



Dark Genesis: The Birth of the Psi Corps

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Long before the Babylon 5 space station brought Humans face-to-face with alien races, they discovered an extraordinary breed among their very own . . .

The year is 2115. Shock waves follow in the wake of astonishing news: science has proven the existence of telepaths. Amid media frenzy, panic, and bloodshed, Earth's government steps in to restore order--and establish tight control over the newfound special population . . . by any means necessary.

Ambitious senator Lee Crawford spearheads the effort, overseeing the creation of the Psi Corps--an elite unit charged with tagging and monitoring all telepaths "for their own protection." But the real agenda behind the crackdown is one of government control. Many question the telepaths' origins, while others view them as a coveted weapon. As the Corps tightens its iron grip, the stage is set for a cataclysmic confrontation--one in which the future of Earth will be decided.

Dark Genesis: The Birth of the Psi Corps Details

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From Reader Review Dark Genesis: The Birth of the Psi Corps for online ebook

Hila says

This is by far the best of the trilogy and one of the better B5 books. It shows how society unravels at the discovery of psionic powers, and then rights itself back up in the structure that we come to know on the show. It is the very bit that is missing in (the real) Alfred Bester's The Demolished Man to understand how the world came to be.

Andrew says

So now to add another review - first off I will admit when Babylon 5 was aired I was a fan - ok the stories were a little ropy the special effects were sometimes showing their "experimental" roots too much and the acting a little wooden - I am sure there are plenty more criticisms out there - BUT I religiously watched it each week waiting for the next instalment. I was glued.

Then then pulled the plug and the series was cancelled. However what it has left is many more shows where green screening is the norm (where shows now can be made where budgets are at least possible), where science fiction series are no longer afraid to share a story that runs longer than the "to be continued...." end of series cliff hanger and where everyday subjects can be given a fantastical and imaginary turn, oh and a whole string of spin off books.

Well that is where Dark Genesis comes in - its an attempt at explain how the PSI Corps came in to being and charts the rise and fall of the TV series most enigmatic and hated characters - Alfred Bester (and yes they make no secret that that its a nod to the Author himself).

This book really charts the creation of the Crops and the eventual introduction of characters we will see during the TV shows - some more obvious than others. The story is like some dynastic history where specific events from certain peoples lives are chronicled - then the next chapter or section many years have jumped forward - till eventually you are introduced to the child who will become Bester.

The book is a strange one in that there are many names and hints that make it feel a B5 story however no references (apart from the cover) to where it is going. as such as a standalone book with no prior knowledge of what it is part of its a rather flat read - not bad just wondering where it will go - i guess the next in the trilogy is where things start getting interesting and familiar. I shall wait and see...

Benjamin Thomas says

I completed Dark Genesis, The Birth of the Psi Corps last night. I watched all 5 seasons of Babylon 5 via DvD a couple of years ago and came away with a profound respect for the work of J. Michael Straczynski. Not only did he create the show but he built the entire story arc and authored almost all of the scripts for the show. But even in 5 complete seasons, there is always room to learn more about various aspects of the show. The background and fate of the character Bester has always interested me so I specifically looked for the Psi Corps trilogy written by J. Gregory Keyes. I was gratified to learn that Mr Keyes wrote his Babylon 5 novels from an outline by Mr Straczynski so I felt confident that the novel was an "official" part of the Babylon 5 canon.

This first novel of the trilogy serves largely as background. I enjoyed seeing how the Psi Corps began and

watching the evolving dichotomy of humans with psychic abilities vs those without. I liked seeing characters with familiar names (ancestors of some on the show). But overall I felt it was a little flat. I think there was just too much territory to cover, too much of a timespan to cover in a fairly thin book (~280 pages). The novel really was a series of connected short stories depicting certain aspects in time of this great transformation in society. The fact that the human race also experienced first contact with intelligent life outside Earth (Centauri) was largely lost in the rest. I have read a few reviews of the rest of the trilogy though and most agree the second two books really pick up, especially as they concern Bester himself. So I look forward to reading them soon.

Martin says

Some really interesting ideas in this book. Almost a shame that it's confined to the B5 universe.

Aagot Lervik says

Elsbeth Artifex says

ripping read!

Suzanne Rutherford says

Brilliant book.

Jason says

I loved this continuing story of the Psi Corps. It was fast paced and kept me on the edge.

Travis says

I absolutely loved the television series. It probably still stands as one of the best science fiction shows of all time. It's funny that I never considered reading the books before and this was my first. I think I want to rewatch the series now because this book was amazing. Babylon 5 is unique in the fact that most of material released, including novels, comics, and short stories are considered canon and are based of outlines by the show's creator. I think I will watch the show again and read the novels where they fit in the timeline. If you are a Babylon 5 fan don't skip the books!

Brian says

It took a while before I got into the book. In fact, I really didn't enjoy reading the first half of the book. The concept is basically outlining the early years of the Psi Corps through a select set of characters, over several generations. The problem was there were too many instances of the same exact character types through each generation. Every incarnation has the strong female leader, the quiet passive romantic male and always one incredibly gifted child. This led to some serious confusion between characters, when they all of their personalities bled into each other. Worse so when 2 generations overlapped.

The motivations of the resistance were a bit too cliché, and difficult to understand -- they seem to fight only for the sake of fighting. One character even questions if there is anything to it other than doing what is expected of them. Later in the book, the author just throws us a bone to give some sense of immediate purpose, but it was also quite cliché, painting the book in absolutes, instead of delving into form of serious issues. For those reasons, I found the resistance part of the story very uninteresting.

The saving grace of the book is everything else. The inside story of the Psi Corps, the senator striving towards his answers, and a bit of good-old alien interactions. This is why I wanted to read the book, and I was quite satisfied with what I got.

The writing itself is pretty well done. It was easy to read, and the dialogue was well done. Again, the issue was that of character development. I really didn't empathize with hardly any of the characters, which gave me a total lack of motivation to read more than a few pages at a time, at least during the first half of the book. I did quite like 2 or 3 of the characters towards the end of the book. Upon finishing it, I am quite interested in starting the 2nd in the series, because I get the feeling that the "growing pains" section of the series is out of the way.

Sye Keene says

I nice recollection back to Babylon 5. Always wondered what the back story was for the Psi Corp. Now at least I know why they were such a pain in the a** in B5. I still can't think of the Psi Corp. without picturing Koenig. Generally a entertaining read.

Daniël says

Disclaimer: I'm a big fan of Babylon 5.

This book was thoroughly enjoyable, even if it didn't take place in one of my favourite sci-fi universes. The premise is great: How would a human society react to the sudden discovery of people with telepathic abilities. The reaction makes sense, and the way the subject is handled feels like it really would be the reaction that humans would have to people who can read minds. The fear of these new people is believable, but so is the political posturing to control these new capabilities.

Here's a breakdown of the good and the bad:

The Good

The setting: It takes place in an earlier time of the B5 universe. A universe that's not that far removed from our own. Earth is slowly uniting, with all the growing pains that would bring.

The characters: The characters are interesting and all are both great and flawed in their own unique ways. The book goes over multiple generations, showing how society adapts over time in how the generations react to similar problems.

The Bad

The speed: Everything goes at a very rapid pace and this goes at the cost of depth. I would like to read more about all of the major sections of the books and lots more about how telepaths read and work.

Lynne says

I love Babylon 5. All of it. But I have to say that I had some difficulty getting through the first part of this first book in this series. It was slow and truly I just never came to care about the people in it. Later on the story did pick up and I got through it. But if this hadn't been a Babylon 5 book and I not been such a huge fan of the whole B5 universe? I would never have stuck with it as long as I did.

Jim says

Ok, this book is not rocket science. Oh wait...it might be as it is science fiction. Anyway, for five years at the end of the last century, I was hooked on the TV show, Babylon 5. It was an amazing science fiction show and I have seen every episode and loved them. It was full of intrigue with hints in every show about the future and always left you wanting more.

One of the occasionally recurring characters was Bester, a Psi Cop and member of the Psi Corp - a large organization for all telepaths, mandated by law and required membership for all telepaths. The organization was always a bit sinister, and the worse of them were the Psi Cops, whose main job was to hunt down rogue telepaths who didn't want to be in the Corp. It was Bester's belief and those of the Corp, that some day there would be a war between telepaths and normals.

Bester was a P12, the highest rating possible for telepathic ability. But, one of the unanswered questions at the end of the show's 5 year run was the fate of Bester and was there ever a war?

Bester was brilliantly played by actor Walter Koenig, of Star Trek fame. He was both funny and deadly, likable and despicable.

This book is the first of three books by Gregory Keyes, from an original outline suggested B-5 Creator, J.Michael Straczynski. Book one is about the birth of Psi Corps, Book 2 is about the rise of Bester, and book 3 is about the fate of Bester.

So, the first two books take place before the introduction of the character in the first TV show. This book, weaves an elaborate plot from the first confirmation that there are indeed a number of human telepaths on earth, to the actual creation of the Psi Corps to both protect them and the normal human population from each other.

There is a lot of violence and bloodshed against telepaths in the the beginning and an ambitious senator who tries to organize and protect them for his own political agenda. The book covers about 70 years and we meet a few character who are the ancestors of characters we later meet in the TV show.

One of the predominant themes of the book is how did telepaths suddenly appear on earth in such great numbers. Of course, TV show fans know the answer to that.

Our friend Bester doesn't put in an appearance until the end of the book as a baby, born of the two most powerful resistance leaders in the anti-Psi Corp movement.

I liked the story, but am not crazy about the way the author writes. He leaves me a bit cold and I think he could have done a better job expounding on the original outline. I felt like the glass was only half full. But, I will read the other two books just to find out what happens to my friend Bester

Ian Swallow says

I first read this shortly after finishing Babylon 5, it was fascinating to discover the history of the Psi Corp as well as forgotten family ties between characters from B5. Now after my most recent re-watch of Babylon 5 I found the book once again. Now I can see it's imperfections clearer but also how Keyes works in themes from the show too that i missed the first time. Overall it's a good read for any B5 fan interested in learning more about the Psi Corp etc.
