



Seraph

John Graham

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In the futuristic world of John Graham's Seraph, voidstalkers fight a rogue conspiracy that threatens all of humanity.

In John Graham's science fiction thriller *Seraph*, the future includes a group of genetically enhanced, superhuman voidstalkers, one of whom is tasked with stopping a conspiracy.

One of the book's three voidstalkers is Gabriel, who's strong and determined, but still a rookie. He serves as the chief operative of the DNI, a naval intelligence organization dedicated to preventing intergalactic evil from taking over and destroying planets. Earth is just one of the DNI's areas of operation.

At the book's beginning, a series of terrible attacks using powerful and hallucinogenic toxins forces the DNI to open an investigation, which proves that the attacks are a ruse perpetrated by a secret conspiracy of saboteurs. This spooks the DNI; it and Gabriel hunt those responsible. Gabriel's investigation is hamstrung by the DNI, though, which tells its top voidstalker that pulling Gabriel off of the case is for his own benefit. Gabriel disagrees and carries out a one-man hunt for the perpetrator and to end the sabotage.

The writing is sharp and concise, though superfluous adjectives and complicated verbs weigh it down early on. Extravagant language is employed to set the mood. The main story, and its concomitant action sequences, are centered within long chapters, each with a central motif. Little information about the novel's future setting, or features of it, is shared, beyond futuristic weaponry and the intergalactic DNI project. Otherwise, the world parallels contemporary Earth.

Gabriel is compelling in his role. Despite his superhuman DNA, he reveals vulnerabilities, but also bumbles as a detective and as an intelligence agent, which is at odds with his early characterization. The personal nature of the case, which features a member of Gabriel's family, results in a deep examination of Gabriel's psyche, especially his view of himself and of voidstalkers in general.

While the villain's identity is never a mystery, his motivations are, even when he's asked why he's conducting his terrorism campaign against the DNI; he replies "You have no need to know." The unanswered riddle weakens the otherwise satisfying conclusion, which leaves open the possibility for more adventures for Gabriel and the DNI.

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BENJAMIN WELTON (May 12, 2020)

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