



Eris

Larry Gaudet

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An ambitious video game is at the center of a global terrorist plot in Larry Gaudet's novel *Eris*.

Don creates Greenhouse, a video game in which players work to curb (or exacerbate) climate change in a simulated world, both to make money and to teach players about real-world issues. But a terrorist hacker, Eris, sees the game—and Don's naïve, neglected son, Tony—as a means to a horrifying end. With millions of lives and billions of dollars at stake, multiple powerful parties are willing to go to extreme lengths to bring Eris down.

Though its ostensible purpose is to spur compassion, Greenhouse has had the opposite effect: Don is as impressed with the hackers' capabilities as he is concerned about his son; Tony views the game as more real than the real world; and Eris, who sees the truth behind Don's magnanimous claims, has long since discarded any notion of morality in favor of anarchy and cynicism. Only Lily, Tony's mother, who has no connection to or interest in Greenhouse, retains any sense of proportion. Even she, however, can be swayed by egregious lies about someone she dislikes when the source appears credible.

As the immense scale of Eris's plan is revealed, so, too, is the power behind the parties seeking to protect their interests. In a story with no heroes and few lessons learned, each side proves as ruthless as the other. There is no point in hoping for the "good guys" to come save everyone: improving the world and increasing empathy must be individual endeavors. Whether people can put down the video game controllers long enough to realize that is an open-ended, dubious question.

Eris is a damning thriller about the how modern media and technology impede people from acting human.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (July / August 2024)

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