

Name or Reviewer Username or Anonymous: Anonymous

School: Valencia High

Grade: Senior

Book Title: The Mountain in the Sea

Book Author: Ray Nayler

Rating (1-lowest to 5-highest): 4.4

The Mountain in the Sea is a sort of science fiction book that takes place on Con Dao, a coast in Vietnam. This location is set in the near future, where capitalism has gone a step too far. Corporations have more power than anything, including the government and they ignore ethics whenever possible. A marine biologist, Dr. Ha Nguyen is brought to the research facility in Con Dao, where she discovers something mysterious on the ocean's edge. This slippery discovery leads to various dangerous situations along with a lesson for her, the other scientists and humanity as a whole. The entirety of the book illustrates what can be interpreted as the ethics of artificial intelligence, corporate greed's environmental impact, especially in our oceans. It gives a voice to the ocean and the ocean's inhabitants. We truly neglect the ocean, and through characters like, Shapesinger, Nayler allows us to understand our effects on our environment and how that environment would fight back if it could.

The book was extremely insightful, it described many thought provoking moments, making it easy to question the current state of the world. The main message is one of avoiding being careless, since it seems that carelessness allowed the corporations in the novel to take over. Also, the inclusion of artificial intelligence in the book is very relevant today. The boats which are basically controlled by AI are merciless and lack any empathy towards humans. Humans are just workers, slaves and if they are neither, they are nothing, and that causes them to be killed.

I loved the explanations of the creatures in the ocean's depths. The book was exciting and interesting especially with the occasional details about actual octopuses, which was easy to take interest in. While science fiction might not be for everyone because of inconsistencies and lack of realism, The Mountain in the Sea is more than just a sci-fi novel. It illustrates corporate greed through the clever metaphor of the octopus.