



MERGERS

“What an intriguing concept! **Mergers** gives readers a lot to think about concerning race, fate, trust—and friendship.”

—Margaret Peterson Haddix,
author of *Turnabout*

“Reads like a comic book with plenty of action.”

—*School Library Journal*

Steven L. Layne is also the author of ***This Side of Paradise***

Hal Clement Award Winner,
Best New Science Fiction novel for Young Adults in the U.S.

Best of the Best for Young Adults,
Missouri Library Association

Read Aloud Books Too Good to Miss,
Indiana Library Federation

Texas Lone Star Top 20 List

Young Adult Choice Title,
International Reading Association

MERGERS

BY STEVEN L. LAYNE



PELICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY

GRETNA 2007

Copyright © 2006
By Steven L. Layne
All rights reserved

First edition, February 2006
First paperback edition, September 2007

The word “Pelican” and the depiction of a pelican are trademarks of Pelican Publishing Company, Inc., and are registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Layne, Steven L.

Mergers / Steven L. Layne.

p. cm.

Summary: Four “deviant” teenagers, each with a special power, struggle to survive in a future where the Legion for World Alliance has merged all the earth’s peoples into one combined race.

ISBN-13: 978-1-58980-538-5 (pbk : alk. paper)

[1. Science fiction.] I. Title.

PZ7.L44675Me 2006

[Fic]—dc22

2005032652

Cover art by Nathan R. Baron



Printed in the United States of America

Published by Pelican Publishing Company, Inc.

1000 Burmaster Street, Gretna, Louisiana 70053

To *Pamela Albers*
for staying up late and opening new doors,
and
to *Debby Krueger-Hipes*
for giving a guy a chance.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Each book is its own journey, and this one has been interesting indeed. As has been my custom, I have involved teachers, librarians, and students from schools all over the country throughout the many drafts of this book. Without them, the effort would be in vain; I am eternally grateful to them. They include the 2004-2005 classes of:

Dr. Karen Biggs-Tucker from Wildrose Elementary School in St. Charles, IL—Grade 5; Mrs. Gail Boushey from Meridian Elementary School in Kent, WA—Grades 5/6; Mrs. Val Cawley, Mr. Eric Chisausky, Ms. Melissa Zaniewski, and Mrs. Anna Lee from Butler Junior High School in Oak Brook, IL—Grade 7; Dr. Jill Cole from Wesley College in Dover, DE—undergraduates; Mrs. Christine Moen from Dakota Junior/Senior High School in Dakota, IL—Grade 8; Mrs. Tammy Potts from Gower Middle School in Burr Ridge, IL—Grade 8; Mrs. Peggy Short from Skyview Middle School in Colorado Springs, CO—Grade 8; and Mrs. Tonya Wilt from Jackson Middle School in Jackson, OH—Grade 8.

Serving in an advisory capacity in the areas of biology, chemistry, and neuroscience were Dr. Elizabeth Juergensmeyer, Dr. Rolf Myhrman, and Dr. Richard Newkirk—professors at Judson College in Elgin, IL. I so appreciate the generous sharing of their expertise.

To my faithful panel of pre-publication readers and critics—is it possible to write a book without people like you? Not for me. Special recognition to Pam Albers, Kathy

Dickson, Debby Krueger-Hipes, Joan Moser, Susan Roberts, Joy Towner, and Susan Wilke for caring enough to tell the truth and doing all that was asked of them.

Love to my wife, Debbie, for traveling the road with me, and to Grayson, Victoria, and Jackson for freeing me up now and then to write. Thanks to our Heavenly Father for His faithfulness in seeing this book through from start to finish.

MERGERS