



The Deserter

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[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

Not a Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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In his previous book, **The Inferior**, O Guilin created a dystopia in which cannibal tribes hunt alien beasts on the surface of a planet ruled by 'the roof', an enveloping advanced technological society, with, it is clear in this sequel, its own conflicts between religious sects and the ruling secular class. In this second book, cannibal Stopmouth enters the many layered roof in search of his wife, Indrani, the dissident daughter of the roof's highest law enforcement officer. The roof is in a state of social and physical collapse, precipitated by a mysterious virus which feeds on its technology. Indrani, who may possess the secret of its recovery, is on the run and in hiding. Coming to this world only in the second book, I found it difficult to fully understand its way of life and to empathise with the characters. O Guilin does provide back stories but not in sufficient detail. Initially, I supposed some of the elements of life in the roof must have been more fully explained in the first book since they are only sketched in here, but, looking at reviews, that does not seem to be the case. This novel relies heavily on a video game format of hunt, battle and survive in the many levels, plazas, corridors and tunnels of the decaying roof, in which the society in which it takes place becomes merely incidental. There wasn't enough in that to sustain my interest for over four hundred pages

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