

Rosary

Wake-up call against uncritical trust in technology

After the mysterious destruction of Earth, which occurred in an undefined past, humanity lives in a series of rings orbiting the Sun (hence the title of the novel). One of them hosts Warsaw. Nobody knows how food or other consumer goods are produced, no one knows whether or how they can travel to other rings, where cities from all over the world are located.

The author describes a system of points that are awarded to anyone who finds themselves in a stressful situation. This system, conceived in good faith to prevent crimes, in practice turned against the residents of Warsaw. After exceeding the appropriate limit, a person is subject to elimination, of which the only thing known is that it is inevitable and involves their removal from the city. The residents of Warsaw, unable to escape to another ring and terrified of elimination, are condemned to constant self-control.



JANUSZ A. ZAJDEL AWARD

Here arises the task for the protagonist, who has the ability to reduce the number of points he has; Harpad is a fixer, who helps – for a due price – those in need, who face mysterious and inevitable punishment if their points rise even more. *Rosary* is probably Kosik's most multi-layered novel, in which we follow the fate of not one protagonist, but a large number of by no means secondary characters. The novel keeps the reader in suspense and it is not known until the very end what the driving force of the described world really is. The solution to the puzzle, as it is with Kosik, is subversive and thought-provoking. I will not be lying if I say that this author's latest novel is one of the best texts in Polish fantasy, at least in recent years.

Michał Źarski, translated by Katarzyna Popowicz

He realised something was wrong when two featureless musclemen in gold mirror visors blocked him on his regular evening run. The trees in the park were masking the glow of streetlights so he almost ran into them. He thought he was being mugged, which was probably the reason he reacted. He lurched sideways and tripped on the curb. He heard an electric crack and blue sparks shot over his head. He steadied himself with a hand on the grass and rushed straight ahead. He didn't scream or look back, so as not to waste energy. He simply ran away as quickly as he could. (...) They'd fallen behind, they were a good fifteen metres behind him. If he reached the doorway... there would be people, and CCTV cameras, lots of them. He dashed out into a cobbled path and covered the distance separating him from safety in a few seconds.

An orange Nysa stopped right outside the doorway. With a hiss of compressed air, the doors with the letters "EL" in a circular logo parted and four men in black and orange bodysuits and helmets with gold mirror visors jumped out. He hesitated in horror and almost stopped. He turned left and sprinted away, but he'd lost his advantage. He saw a blue flash and felt a sharp pain in his left shoulder. The rest of the charge broke up with a hiss on the wrought iron fence. Rose petals scattered like feathers from a torn pillow. He screamed and staggered. His now limp arm was slowing him down, but he ran on.

Two people were coming the other way. A police patrol! He opened his mouth, but didn't manage to scream. Sparks danced on the pavement, along the cracks in the granite slabs. Needles of light struck his feet and his calves immediately went limp. He slumped to the ground, breaking his fall with his good hand. The policemen slowed down and observed the situation from some way away, curious.. He raised astonished eyes towards them and then understood – it wasn't a mugging.

The stamp of heavy boots thudded by his ear. A knee pushed him down to the ground, his arms were twisted behind him and handcuffs snapped shut on his wrists. Three men hauled him upwards. He couldn't stand by himself.

"Citizen Marek Reveda?" one of the heavies in black growled through his visor and continued without waiting for an answer. "Eliminator number eight-one. On behalf of the President of Warsaw I'm arresting you pre-emptively. The rights applying to you will be read out after confirmation of the legality of the arrest procedure."

His eyes swept helplessly from one mirrored visor to the next. By now he understood, but needed a little more time to believe it. I mean, he had a supper date in an hour and a meeting the following day – that project was back on track.

"What are...? he uttered with difficulty. "But I didn't... I haven't done..."

Before he could say anything else a cloth sack was placed on his head. He felt the men pulling him, the tips of his shoes dragging on the pavement. But what's...? I mean he's wanted to buy a cat to have something living hanging around his house. He'd almost decided on a black one so you wouldn't see the fur on the carpet. He was going to wash his car and buy Anka a gift. So many things to do... So what the...?

Excerpt translated by David French

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KOSIK**
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SF novels for adults

Mars, 2003

Vertical, 2006

Kameleon, 2008

Books for children & YA

Amelia i Kuba series, 2014-2018

Felix, Net & Nika series, 2004-2015 – **over 800,000 copies sold**

Foreign language translations

Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania

Germany – in anthologies

Selected awards

Janusz A. Zajdel Award (2008, 2018)

Jerzy Żuławski Award (2008)