



Hosts

F. Paul Wilson

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Repairman Jack returns in a sequel to the *New York Times* bestseller, *The Tomb*!

Repairman Jack has been tearing up the urban adventure scene ever since he was introduced in the *New York Times* bestseller *The Tomb*. As his fans know, Repairman Jack doesn't deal with electronic appliances; he's a situation fixer, no matter how weird or deadly a situation may be. Repairman Jack has no last name, no Social Security number, and no qualms when it comes to getting the job done—even if it means putting himself in serious danger.

After fifteen years of separation, Jack is contacted by his long-lost sister, Kate, to help her track down the source of her girlfriend Jeanette's sudden trance-like behavior. Referred by a mysterious stranger who gives only Jack's name and phone number, Kate is shocked to find out that the "repairman" she seeks is none other than her little brother—and not altogether happy to find out what little "Jackie" has been doing with himself for all these years. With Jack leading the way, Kate finds out that Jeanette's behavior can be traced back to the experimental therapy she underwent for a brain tumor: now Jeanette's brain and those of several other subjects are infected by a mutated virus. Like any good virus, it wants to multiply—and if Jack can't stop the virus in its path, there will be deadly results.

Meanwhile, Jack is traveling on the 9 train when suddenly a passenger goes berserk and starts shooting at random—leaving Jack no choice but to throw himself into the spotlight by putting the shooter down. Worse for Jack, one of his fellow passengers is a reporter for the local tabloid, *The Light*, who sees Jack's heroism as his ticket to journalistic stardom. The reporter promises to make Jack a celebrity hero, a household name—which could mean the end of Repairman Jack as we know him.

Hosts Details

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Author : F. Paul Wilson

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From Reader Review Hosts for online ebook

Robin says

In the fifth of sixteen Repairman Jack novels, a strange Russian lady with a large white dog appears at Jack's sickbed and tells him that he, and he alone, must stop a virus that the Adversary of all mankind has unleashed to create war, hate, death, fear, pain, and destruction. Here is a snippet of their conversation:

"Stop virus before it spreads, or all you love will perish." She turned and headed for the bedroom door. "I leave you now."

Jack felt the temperature drop. No...more chills. He pulled the covers back over him.

"Lady, who are you?"

She and her big white dog stopped at the door and looked at him. "I am your mother."

Nonplussed, Jack struggled for a reply. She was nothing like his mother. Finally he resorted to a simple statement of fact.

"My mother's dead."

"She was your birth mother," she said. "I am your other mother."

If that doesn't qualify as creepy, the statute should be repealed. And this is only one-third of the way through a series of thrillers that get weirder and scarier with each installment. The Adversary bit suggests that this book also features a crossover with the same author's six-book Adversary Cycle. Whether you call it the Adversary or the Otherness, or whatever you choose to call it, it's a force from outside our reality whose intentions toward mankind are not good. Already in less than a year (Jack's time), it has tried to break into the world four different ways: vicious demons, diabolical machines, rips in the fabric of the universe, and most recently a drug that heightens aggression. Now it's found another way: turning an experimental cancer cure into a mutation that could end human life as we know it.

It isn't unusual for Jack's most serious cases to endanger the people he cares about the most. He's gotten pretty well mauled himself, a few times. But his work gets harder than ever when a young journalist witnesses him saving a subway carful of passengers from a mass murderer. Not only does the publicity threaten to blow his cover—no disaster could be worse for a man whose lifestyle is based on flying below the government's radar—but it also attracts the attention of a pair of professional bombers who have a grudge against Jack. And it's just when his invisibility cloak is slipping that he gets a new fix-it job that hits closer to home than most. For his new client, referred to him by the mysterious lady with dog, is none other than Jack's estranged sister Kate.

Kate has her own closet complete with skeletons. One of them is a lesbian lover whose personality suddenly changed after a life-saving cancer treatment. Kate worries that Jeanette has become involved in a cult. But it's actually much worse than that. All the members of this supposed cult were subjects in the same clinical trial. Somehow their miracle cure has mutated into a virus that has replaced their individual identities with a single, shared mind. Driven by the survival instincts of a sentient virus, they are only a few mutations away

from being ready to spread their Unity to an unsuspecting world. From a virus's point of view, the result will be a paradise on earth. Other than that, it looks like the end of human civilization.

While Jack dodges the enquiring mind of his own personal Jimmy Olsen and the deathtraps set by a couple of pyrotechnic goons, he and Kate find themselves fighting an enemy that—thanks to Jeanette and her buddies—is now in their blood too. Kate feels herself gradually losing control over her own thoughts and actions. Jack becomes deathly ill, helpless and weak. And though the Russian lady assures him that he is the one who can stop the virus, it's hard to figure how he can do this. People who can act in concert, sharing the same mind, can be amazingly dangerous enemies. They know Jack is a threat to them. They have proven willing and able to kill whoever stands in their way. And he knows that if he doesn't stop them before the virus goes airborne, all will be lost.

Truly, fixing this is going to be a big job. It's going to hurt Jack more than any case he has worked so far. But more importantly, it poses the big "Why me?" question in a way that he can no longer ignore. For the first time, Jack begins to realize that his repeated brushes with the Otherness are more than a case of serendipity. He learns that he has been recruited as a warrior to fight an Adversary he does not understand, and he has no choice in this. It's not going to sit easy with a guy who values his own freedom (including the right to bear arms) as much as his own life. But he has eleven more novel-length adventures to learn to accept it. The next Repairman Jack book is *The Haunted Air*.

Cathy Jung says

Good book. Enjoying this series.

Francesco says

Vote: 3,75

Class: L-B2 (FP) (*)

(fifth book of the Repairman Jack Series)

Fast pacing, well written and with wonderful characters I've come to really like the Repairman Jack series! This one picks up where the third book ended, with a supernatural war going on with the *Otherness*: good story with some interesting twists.

A good and enjoyable reading and I'll follow up with the next installment of the series sometimes in the future.

(*) There is some homosexual content (almost nothing explicit though) which some people could find not appropriate.

Chloe says

Reading the Repairman Jack series is starting to remind me of listening to old 1930s radio serials when I was

a kid. Whether it's Dick Tracy unraveling the Mystery of the Pharaoh's Scarab or The Shadow trying to stop a notorious arsonist, Wilson definitely draws much inspiration from the radio heroes of yesteryear in the construction of his bite-size thrillers and his reluctant hero, Jack.

In *Hosts*, Jack's conflict against the inter-dimensional Otherness gets personal when his estranged sister contacts him out of the blue for help in freeing her girlfriend from a creepy cult. Of course when Jack is involved things are never as cut and dry as a mere cult. Before he knows it, Jack is fighting off an especially malicious virus doing what viruses do best (spread their contagion as far and wide as possible) and trying to keep his family out of the increasingly dangerous crossfire.

Wilson is setting Jack up for some big events further down the line but the story in this one suffers from looking ahead too much. It's as though Wilson was more interested in framing events for the series' climax than in crafting a truly captivating story. There were some fun additions to Jack's rather familiar bag of tricks and some rather chilling flash forwards of a strife-filled future in which the contagion has run rampant, but all in all this book seemed like a build-up for something farther down the road.

Foster says

You can read the first book in a series and, depending on the cliffhanger, just walk away from that whole written universe. (I have done that with the Redwall series about 15 years ago). But once you've read the first five books could you walk away? I'm going to read the entire Repairman Jack series. I'm hooked.

A quote from the very end of this novel: "No more coincidences for you." Jack isn't getting into situations on accident. He is a warrior for the war that is coming. So far what I've liked about the series and this book in particular, each story *feels* different from the others, but maintains the world he creates among the newly added story. I also like that there is sometimes a side problem going on in the story. *Hosts* offered The Brothers K, a couple of bomb makers that were out for revenge against Jack.

Jason says

4.5 Stars

Hosts by F.Paul Wilson (Repairman Jack #5) is another fantastic addition to the life and story of Jack, our anti-hero fixer upper. *Hosts* starts out with a great action scene on a subway and things don't necessarily work out for the best. I won't spoil anything for you. I loved that we were treated to some back story about Jack and were given a story about him and his sister Kate. I did miss Gia and Vicki as they are hardly in this one.

Two story lines unfold in this one and Jack finds himself in the center of both. I wondered how this story fit in to the bigger picture that is the center of The Repairman Jack series and was pleased when I finally discovered how. I love how slowly Wilson has developed the bigger picture as it now takes on more and more weight in Jack's life.

Hosts is a great read. The Repairman Jack series is a blast. F.Paul Wilson is an author not to be missed...Highly recommended!

Nancy Oakes says

I love Repairman Jack. If there was such a person in this world, you'd really want to have him on your side. In the world of fantasy, horror and often verging into pulp, this entire series is just fun.

In this installment, Jack, who prefers to remain anonymous, has his work cut out for him. After an incident on the subway, a New York tabloid reporter wants to find him and draw him out of hiding. This thread continues throughout the book and ultimately is interwoven with the main story -- in which Jack's new client turns out to be his long-estranged sister. Without much detail, Jack is drawn into the world of a strange group of people, all of whom are patients of a certain doctor whose treatment has altered their brains. I won't say any more; suffice it to say that Jack is under a deadline to stop a nefarious plot (is there really any other kind in the sci-fi, horror world?) and you can feel the tension heating up as the time grows nearer and Jack must once again save the world.

Hosts is the type of book that you absolutely have to read as escape fiction, or at least just for the sheer fun of it all. Once you start it, it's hard to put down and trust me, you'll get through it quickly because it's a page turner.

My advice on reading the Repairman Jack series -- start from the beginning and do not miss a single one in order -- <http://booksnbytes.com/authors/wilson...>

Anyone who likes a bit of horror fiction with some dark humor would like these books.

Chris Tweitmann says

Yet another foray into the urban adventures of Repairman Jack and his close encounters with the supernatural, inter-dimensional Otherness as he tries to "fix" situations for those who are desperate and in need. We get to meet Jack's sister, Kate, in this fifth novel. Delving into Jack's back story and family dynamic really adds to the depth and appeal of his character.

In terms of the plot, this might be the best of the series yet -- echoes of "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." Jack's anonymity is also in jeopardy as his heroism as "the Savior" in a tragic subway encounter draws the admiration not just of the city but of a reporter who won't let go of the story that can make him famous.

For me, these books read like those old-time radio mystery serials that our grandparents used to listen to week after week. I am really enjoying this ride. Glad I have ten more books to enjoy. :)

Darius Murretti says

Dont really know why I did not give it 5 stars maybe 4.7.....on to the next....

Mike Kazmierczak says

In this extremely enjoyable novel, Wilson continues expanding on the life of Repairman Jack and by extension the Adversary Cycle universe. We pick up on Jack's life about a year after **ALL THE RAGE**; at the same time though Wilson brings Jack's life into the present. There are small clues dropped throughout the story that point at Jack now living in the 2000s instead of the 1980s. Anyway this story has Jack by an act of weird synchronicity finding his sister who he hasn't talked to in years. The sister pulls Jack into an adventure that ends up tying into previous books and future books.

As is usual for Wilson, he does a fabulous job at writing a story that is engrossing with characters that are interesting and includes enough adventure and suspense to keep you on the edge of your seat. This time the story does not involve Gia or Vicky very much; it would have been nice to see more of them but they didn't fit into the story line. The one thing that I didn't like that much was near the end when Jack has revealed to him that he is an important person in the fight against the Adversary. I know that Wilson is playing into the already written Adversary Cycle finale but it was a bit too contrived; it's like the moment during a movie when you just KNOW that there are going to be lots of sequels. Same thing. It's good because I love his writing and the character. The moment was just over-dramatized.

D. says

A bit of a misstep in the REPAIRMAN JACK series. Not that it's a bad book, it just fell a bit flat for me. It's still a compelling book in parts, but Jack seems a bit of a side-player in this one. A lot of it has to do with medicine and science, which simply aren't Jack's forte. Still, a worthwhile read for a few strong action sequences and, of course, some additions to The Adversary cycle.

William says

Another great book involving the continuing fight against "the otherness".

Wilson continues the story of Repairman Jack as he continues his struggle to right wrong while at the same time remain anonymous.

Paul says

Having enjoyed the RJ series up until this one, I found Hosts to be a letdown. It has several problems.

1. The author switches back and forth between present and future without any warning to the reader. This was not only disconcerting and confusing, but elicited unnecessary remorse from certain events which were narrated but did not really happen because they were a dream. As a reader I felt manipulated.
2. The author would at times drop pronouns for a paragraph, as some do these days in blog comments. It was a bit jarring, and negatively affected the flow. Why do this?
3. The author seemed to be on a didactic binge to teach us about controversial topics, such as sexual orientation tolerance. I don't read a novel to get a lesson from a fiction author!
4. I had to force myself to keep reading several times, and could only read a few pages before I had to take a break, because this is a "dark" story that was not particularly pleasant or fun to read.

5. The author has made the Semmerling pistol a major prop in the book, which is interesting, but both he and the editor need to at least learn how it functions if they are going to write about it. On page 370: "Kate's left hand slides back the top of the pistol and lets it slide forward." She is supposedly cocking and loading a round. But the Semmerling does not function like most other slide-action pistols. A Semmerling's slide is pushed FORWARD, and then springs BACK to load a round, the opposite of the narrative.

Mike (the Paladin) says

I had forgotten how much I was enjoying this series as I set it aside a while back. Recently a "prequel" was released by the author showing us how "Repairman Jack" came about (and the sadist ended said book in a cliffhanger). That book reminded me and I went back to my shelves and pulled the paperback where I'd "fet off down". **(That was what I typed originally...I have no idea what I meant to type. That is one "doozy" of a typo. I meant to type that I picked up the series where I'd left off. I leave the typo to show what can happen when a "self taught typist" tries to type quickly.)**

And I'm glad I did. Here Jack's past pops up to sort of drag him back in and his carefully crafted anonymity is threatened. He unwillingly gets drawn farther into the apparently supernatural "war" or "conflict" or "invasion"....or "invasions" that seem to be horning into his life.

The story here snatched me up and dragged me in quickly. As I don't often have as much time as I'd like to actually sit and read print it was extremely frustrating to find I couldn't get back to it as often as I'd like.

Told as a complete story yet still leading deeper into the morass that Jack's life has become this is another good read.

On another tack I also find Jack's view of life (and the view of those around him) interesting and enjoy that part of the books also. So, good read, interesting read, fairly fresh take on the ideas behind the books. I like them...I like this one.

5 stars, recommended, enjoy.

Lavender says

I am liking this series more and more as it goes on. It gets weirder and Jack, along with his loved ones, gets into some crazy situations. He usually manages to save the day in the end, but it doesn't always go as planned...
