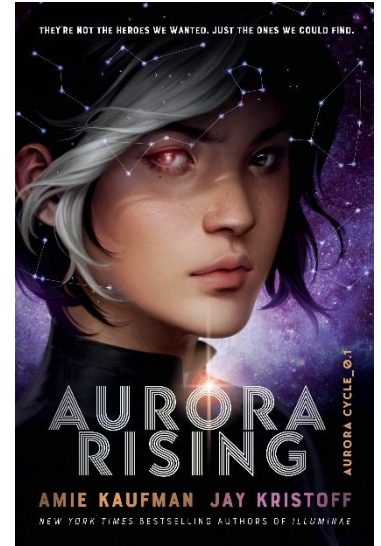


Aurora Rising: The Aurora Cycle 1

By Amie Kaufman and Jay
Kristoff



May 2019 ISBN 9781760295738
Paperback novel
Recommended for 12-18-year-olds

Summary

The year is 2380, and the graduating cadets of Aurora Academy are being assigned their first missions. Star pupil Tyler Jones is ready to recruit the squad of his dreams, but his own boneheaded heroism sees him stuck with the dregs nobody else in the Academy would touch..

- A cocky diplomat with a black belt in sarcasm
- A sociopath scientist with a fondness for shooting her bunkmates
- A smart-ass tech-wiz with the galaxy's biggest chip on his shoulder
- An alien warrior with anger management issues
- A tomboy pilot who's totally not into him, in case you were wondering

And Ty's squad isn't even his biggest problem – that'd be Aurora Jie-Lin O'Malley, the girl he's just rescued from interdimensional space. Trapped in cryo-sleep for two centuries, Auri is a girl out of time and out of her depth. But she could be the catalyst that starts a war millions of years in the making, and Tyler's squad of losers, discipline-cases and misfits might just be the last hope for the entire galaxy.

They're not the heroes we deserve. They're just the ones we could find. Nobody panic.



Dual authorship is rare in novels, but Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff's collaboration is seamless, writing in a consistent and lively style with no obvious indications as to who has written which character.

Their use of first-person present tense adds immediacy and authority to the story, and the regular moments of high-humour keep the action fast and fun. Furthermore, multiple narrators, computer screenshots and other devices keep the story varied and create a world (or worlds) where even the strangest things can and do seem plausible.

Jay has written about their collaboration: *Amie and I have our own characters (I write four, she writes three) but we often improvise/roleplay through dialogue and scenes,*

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playing the role of our characters so our co-author gets a feel for their dialogue/vibe. This is nerdy, but useful early in the process, when our respective characters may not be fully formed in our co-author's minds yet.

Use in the curriculum

Aurora Rising is the first in the Aurora Cycle trilogy. The authors are internationally famous, with a significant on-line presence, which can assist research. The book is excellent for fantasy/sci fi genre study at secondary level, with vivid characters and an excellently written fast-paced plot, with substantial helpings of humour.

Themes

- War
- Racial tension
- Time travel
- Space
- Survival
- Romance
- Dysfunctional teams

Discussion questions

- Chapter One – Tyler: define the literary term *In medias res* and describe how it relates to the opening of *Aurora Rising*. What impact do other literary devices such as nonlinear narrative, informal language, humour and direct address have on your reading of this chapter?
- (a) What is a multiple narrative? Why do you think the authors have used this device in *Aurora Rising*? Does it make the story more or less interesting for you?
(b) How does the addition of Magellan screens between chapters extend your reading of the novel?
- Jay Kristoff describes his writing process with Amie Kaufman as: 'We each have our own characters (I write four, she writes three) but we often improvise/roleplay through dialogue and scenes. We like to play the role of our characters so we each get a feel for their dialogue/vibe. This is nerdy, but useful early in the process, when our respective characters may not be fully formed in our co-author's minds yet'.
 - Encourage students to come up with a character profile for a man or a woman who finds themselves trapped in a lift with a stranger. Organise students into groups of two and encourage them to improvise/roleplay with their partner how their character might react to the situation and, in the process, explore as many different aspects of their chosen character as possible – how do they look, dress, think and speak?
 - Students should then, in pairs, proceed to write a short story together about the two characters' reactions in the lift, featuring one paragraph in the voice of one character, followed by the next paragraph in the voice of the other. [Each student takes turns writing as their partner writes their part of the story.]
 - After completion, spend some time discussing the challenges of dual narration and authorship, how it impacted on the shape and events of the story, and what, if any, benefits came out of the process.
- Each chapter opens with the name of its narrator but what other devices have the authors used to create seven distinct character voices? In your answer consider what was learned in the previous activity. Also consider humour, language (formal or colloquial), sentence and chapter length, world-view, and font.



In the classroom...

- 'WE STAND IN THE SKIN THAT WAS CAT...' (page 456) Toward the end of the novel we are introduced to the voice of the Ra'haam. How do the authors make this voice different from all others in the novel?
- In small groups, compile character profiles for each member of Squad 312. Note what we are told about each when they first appear in the story, and what we discover about each as the story progresses. Discuss whether each character is transformed during the course of the novel and give examples of the change they undergo.
 - Create character cards, as if for a game, with illustrations of the characters and essential information about them.
- Read the following excerpt and answer the five questions that follow.

'Its mouth is open, showcasing row upon row of razor-sharp fangs... 'We're boned.'

(page 314)
- Why do you think the author of this section chose to use the word showcase here?
- '...like a blast furnace, ...' is an example of what literary device?
- 'flash with rage' is an example of what literary device.
- 'I look up, see glass above me. Glass behind me. Monster in front of me.' What effect does repetition and rhythm have on this sentence?
- 'We're boned.' What effect does the abrupt change in language and font have here?
- "Seems to me we're in a war here." I nod to Aurora. "And seems we've already got our trigger." Our engines flare, bright against the darkness. "Let's go find our weapon." (page 470)

Come up with some 'what happens next...' scenarios to continue the story of Squad 312.
- After finishing the novel, design a new cover to incorporate as many of the story's key themes as possible. Remember, covers are more than an image, so carefully consider other aspects such as the font you want to use, the size of the title and authors' names, perspective and framing. Pitch your cover idea to the rest of the class and explain why you have chosen each of these elements.

Related texts/Further reading

If using this text as part of an extended multi-media genre study, or in a Literature Circle, students may be interested in the texts Jay Kristoff cites as his inspiration:

- *Babylon 5*
- *Star Trek*
- *Star Wars*
- *Harry Potter*
- the old *Star Control* video games

Also consider other sci-fi/fantasy books for young adults co-authored by Amie Kaufman:

- The Illuminae Files trilogy: *Illuminae*, *Gemina*, *Obsidio* – co-authored with Jay Kristoff

In the classroom...



- The Starbound trilogy: *These Broken Stars*, *This Shattered World*, *Their Fractured Light* – co-authored with Megan Spooner
- Unearthed duology: *Unearthed*, *Undying* - co-authored with Megan Spooner

Other books by Jay Kristoff:

- The Lifel1k3 series: *Lifel1k3*, *Dev1at3*,
- The Nevernigh trilogy: *Nevernigh*, *Godsgrave*, *Darkdawn*
- The Lotus War trilogy: *Stormdancer*, *Kinslayer*, *Endsinger*

The authors

New York Times bestselling co-authors Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff feast upon your tears and relish your screams.

In addition to their internationally bestselling *The Illuminae Files*, Amie is the co-author (with Meagan Spooner) of the bestselling Starbound trilogy and the Unearthed duology. She is also the author of *Ice Wolves* and *Scorch Dragons*, in the Elementals trilogy for middle-grade readers.

Since 2012, when his first novel was published, Jay has received numerous awards for his books and they have been published in over 35 different countries.

Jay and Amie met through the United States Internal Revenue Service—long story, but basically, if you're an Australian earning money in the US, you have to fill in an enormous, labyrinthine form to apply for an International Tax Identification Number, and Jay had just successfully completed this ordeal, so Amie bribed him with brunch so he'd tell her the secrets. They have been friends ever since. They started writing a novel together because Amie had a dream they did.

They live with their respective spouses in Melbourne, Australia. Find Amie and Jay at <https://amiekaufman.com> and <https://jaykristoff.com/>.

