

CASUAL

BY KOJI A. DAE

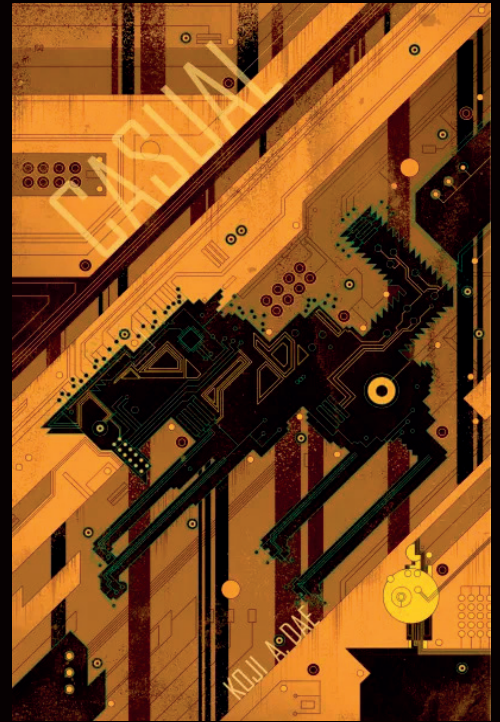
VALYA'S NEURAL IMPLANT IS AMAZING.

CASUAL managed her depression and anxiety, stabilized her mood, and helped her get pregnant; but new laws forbid her from using the device when she's sole caregiver for her infant, so Valya needs to detox before giving birth. The full-blown panic attacks have her considering a controversial clinical trial that would place a tandem implant in her unborn baby and allow Valya to keep hers active. Her only options are to attempt solo parenting without CASUAL, or install a minimally tested device in her vulnerable child.

CASUAL is a stark and cutting glance at a near future that looks uncannily like our present, exploring themes of bodily autonomy and the struggle for mental health in a world increasingly divided.

ABOUT KOJI A. DAE

A born drifter with plenty of dark stories, childbirth is the closest thing to eldritch Koji has experienced. Now she finds herself strangely settled in Bulgaria with two kids, a cat, and a whole lot of responsibility. She writes about things mothers see from the corner of their hearts and all varieties of human relationships — with each other, with technology, and with the greater universe. Her work has appeared in *Clarkesworld*, *Apex Magazine*, *Daily Science Fiction*, and elsewhere.



TITLE:

Casual

AUTHOR:

Koji A. Dae

PUBLISHER: Tenebrous Press

PUBLICATION DATE:

February 10, 2025

PAGE COUNT: 296 pages

COVER ART: Cristina Bencina

INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS:

Helen Whistberry

PAPERBACK: \$19.99 /

ISBN: 978-1-959790-29-7

EBOOK: \$3.99 /

ISBN: 978-1-959790-30-3

AUTHOR CONTACT:

writeme@kojiadae.ink

WEBSITE: kojiadae.ink

PUBLISHER WEBSITE:

tenebrouspress.com

TENEBOUS



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