



Habitat

Simon Roy

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All his life, Hank Cho wanted to join the ranks of the Habsec - the rulers of the orbital habitat his people call home. But when he finds a powerful, forbidden weapon from the deep past, a single moment of violence sets his life - and the brutal society of the habitat - into upheaval. Hunted by the cannibalistic Habsec and sheltered by former enemies, Cho finds himself caught within a civil war that threatens to destroy his world. A new barbarian sci-fi adventure from SIMON ROY (Prophet, Jan's Atomic Heart, Tiger Lung). Collecting installments originally serialized in ISLAND MAGAZINE issues 2, 5, and 8.

Habitat Details

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Author : Simon Roy

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From Reader Review Habitat for online ebook

Denver Public Library says

I loved Simon Roy's concept and world building, and really enjoyed his cartoonish and at times, brutally violent art. This said though, the disjointed sequencing, which was confusing despite the relatively simple page layout, was enough to keep me from really enjoying this read.

Let's start with where he went right: a dystopian, sci-fi tale set on an ancient orbital or ark ship, long isolated from the rest of society, with a remainder population almost totally degraded into primitive tribalism. The juxtaposition of the still (barely) working tech, side-by-side with spear-wielding cannibals, really underscores how far this culture has fallen. The ancient, and science-fictional architecture of ziggurats intertwined with canals and overgrown with vegetation recalls something out of the ancient Mayan world, while the hints of god-level bio-tech summons up the feel of James Cameron's Prometheus. Add to this the eclectic hodge-podge of tribal but retro/futuristic costuming and you have the picture.

The comic has the fast pacing of an action movie, which makes for a page turner, but I found the storytelling to be abrupt and the exposition blunt in places, creating an overall confusing narrative. I am not one that needs to be spoon-fed a story, and I like a narrative that holds back a little mystery but Habitat is an example of taking this too far. At a few turns of the tale, I felt left behind but didn't feel patient or invested enough in the story to try and make sense of what had transpired, I simply pressed on. And while I enjoyed this book and read it in one quick and gleeful reading, I was never able to lose myself in the story, all for being too aware of the narrative hiccups. A better editor and this book might have earned five stars from me (wait, I give out stars?). I will say that my objections shouldn't be enough to keep a person away from this read, and maybe a more patient mind could make perfect sense of this tale.

Get Habitat from the Denver Public Library

- Mikel

Andrew says

Super fast-paced dystopian sci-fi. I think it's easy to overlook the world-building and the intricacies of the failed utopia because the action takes precedence. Simon Roy proves once again that he's a magnificent artist with incredible creativity when it comes to designing new worlds, devices and creatures. I love the look of the overgrown habitat.

It's interesting to see that outside of his work on Prophet this is his most popular book on this site. I think he's been getting better and better, so its justified really. Can't wait to see where he goes next.

I'll plug his patreon

Laura says

Unique and compelling primitive sci-fi, set in the ruins of a generation ship whose descendants have descended into cannibalism and internecine warfare using a blend of low tech and high tech weapons. Far

too abrupt of an ending of there's no sequel, so fingers crossed.

Tom says

To be honest, I'm not sure what to make of this book. Set on an orbital space station shut off from the rest of the world (if the rest of the world exists), the citizens have had massive technology failures and four generations later have gone more or less tribal and some of those tribes (like the security squad) engage in cannibalism. The ending left me somewhat scratching my head. Is there more to this story? Possibly, but I don't think more is coming.

Jared Pechacek says

(Note: I received this book as a Goodreads giveaway.)

Every so often, a book comes along that clicks precisely with your specific interests, and it fits so naturally into your life that you don't really care whether it's good or bad. All you really need is the book itself. Like Ringworld written by Aztecs, Habitat centers on a culture in a giant orbital space station where cannibalism is the norm and some long-past emergency has damaged the, well, habitat, leaving factions of the crew to squabble for generations. Half the fun of reading it is getting swept from one dreadful revelation to the next, so I won't go into the plot too much, but I'm assuming if you didn't check out after "cannibalism", it's probably something you'll want to read.

The other half of the fun is the art. Sketchy and lush, with a delicate watercolor palette, Habitat is never less than visually stunning. It's full of vast "landscapes" where buildings like Mesoamerican pyramids coexist with overgrown rainforests and huge arthropodal robots, but the smaller elements are just as beautiful: the visceral spacesuits and the robotic nuns are particular favorites of mine.

Despite how good Habitat is overall, I haven't given it five-star love because it's rather light on character. Since this is only the beginning of a longer story, I hope that will be rectified, but as it stands now, the characters are too vaguely defined to be truly interesting.

Still, it's a smart, pacy first entry in a series I'll gladly follow to its end. Which, given the bizarre last page, should be quite the experience.

Rick Hunter says

*****I Won This Book from Goodreads as part of their First Reads promotion*****

This was not anything that I'd ever heard prior to entering to win it. The blurb that was posted with the contest sounded interesting so I entered it and won. When it came in the mail, I opened the package, looked at the front cover, and then flipped it over to read the back. There is a gleaming review on the back Warren Ellis. I love Ellis as a writer. If he's saying something is great, it must be right? I opened the book and my eyes were immediately bombarded by some of the most horrendous artwork ever put to paper.

Simon Roy is the lone creative mind behind this book, but he should have passed the art duties on to someone who is a little more adept at illustrations. There is a little bonus gallery at the rear of the book that has some sketches of Roy's ideas for the look of the characters and machines within this graphic. These sketches don't look any different than the art in the rest of the book other than they are not colored. The sketches at the end of the book and the story portion all look like something a writer might scratch out a

piece of scrap paper or a napkin to pass on to the artist for a comic just to give the artist some basic idea of what the writer has in mind. That artist would then take said idea and turn it into something presentable and appealing to look at. There is nothing appealing about the art in this book. The only positive thing I can even think to say about the art is that it is drawn by a pretty good writer.

Habitat is about a space station that was attacked by the people of Earth because of something the people on the station had done. Now several generations have gone by with the people on the station at civil war with each other. There are several different factions that are made up of the different people needed to man a space station. The doctors and security (Habsec) are teamed up against the engineers and there seem to be other people that just are just trying to survive and are caught in the middle. Food is scarce so the people cannibalize the dead from the other factions.

There is one Habsec member named Hank Cho that is front and center who serves as the main character for the book. Even though he is the main character, him and every single one of the other characters seem to be secondary in Roy's mind as he was writing this. Habitat is more of a world building exercise than it is a character driven story. This book is pretty much the exact opposite of The Walking Dead. In both The Walking Dead comics and TV series, the characters are the most important thing. It doesn't matter where those people are or what the circumstances are, their reactions to the situation and interactions with each other drive the story forward. Here, the characters seem like an afterthought.

Because of the fact that the characters seem to be just thrown in there without any purpose other than to showcase this cool spaceship habitat that Roy created, I never connected with any of them. Since I didn't connect with any character, I didn't care what happened to any character. Roy should have taken a little more time and released a longer book (this one is only 96 pages). Having a longer book would have given more time to spend with each character and get to know something about them. Instead, we see the main character get chosen to join Habsec at the beginning, he joins, finds something, chasing ensues, he meets 2 people, "Hi, I Joan", "I'm Cho", "You found it?", more chasing, people shooting, more chasing, meet more people, something happens, and it ends. The story jumps from place to place with such a frenetic pace that the reader never really understands what the hell is going on. The book starts kind of slow like Simon Roy had trouble getting the imagination ball rolling, but that's because he was trying to roll the ball uphill. Once it started rolling, it went downhill so fast that Roy couldn't keep up and it got away from him.

I have a few tips that will really help Simon Roy out the next time he decides to make a graphic or continue on with this story. 1) Hire an artist. 2) Don't have characters speak in symbols and made up words unless you attach a glossary to the back of the book showing what those symbols and words mean. There are several parts of this book where symbols were used and it just seemed like Roy used them because he didn't really have anything for his characters to say. 3) Character building is just as important as world building. The world that The Hunger Games is set in may be interesting, but it would never have become such a huge success if people had not fallen in love with Catniss Everdeen. The same can be said of the Star Wars movies. The original trilogy was such a huge success because people liked the characters. Not all the characters you create have to be likable, but they need to be interesting. Hank Cho is less interesting than a convenience store microwavable burrito that tastes like wet cardboard.

I give the art on this book 1 star only because this site won't let you give 1/2 stars. The writing on the book gets 3 stars because of the imaginative world the story is set in, but I can't give any higher than that because of the lack of character development and rushed nature of the story. Those 2 scores average out to make this a 2 star book. I said at the beginning that if Warren Ellis heaped a bunch of praise on this that it had to be good. I was wrong. It seems that the mighty Ellis is human after all and makes mistakes just like the rest of us.

Kenny says

Moebuis like bande dessine style combining the barbarian and sci fi genres in an exciting mix.

Sacha Valero says

I don't know what to make of this. There are two raving reviews on the back and I can't really understand why. You've got some sort of space station that's broken down. There's overly large architecture reminiscent of Myan culture and of course every thing is falling apart and overrun with vegetation.

The people left have divided by what their ancestors did on the station, ie security, engineering and so forth. Some have turned to cannibalism and a war breaks out over a printer card leading to an ending that's just bizarre

Chad says

I know a lot of people liked this but I found it hard to follow. All the characters looked the same. It was hard for me to tell one group from another and there were a lot of different factions to keep track of. It was a neat concept though with some unique worldbuilding. The crew was left inside a giant ship generations ago and the various jobs of the crew have degenerated to the point where they are factions with various tech levels.

Daniel Bensen says

Yesterday I received two books with Warren Ellis endorsements. One was Pirate Utopia by Bruce Sterling, the other was Habitat, by Simon Roy. Looks like Ellis and I both have great taste.

I worked with Simon at the beginning, middle, an end of Habitat's writing process, but yesterday was the first time I'd actually gotten to read the finished book all the way through.

And it's so good, people.

There are all these little details I didn't notice the first time around. Like the little boy who just lost a tooth, and then found a new one in a cannibal midden. The sinister way the phaser passes hands. And then there are the big things that look so great on real paper like the Neo-Sotz reliefs carved in red, white, and yellow. That cyclopean architecture! The environment suits flayed and restitched into tribal garb. It all fits together into an atmosphere as lucid and claustrophobic as the air of the doomed Habitat, itself.

The story is a tight little spin off of the familiar hero's journey, where a boy flails his mystical weapon in blind panic from one crisis to the next, bouncing off of people qualified to make good decisions...except they don't. They're flailing too. Everyone is tumbling in a panicked free-fall freak-out in a very fragile artificial world. It's heartbreaking and quite human and oh man, I cannot wait for the sequel.

Buy this comic and motivate Simon to make more.

Travis says

I have often encountered settings with the same premise, a post-apocalyptic (or at least post-societal collapse) world where the culture is a mish-mash of tribalism and remnants of advanced technology. It seems especially common in roleplaying games, and one of the earliest games, *Metamorphosis Alpha*, is even set inside a giant space ship on which things have gone horribly wrong, though as is common for the genre, there is more interest put on radiation-based super mutations than we see in this work. And though I'm familiar with this genre, I've rarely stories set in it.

This is a really good book. The visuals do an excellent job of communicating background even as the story moves forward at a steady pace. One area that the book diverges from genre conventions is how much knowledge of old tech is maintained, which is an interesting question of how quickly knowledge deteriorates; in this case it helps that much of the old tech survives in somewhat workable condition, and the major characters are some of the intellectual elite. Although the story wraps up satisfactorily, I kind of want to read more in this setting, just because it is so visually interesting.

Random point: I really like the robo-nuns. For showing up in only a limited time, they have really fun personalities, like the first one who quips "Safety protocols defend against events like this!" as she slams a chainsaw back into an attacking habsec.

And an aside: somewhere in the middle of the book I reflected that it seemed very reminiscent of *Prophet*, Volume 1: Remission. And then I went to see if the creator had any other works in the library system, and of course he was the artist for *Prophet*.

Craig says

Really liked this. Story takes place on some sort of space craft/space habitat, long after an unknown and almost forgotten cataclysm has taken place. Society has devolved and people are at war with each other. Habsec, the old security class, keep people or "civvies" in feedlots and routinely cannibalize them. Doctors still maintain some memory of the ability to use key cards to create weapons and other items on the station's 3D printers. Engineers keep the place running, including a makeshift patch in an area known as the "dead zone," where there's a breach in the hull. Into all this comes Cho, a young man recently instituted into the ranks of habsec. On his first day, he captures an old man with a strange clay tablet around his neck. In honor of this, Cho's superior allows him to keep the tablet, which is then damaged, revealing a key card underneath. Cho sneaks out of his bunk that night and uses the card to create a phaser (it looks like a variety of particle weapons are available), setting in motion a power struggle between habsec and the engineers. What a great book! The art is stunning and the story is quite powerfully told, through rather minimalistic means. I've always had a soft spot for this subgenre of science fiction--the doomed generation ship where people have devolved into primitive or feudal societies--and Roy's work fits right in there. Not sure if there's more to this story or not, but I'd sure be interested in reading another volume.

Crystal Starr Light says

Bullet Review:

This was AWESOME! The story was captivating and completely unique (to me). The characters were compelling. The world was interesting and well-built. The art was fantastic and made me engrossed even more in the whole ambiance of the graphic novel.

This is one of the best graphic novels I've read recently. Although this is not called volume 1, there better'd be a volume 2 in the works because I need to learn more of what happened to the Habitat and this group of people!

Highest Praise Possible.

Blair says

Nice art and concept, but the characterisation and story leave something to be desired.

Dave Versace says

Intriguing science fiction drama about a collapsed civilisation aboard a space habitat, where tribalism has emerged around the various functional departments - security, engineers, much-despised civilians etc. Intriguing mix of Aztec design, brutalist architecture and advanced technology, all overgrown with uncontrolled forestation. The plot largely revolves around an illegal 3D-printing pattern and is mostly a protracted chase through hostile territory. Good stuff. Intrigued to see where it's going.
