



The Host Rises

K. H. Brent

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Introspective and action packed, The Host Rises is a deft start to a new science fiction series.

An implacable alien force arrives to usher humanity into an era of peace in the thrilling *The Host Rises* by K. H. Brent.

In the not-too-distant future, Earth is reeling from catastrophe after catastrophe. Corporations coalesce into megacorporations with influence enough to unseat governments.

Grace thrives as a war correspondent traveling from conflict to conflict, while John slips in and out of global conflicts on secret missions. Wilson lives in a virtual world, only leaving for food and hygienic considerations. The three find themselves connected when an extraterrestrial force arrives on Earth to enforce peace at any cost.

Seemingly omnipotent and able to strike down countless threats, the Host demands that human beings put aside violence or face instant execution. Earth enters a period of peace, but dissidents threaten to unravel everything.

The Host Rises is the first book in the Promised Land series. It does a great job of introducing characters and setting scenes. It's also chock full of both thrilling action and contemplative moments. From exploding battlefields to efforts to solve the food crisis, there is never a dull moment. The book's cliffhanger ending is appropriate, satisfying, and engaging.

John and Wilson shine in their roles. John starts out as a human weapon; the president points him at whatever threat needs to be taken care of. Over the course of the novel, he struggles with war and violence and his place in both. A twist near the end adds intensity to his backstory and sets up the conflict for the next book.

Meanwhile, Wilson barely escapes the lure of the virtual world, but he ends up studying with AIs that are modeled after history's greatest minds to solve the world's food crisis.

The point of view moves between characters to flesh out events thoroughly, particularly when John or other military characters step into the spotlight. Military jargon and tactics are used freely and only explained when needed, allowing events to unfold appropriately.

This is also science fiction with an important perspective. In between its unusual aliens and new technology, characters grapple with moral and ethical issues. John's cold, unfeeling executions are coupled with his increasing difficulty at staying distant from his actions.

Wilson, too, forces himself to learn and understand as much as possible in the hopes of helping an unstable world. Issues of economics, philosophy, and human nature are confronted. Intense world building adds to the book's appeal.

The Host Rises is a deft start to a new science fiction series, both introspective and action packed.

JOHN M. MURRAY (December 22, 2017)

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