

Vestige: Book One

Anonymous

Vestige Books (Feb 27, 2024)

eBook \$18.99 (400pp)

979-898928793-2

Young people inherit their parents' global project in Vestige, a philosophical science fiction novel.

A group of powerful young people decides how, and if, they want to help the world in *Vestige*, a novel by an anonymous author.

Alexander never had the chance to get close to his father, who was a member of a secret society, the Ohm ce Alefa. The society alters global events by influencing key people or, on occasion, through more drastic measures. But when the entire society dies by suicide, Alexander and the other members' heirs must decide if they are prepared to form the new Ohm ce Alefa—and, if so, how many risks they are willing to take to steer humanity onto a gentler path. Along the way, they must also reckon with their elders' mistakes and grapple with long-buried secrets about their heritage.

Each of the six heirs, or "saints," has a distinct personality and opinions about what they should do in the wake of their parents' unexpected deaths. This leads to many lengthy debates regarding the nature, purpose, and consequences of religion; what people owe to each other; and how gender disparity has influenced and continues to influence all aspects of life. Their arrogance, inexperience, and grief causes some of them to make rash, short-sighted decisions, ignore each other's feelings, and put billions of people—including each other—in danger.

Most of the book maintains a slow pace, establishing the group's history, rules, and capabilities, as well as exploring the ethical ramifications of their plans for humankind. In the second half, conversations still dominate, even as events occur that endanger certain members of the group or that reveal new truths about reality.

Intriguing technologies and imagery arise, including via a training session where a crater of sand becomes a battlefield. Inventive terms punctuate the narrative, emphasizing just how different the saints' world is from the world they seek to protect. By the book's end, several critical issues remain to be explored, including whether the Ohm ce Alefa have a right to interfere in global affairs at all and whether their dependence on the forced labor of the humanoid beings that serve their needs is moral. Still, the book's cliffhanger conclusion soars thanks to its freeing realizations.

The first in a series, *Vestige* is a science fiction novel about the ethical ramifications of trying to change the world, even with the best of intentions.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (December 20, 2023)

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