Pincent is facing a decision. His grandfather has offered him a position at Pincent Pharma, the company that produces the drug Longevity. Longevity prolongs human

life indefinitely. Since its introduction, resources are scarce and having children is illegal. Such children, known as Surpluses, are ostracised by society and condemned to slavery.

Peter believes Longevity is responsible for everything bad that has happened to him. Peter, his girlfriend Anna, and her baby brother, Ben, were born Surpluses. Although they are now Legal, they are still regarded with suspicion by the Authorities.

Peter has secretly joined the Resistance. Its leader, Pip, wants Peter to infiltrate Pincent Pharma and find out everything he can about its activities. Peter accepts his grandfather's offer, but begins to have doubts that the Resistance can change anything. Meanwhile, his grandfather increases pressure on Peter to prove his loyalty. He must sign the Declaration or lose everything that is dear to him.

This sequel to *The Declaration* is for older readers and would appeal equally to boys and girls. Dystopian themes provide the backdrop for an action novel with plenty of secondary characters and subplots woven into a satisfying conclusion. The ending sets the scene for a further sequel. However, this book didn't quite stand alone so I suggest reading *The Declaration* first.

The author has homed in on some worrying trends in Western culture; the obsession with appearances; the refusal to accept death; the importance placed on individual rights at the expense of community, family and diversity; the decline of religious faith; the propaganda that thrives on individualism. In the classroom, this book could be used to discuss the ethics of science. What constitutes good science and should citizens, scientists or governments decide? The current debate over stem cell research could provide a context for their discussions.

I found it uncomfortably credible. Teenagers should love it.

Sharon Hammad, NSW

Wow!! I am excited to read the prequel now.

The Resistance is a futuristic fast paced story of Anna and Peter, who in the prequel, *The Declaration*, were part of a world where people take pills in order to live forever. Of course, no children are needed in this world. Peter and Anna escape and this novel follows their journey in their next steps as they are involved in an underground resistance movement and are also expected to sign loyalty declarations to the pharmaceutical company making the longevity pills.

In this novel, Peter and Anna befriend a woman with pictures of children and they are torn between the new way of life and what they remember of their past. They search for people they can trust and work with a computer nerd to try to bring down the system. For older readers, this sci-fi yet very believable story could be used to open up discussions on refugees, the place of children, use of common resources, age and poverty.

Carolyn Hicks, Vic

Imagine a world where aging is optional and new life discouraged. In Gemma Malley's latest book, that is exactly what has happened. In the year 2140, the wonder drug 'Longevity' enables those who take it to live forever, but at a price. They must sign the 'Declaration' that they will "never be responsible for the creation of new human life" – after all, the balance of nature mustn't be upset and who needs surplus population? Those who do have children face an uncertain future. What is almost certain is that they will have their children taken from them, and those 'Surpluses', will be raised to a life of slavery or worse. Into the picture comes Peter Pincent, 'Surplus' grandson of Richard Pincent, director of the pharmaceutical company that manufactures 'Longevity'. Rescued by the Underground, from the Surplus Hall that he was being held in, now they have a mission for him; to take up his grandfather's offer of work at Pincent Pharma, and to destroy the company from within. How will a 16 year old with no experience, take on his powerful and ruthless grandfather and survive?

This is a meaty thriller, the sequel to *The Declaration*, which not only takes the reader on a rollercoaster ride, it also raises ethical issues which current scientific progress may one day enable to become a reality. How would we react if offered the chance to live forever or to play "God" with the lives of others? How far would we go to defend what we believed in? How much can we believe what we are told by those in authority?

This is not a comfortable read but for students who like to wrestle with deeper issues, this is the perfect book. It could also make an interesting adjunct to units such as 'Birth, Death & Aging'.

Debbie Williams, Mountain District Christian School, Vic

Set in England in a foreseeable future, this gripping story explores the social impact of a society with perpetual good health and the resulting longevity that accompanies it. In such a society, where the elderly are renewed and do not die, and resources are in short supply, there is no place for the young, and children born into this world are considered 'surplus'. The Surplus are outcasts, seen as a drain on society, and only become accepted into society when a parent dies and makes a 'place' for them.

In the prequel, *The Declaration*, Peter and Anna escaped from Surplus centres and have become members of the Resistance. Their position in this new society is tenuous and they are determined to fight against the multinational company that supplies the longevity drugs. This company is controlled by Peter's grandfather and, in an attempt to infiltrate the organisation, Peter pretends to be reformed and gains a position in the company under his grandfather's watchful and distrusting eye. Tension mounts as Anna is duped into betrayal and Peter is manipulated towards signing the Declaration that will bind him to his grandfather's will and longevity. An acceptance of this new world condones the corporate and political advancement of influential players above ethics and morality.

Malley has crafted a tale of fiction built on credible social and scientific 'what if' scenarios.

Contemporary issues – lack of renewable resources, sustainability, medical advances in increasing life spans, birth control and stem cell research are deftly intertwined to provide a frightening future world based on scientific possibilities. This novel challenges the reader to reflect on current issues and to consider how these may evolve and impact on our future society. It offers thought provoking, exciting read for secondary students.

Jennie Bales, Lilydale District School, Tas

This sequel to *The Declaration* continues the story of Peter and Anna. They are now living in the suburbs of London in 2140. Life for them is not easy, there are few other young people living as "Longevity" has enabled people to live forever. The cost of this is that no children are allowed to be born. Those that are born are declared surplus and removed from their parents. Only replacements are allowed, and as Peter and Anna's parents died they are now legal. Peter is working for his grandfather at Pincent Pharma the manufacturer of Longevity, Anna is at home looking after her baby brother Ben.

The time for Peter and Anna to sign their declarations is fast approaching, but they have mixed feeling about this. Signing the Declaration will allow them to receive Longevity and live forever, not signing will condemn them to a normal life span but they will be ostracised by the rest of society. Anna is against signing but Peter is convinced by his grandfather that they are no longer able to have children therefore not signing seems pointless. Peter is involved with the underground resistance movement and gradually becomes concerned by some things happening at the factory; Anna is arrested for planning to help surpluses. On the scene comes Jude, half brother of Peter, he is an IT whiz and discovers a few secrets about the factory too. They all manage to get themselves caught up in an underground action to embarrass Pincent Pharma but in so doing they reveal the true nature of "LongevityPlus" the next wonder drug. They manage to expose this to the media and make good their escape, Peter and Anna retire to country obscurity and Jude joins the underground.

Like its prequel, this title may inspire much classroom discussion for secondary schools on the value of life, use of resources and ethics in general.

Lorene Furmage, Blackmans Bay Primary School, Tas

The Resistance by Gemma Malley is the long awaited sequence to *The Declaration* and continues the journey with Anna and Peter in the year 2140. Written in the enthralling and captivating style that any fan of Gemma Malley's would be used to, the reader is taken on a journey of love and a struggle and fight for rights with two teenagers who live in a world where children are pests who drain resources. Following on

where *The Declaration* left us, Anna and Peter are now 'legal's. With their parents gone, and left the guardians of Anna's baby brother, they struggle to leave their past experiences as surpluses behind them. With the coming of age the decision and pressure to sign The Declaration looms.

Peter soon begins his job working for his estranged grandfather Richard Pincet at Pincet Pharma Corporation, the company who are behind The Declaration and Longevity drug. Whilst also working for the underground, fighting for a stop to longevity, Peter finds himself in the middle of a tense and exciting battle. Pincet Pharma Corporation is working on a new drug longevity +, said to stop the ravages of old age. Peter soon uncovers disturbing practices that are happening within the company to make this drug possible and sets out to put a stop to it.

Throughout this book you find yourself questioning what if this is what lay ahead in our future. Would you opt to sign The Declaration? What would it be like living as a teenager in a world where children were seen as surpluses and a waste of resources? How would you feel and cope if you were left with the only family member living being a grandfather who was behind what you despised? Peter feels strongly about his rights and the rights of surpluses. He is willing to fight to his death, should it be necessary, in order to make changes for those who choose not to sign The Declaration. Would you be willing to fight as Peter does? Are there any causes similar to Peter's that you are passionate about and willing to fight for?

A fantastic read that has you wanting to read well into the night.

Jennifer Deaves, Homeschooler, SA

The Resistance is a stand alone sequel to *The Declaration*. Malley interweaves details about the first story into *The Resistance* very cleverly so the reader feels quite comfortable with the continuation. At the end of *The Declaration*, Anna, with the help of Peter, had escaped Grange Hall, the place where those Surplus to the World's requirements spend their time ever striving to become Useful.

In *The Resistance* Peter and Anna, through Anna's parents self sacrifice, have become legal, and are living together, with Anna's baby brother. *The Resistance* focuses more on Peter's viewpoint as he infiltrates his Grandfather's company, Pincet Pharma, the producers of Longevity and the soon to be released Longevity+, to spy for the Resistance. Peter finds himself questioning his belief in the Resistance and his relationship with Anna. With the help of his legal half brother Jude, what Peter discovers about Longevity+, the new drug that will reverse the signs of aging as well as extending the life span of the user, is even more sinister than he could ever have imagined.

The Resistance (and *The Declaration*) is a gripping read in which the author poses many moral and ethical dilemmas for her characters. Peter and Anna are both compelling and likeable. The plot, fast paced and believable, leaves the reader eager for the next book. Highly recommended for older readers.

Pia Butcher, Knox Library, Vic

The Resistance is the eagerly awaited sequel to *The Declaration*. The year is 2140 and living forever is the norm. Not everyone agrees, however, that eternal youth is ethical. Peter doesn't. He is part of the resistance movement fighting the push for eternal youth.

To be very honest, I found it incredibly difficult to get into this novel. In fairness to the author and fans of Gemma Malley, I have not read the first book in this series.

The whole story revolves around the concept of longevity and genetic cell mutation which suggests eternity. The main character Peter (apparently overshadowing Anna, who featured prominently in the first book) has ethical issues with this, causing much angst, considering his grandfather is heavily involved in the scientific development of the "product".

Perhaps over-endowed with a Science Versus God thread running through the story. Discussion in science classes could be quite lively.

The main characters are teenagers, hence the story is aimed at young adults.

Julie Huntley, Noosa Library, Qld

“You're going to be on your own, Peter, and I need to know that you're prepared. You must realise this is a battle. A battle of nature and science, good and evil. And your grandfather will do everything in his power to win you over.”

The Resistance is the sequel to *The Declaration* with Anna and Peter now part of the Resistance movement against longevity. For Peter it is a struggle not only against his society but also his own family. It is preferable to read this novel in conjunction with *The Declaration* but not totally necessary. I started by reading this novel before reading the first one and was completely able to understand what was going on. This novel, like *The Declaration* explores notions of freedom, medical ethics and the essence of what it means to be human. Parallels can be drawn between this novel and its ideas and other resistance/wartime movements to broaden understanding. In this way, *The Resistance* can be combined with other texts about wartime experiences.

Gersha Shteyman, Kesser Torah College, NSW