



Withur We

Matthew Bruce Alexander

CreateSpace

Unknown (pp)

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Withur We is a magnificent epic in the grand tradition of such works as Isaac Asimov's Foundation series and Frank Herbert's Dune. Matthew Bruce Alexander, a first-time author, combines the warfare orientation of John Ringo and the lyricism and storytelling ability of Ray Bradbury with philosophical, political, and economical treatises similar to the works of such thinkers as Thomas Paine, Thomas Hobbes, Adam Smith, and Noam Chomsky.

Protagonist Alistair Ashley 3nn is a young Marine back on his home planet, Aldra II, after serving "four cycles" on the war torn planet Kaldis. Physically enhanced by the Marine corps to be an elite fighter and a killing machine, Alistair tries to acclimate to living a "normal" life but has difficulty adjusting to the current government and its dystopian elements. He joins a group of freedom fighters that are labeled terrorists by the powers-that-be, the "Realists." Taken prisoner, Alistair and many others are banished to the prison planet Srillum. The planet is controlled by prisoners who hail from all over the galaxy and who have devolved into barbaric tribes of cannibalistic hunter-gatherers. Some of the weakest prisoners that arrive with Alistair literally become fresh meat. "The cadavers were skinned and the flesh stripped from the bones," Alexander writes. "The meat was passed up to the men on the tower...It looked like they were going to cure the meat...The bones from the bodies were also passed up to the tower guard, as were the skins and the organs." Through the power of his brute force and his incredible intellect, Alistair is able to implement a Libertarian free market within Srillum's economy and within a short amount of time the prison planet is reformed into a thriving semi-utopia. But this society is tenuous at best, because of humanity's innate drive tendency towards self-destruction.

Alexander has given readers a work of brilliance, but unfortunately his magical narrative is adulterated by inconsistency and careless mistakes. For example, he writes, "he waded into the cool water. When he made it to a depth that brought water up to his waste, he spread his arms wide...and allowed the lake to give him a quick bath." Such crude syntax and cringe-inducing typos deface this extraordinary work of science fiction. Professional editing is recommended for the author's sequels or future works.

LEE GOODEN (July 1, 2010)

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