



## The Rise of Io

*Wesley Chu*

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## **The Rise of Io** Wesley Chu

Ella Patel – thief, con-artist and smuggler – is in the wrong place at the wrong time. One night, on the border of a demilitarized zone run by the body-swapping alien invaders, she happens upon a man and woman being chased by a group of assailants. The man freezes, leaving the woman to fight off five attackers at once, before succumbing. As she dies, to both Ella and the man’s surprise, the sparkling light that rises from the woman enters Ella, instead of the man. She soon realizes she’s been inhabited by Io, a low-ranking Quasing who was involved in some of the worst decisions in history. Now Ella must now help the alien presence to complete her mission and investigate a rash of murders in the border states that maintain the frail peace.

With the Prophus assigned to help her seemingly wanting to stab her in the back, and the enemy Genjix hunting her, Ella must also deal with Io’s annoying inferiority complex. To top it all off, Ella thinks the damn alien voice in her head is trying to get her killed. And if you can’t trust the voices in your head, who can you trust?

## **The Rise of Io Details**

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# From Reader Review *The Rise of Io* for online ebook

## Fangs for the Fantasy says

Ella Patel is a con artist, a thief and a young woman who survived and even thrived on the streets of Cratetown, a vast slum that has grown up on the edge of the demilitarised zone in the aftermath of the great Alien War. And one day she found herself witness to a brutal murder, driven to intervene she never imagined she was stepping in the middle of the conflict between the Genjix and the Prophus

Or becoming the new host of the Quasing, Io. A quasing who throughout all of human history has been renowned for... her string of utter failures. This doesn't make her the best or most useful guide for Ella now pulled into the war between the two big alien factions. A quasing can be a powerful guide - but when that quasing is Io?

In the story of Tao, we saw one of the most powerful and influential Quasing in the history of the Prophus. He has inhabited a series of powerful people who have completely and utterly shaped the world, who have achieved great things, influenced history and been at the forefront of their war against the Genjix. We've seen him take some extremely unprepared hosts, like Roan Tan and raise him to greatness, we've seen him inhabit Cameron to great effect.

Tao was a superstar, even in the most inept of hosts, Tao was a force to be reckoned with. Tao was terrifying. Tao was powerful. Tao changed the world.

Io is not a superstar. Io is an abject failure. Late to living in a human host, having great difficulty in influencing her hosts and having a long history of leaving them dead in her wake. Io is the excellent depiction of an entirely different kind of Quasing. Not all quasings are skilled world leaders, not all quasings shaped the world, not all quasings made a huge difference to world history - good and bad. And while Tao ended his arc wondering whether Quasings were good or bad for Earth and openly admitting that the Quasings are a dangerous invasive force: Io has pretty much given up on influencing the world at all. Tao is deeply invested in his host, Tao is invested in humans, Tao cares. Io is almost completely done with humanity

Through Io's eyes we also get some really excellent insights into Quasing society when they were originally on their home planet, how their society worked, how these extremely alien creatures co-existed through the universe and how their hierarchy was structured. And from we see just how different modern Quasing are - they're so disconnected compared to what they were and their hierarchy has been utterly turned on their head.

What is an equally awesome facet of this book is Ella, Io's human host. And while we've seen Roan and Cameron very much in the thrall of Tao, following in his wake, following his lead and pretty much obeying everything Tao says. Ella is not obedient. She's not following Io's lead, she argues constantly, she is determined to live her own life, determined to be paid and refuses to be fobbed off, dismissed or controlled

by her Quasing inhabitant. Ella is a homeless young woman living a desperate life in one of the biggest slums in the world - but she is a master of her environment, she is a power in her own right, an expert, fiercely intelligent, brave, resourceful (and all without any dubiousness. No this child of the street isn't super educated or an amazing fighter, for example) - and if her quasing is disappointing, she goes above and beyond any possible expectation. It's a glorious change from Tao and shows how humanity can shine - as well as introducing the excellent conflict between Io and Ella

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## Leo says

Well that was enjoyable.

It's been a while since I last read one of the Quasing books so I found myself a bit lost as I was forced to recollect what had happened in the previous books. Luckily, Wesley Chu was clever in his use of hints throughout key points in the book. Subtly reminding the reader of what's transpired in previous books, without sounding like he was simply lifting whole passages from previous books.

The first 1/3 of the book was pretty much dedicated to introducing Ella Patal, Crate Town and its inhabitants. Something I knew was necessary to setup the characters and the events to come, but never felt it was a slog to get through. That being said, the pacing of the book only really started to pick up once the setup was complete, and an important Prophus agent (view spoiler) entered the story. Similar to previous Quasing books, once the action starts, it keeps going all the way to the end, with few respites in-between.

Finally, the last couple of lines in the book was not much of a surprise, and heavily hinted upon through the various IO flashback chapter introductions. Having read similar story arcs in other Sci-Fi books, Cixin Liu's *The Three-Body Problem* book series being the first to come to mind, (view spoiler)

I'm looking forward to see where Wesley Chu takes this universe he's created, and sure I'll like to how the Black Cat will land on her feet after the next Genjix encounter.

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## ~Dani~ LazyTurtle's Books says

Millions of years ago the Quasing crash-landed on Earth. Not being able to live in Earth's atmosphere, they have survived the many years by inhabiting the creatures native to the planet. Since the rise of humanity they have worked toward mankind learning enough to engage in space travel thereby getting the Quasing off the planet and headed home.

My worry with this book was that it was a case of an author not being able to let go of the universe they created even when there is no more story to tell. These are almost never good.

Thankfully, this was 100% not the case here.

*The Lives of Tao* ended with the Alien World War on the horizon. Instead of this series diving into that story, *The Rise of Io* jumps ahead several years to after that war has kind of ended in a stalemate. I found that kind of odd at first because there would undoubtedly be more than enough events that take place in that war to make a book out of.

But like the original trilogy, the story zooms in on a human and Quasing host that are involved in the bigger picture. The relationship between Quasing and host is really the heart of the story.

I love Roen and I love Tao and I love Cameron. There was a little bit of a bittersweet feeling being back in this world it not being all about them. The dynamics in the relationship between Ella and Io are very different than in the first series. There are far fewer witticisms and less bonding.

But that's because their story is less about bonding with the alien that has taken up residence in one's mind and more about dealing with it in a more practical sense. Ella is a much more practical person than Roen/Cameron so she spends a lot of time thinking about how she can use being a Quasing host to her advantage, namely her financial advantage.

I do think that this book started out really similar to *The Lives of Tao*, just in a different setting and characters. And a lot of the book kind of read like that with lots of training for the human (Ella) to get physically trained enough to be a Prophus operative (although it did seem a little more sped up in this book versus the initial series) and some time spent with Ella slowly coming to terms with how her life has changed since Io made Ella's brain her new home.

After the beginning phases though the story is very different. Ella's life is very different from Roen's and she faces somewhat different challenges. While Roen lived in the US and worked in a cubicle all day long (which contributed to his obesity), Ella lives in a slum in western India in a town that was built up from the Alien World War and grew up orphaned and fighting for every little thing that she has.

While I have seen some reviews on this book from people that did not read *The Lives of Tao*, I would recommend starting with that series rather than jumping in here.

The information on what is going on is here so you could start with *The Rise of Io* and be okay, I think the world-building is a little bit stronger in the first series because it was starting the story from scratch whereas this book kind of assumes you know at least a little.

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## **Geoff says**

Throughout the first half of this novel I felt a little underwhelmed. The interaction between Io (the Quasing) and Ella (the host) were just too similar to what happened between Tao & Roen in *The Lives of Tao*. There was conflict, there was training. It was the same 'everyday' human being thrust into the Genjix v Prophus war.

But then, things pick up in a big way. Without entering into spoiler territory, there are the return of old characters and the revelation of hidden objectives that really ratchet up the tension & excitement in the final third of the book. Which finally leads to a revelation at the very end which brings up an intriguing problem for the future of the series.

The book has the same humourous, action packed style as the Tao books. And I'm now looking forward to

the continued story of the Quasings on Earth.

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## **Pam ?Because Someone Must Be a Thorn? Tee says**

~ this review is for an Advanced Review Copy

I really enjoyed this book and I would have to say that it's because of the depth and complexity of the story and characters. What Wesley Chu has created is a world of contrasts. A world that has evolved as no one expected. Not human, not alien.

The story is mostly told from Ella Patel's perspective. We do however get chapters from the viewpoint of other major characters, and that makes all the difference. It's one thing to be told how the opponent works. It's another thing to be thrust into their world to see their inner thoughts.

The characters are very well developed in this book. I particularly like the shades of grey that exist and that not everyone on any particular side has the same motivation.

The wordsmithing is good. I found a few minor persnickety things that jarred but overall I have been left wanting the next book. THE RISE OF IO is not your vapid action hack, but a book that creates a world and inhabits it with real people.

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## **Lynn Williams says**

<https://lynns-books.com/2016/10/06/th...>

I loved The Rise of Io – in fact I'm just going to be totally reckless ('fools rush in, something something something...') and say that this is my favourite Chu book to date. I don't know whether that's because we're back in the world of Quasings, whether it's because it's a world I'm already familiar with or whether it's the characters of Ella, Io and The Scalpel – or maybe simply a winning combination of all of those facts – but I loved it.

Firstly I would like to make clear that although this book takes us back to the world of Quasings this can definitely be started as a fresh series without the need to play catch up with the previous three books (The Lives/Deaths/Rebirths of Tao) – although, having loved those three books I do recommend them to you! That being said, knowing what it's like starting a story already deeply behind I fully appreciate sometimes having a new place to start and so if you don't enjoy playing catch up you could jump straight in with this one. Chu does a perfect job of laying out the basics of the world and the aliens that inhabit it and surprisingly, although I've read the previous books, this doesn't come across as tedious in any way whatsoever – in fact I found the information really helpful after the break between books. Secondly, if you're a little bit like I am – you're maybe looking at these books and thinking, 'mmm, sci-fi, not really my thing' – if you are thinking that same thought let me just say that it would be a crying shame to miss these books for that reason. Of course the very idea of aliens is science fiction but these books are so very much more – thrillers, mystery, espionage, war and great characters.

Basically the world created by Chu is one in which aliens exist on our planet. Unfortunately the only way for the aliens to function is to co-habit a human body and therefore over the course of history these aliens have

been responsible for many significant moments in our world's development. Unfortunately, the Quasings are at war with each other – in brief, they all want to return home and the only way to do so is to help humans to advance in their capabilities in order to make that a possibility – but they disagree over the way in which to do this. Split into the Genjix and the Prophus the Genjix take a fairly ruthless approach to human existence and see people as necessary casualties of their ultimate aim. The Prophus are more sympathetic to humans and don't wish to cause unnecessary harm. And so for years war has raged between the two.

At the start of the story we are introduced to Ella Patel. Ella lives in Crate Town and at the beginning of the story she's in the throes of pulling off a con which leaves her running for her life when the gangsters she's stealing from catch on! Of course Ella has lived in Crate Town for years and she knows the streets like the back of her hand. Pretty soon she finds herself, hidden in a dumpster, on the outskirts of town and playing witness to two characters who are themselves, similarly, being chased. The two, a man and a woman, are forced to defend themselves and when the man freezes Ella jumps in to help the woman as she fights alone. Unfortunately the woman dies and the Quasing that was inhabiting her body needs a new host – and chooses Ella. And so it begins. The process of denial and acceptance. The eventual realisation that Io's mission is now Ella's too.

In terms of plot this is the usual fast paced and intriguing storyline that I've come to expect from Chu. We have an element of mystery to the book. Why is Io, one of the Prophus, in India? This is an area that is predominantly Genjix and so it's both dangerous and puzzling. It seems that the Genjix have taken over a large portion of the area and are using it for a top secret purpose. Heavily guarded by the military anybody who steps into the wrong part of town seems to mysteriously disappear. On top of this we seem to have a traitor amongst the Prophus and that, coupled with Ella's inherent distrust of anybody else makes for very interesting reading.

Place. Well, we basically have a slum, where crates are stacked to create homes. This place is really not the sort of place that you'd like to wander into haplessly – even in the full light of day. Rough and full of thieves, conmen and gangsters one has to become tough to survive.

The characters are what made this so enjoyable for me, well, I say that, but also the writing which so easily brings them to life on the page and turns them into characters that you will care about. Obviously we have Ella. She is a wiry, tough little nut with a heart of gold. I love her – the way she's always looking for an angle, her prickly exterior, the fact that her best friend and burglar alarm is a dog, the way she steps in to help others and watching her have her first ever crush! Compelling reading. Then we have her Quasing Io. Io has lead a very long life but not maybe one that is totally noteworthy! Io is a fairly low ranked Prophus who isn't going to find Ella an easy person to control or persuade. Such a different angle to the Quasing in the last books that it was a refreshingly unexpected surprise. The banter and struggle between these two is just brilliant to behold. Then we have the Genjix. Known as Shura the Scalpel with a Quasing called Tabs – she is absolutely ruthless and very appropriately named. Cold, calculating and ambitious. The very qualities that are prized in a Genjix Adonis.

On top of all this the writing is wonderful. Chu is definitely smooth – there are no info dumps or flashbacks. With a few seemingly simple sentences he teases out his cast in a way that makes them spring to life, the same with the place. Literally, pages into this book and I was hooked.

A thoroughly enjoyable read and one that I practically devoured in two bites and a finish that makes me wonder when the next book is due out?? No pressure Mr Chu.

I received a copy of this through Netgalley courtesy of Angry Robots for which my thanks. The above is my

own opinion.

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## **Rob says**

**Executive Summary:** After a bit of a slow start, this is another solid entry in Mr. Chu's Quasing series.

### **Full Review**

I really enjoyed Mr. Chu's Tao series. I still think *The Rebirths of Tao* is his best book to date. This one is a good addition to the Quasing world and helps to build on the story established by the original trilogy.

Ella is a very different protagonist from Roen in *The Lives of Tao*. And Io is very different from Tao. The relationship between the two is also very different. That said, I found some of the initial plotting very similar to that book. I was enjoying the story, but it was a bit on the slower side and I was concerned it was simply a remake with a female protagonist in a different setting.

Thankfully that wasn't the case. I forget at what point in the book the story picked up, but once it did the fast paced action/thriller aspect of the original series was once again there, and instead of a reboot, the book felt like a natural progression of the original series.

While this is book 1 of a new series, it picks after the event's in Mr. Chu's original series. The author and the publisher would likely say you can start here having never read the original series, and they aren't entirely wrong. You get enough background to not be lost, but there are details from the original series that are important here. Personally I'll always do publish order, even if the author suggests otherwise.

If you're looking for a fun sci-fi thriller, I highly recommend checking out *The Lives of Tao* and the rest of that series before picking this one up. If you already read and enjoyed that series, I think you'll be happy with this new book.

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## **Cathy says**

A decidedly and enjoyably non-Caucasian or Western hero, Ella is half-Indian and half-Singaporean. Most of the story takes place in Crate Town, a slum made out of people live live in abandoned shipping containers on the Indian/Pakistani border leftover after the recent world war that was a result of the revelation of the Quasing's existence to the humans. Ella's mother fought for the Prophus in the war and died when Ella was 10. She lived on the streets of Crate Town until she was old enough to earn enough money as a con artist and buy her own crates. I enjoyed the international setting and characters, though other than descriptions of the characters and food, it didn't have such an international feeling, it kind of could have been anywhere. Ella didn't really feel different than any American girl in any other story I've read except for her taste in food. But I sure do appreciate the attempt. And the story was very enjoyable, a worthy progression in the tale of Quasing's on Earth and their often uneasy partnerships with humans. It's a really fun series and I definitely recommend it. Oh, and the cover by Tommy Arnold is beautiful, super cool.

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## **Kdawg91 says**

First of all, Wesley Chu is the bomb.com (trademarked), secondly The Rise of Io was a stellar read. A continuation of the Quasling universe created in Mr. Chu's first trilogy, Io is a brilliant tale, killer world building, great characters, action and dialogue.

Top to bottom...total FUN, and eventhough I was a fan of the first trilogy, I liked this book better and applaud the change of scenery and slight direction. It's a fun, fast read, go spend your money and buy all four in the series.

Thank you to Angry Robot for the ARC, the overlords are awesome..(drone sounds inserted)

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## **Tammy says**

4 1/2 stars\*\*\*\*\*

The nitty-gritty: A fast-paced adventure, back in the exciting world of the quasing, with some new characters, old friends, and plenty of cons, deals and double-crosses.

The Lives of Tao and the subsequent books in Chu's fantastic series were some of my favorite books from the past few years, so you can image how excited I was to find out he was starting another series set in the same world. The Rise of Io takes place some years after the Tao books (and I say "some years" because I'm not exactly sure how many) and contains many of the elements we're familiar with, if you've read that series. But this time the setting is Surat, India, and the main character is a tiny but fierce and plucky girl named Ella Patel. Like Roen before her, Ella is thrust into the life of the quasing against her will when she unwittingly becomes host to a Prophus named Io. But Ella and Roen couldn't be more different. Ella might be one of my favorite fictional characters ever, I simply loved everything about her.

But perhaps I'm getting ahead of myself. If you haven't read the first series, here's a little background about this world. The quasing are an ancient alien race who crash-landed on Earth millions of years ago, and since then have evolved and managed to survive our unbreathable air by using animals, and later humans, as hosts. At some point in our history, the quasing split into two factions: the Prophus, who want to live in harmony with their human hosts and who appreciate all the various forms of life on Earth; and the Genjix, those quasing whose only drive and purpose is to conquer humanity and crush anyone who opposes them. Because of the quasing's influence, all of the most important events in history have been shaped by either Prophus or Genjix, acting through their hosts. To simplify things, the Prophus are the good guys and the Genjix are the bad guys.

Ella Patel is a nineteen-year-old survivor of the Alien World War who has made a home for herself in a place called Crate Town, after the war decimated the economy in India. Ella has lived on her own for the past nine years, gaining street smarts and business acumen, running cons with the locals. She's made enough money to buy her own shipping crate which she calls home. Everything is status quo in Ella's life until one night she happens upon a fight between a young woman and two men. Despite the woman's keen fighting skills, she's killed in the battle, and as Ella rushes to help her, she unwittingly becomes host to the woman's now host-less quasing, a Prophus named Io.

Ella is terrified and angry with this sudden voice in her head, who she can't seem to escape, but she soon learns that as a quasing host, she has grave responsibilities. The woman who died, an operative named Emily, was about to uncover a secret plot by a group of Genjix in Surat, and now Ella has been tasked with taking over her mission. With a team of trainers and other loyal Prophus hosts to guide her, Ella reluctantly joins the mission to uncover the mystery of something called the Bio Comm Array, a machine the Genjix are building, right in Ella's backyard.

If you know my reviews at all, then you'll know I'm a huge fan of well-done humor in the novels I read, and true to form, Wesley Chu's latest is full of exactly the kind of snarky dialog I love most. Many of the conversations between Ella and Io are simply priceless. (Come to think of it, Ella is hysterically funny no matter who she's talking to!) Ella is shocked that she's expected to share her headspace with an alien, especially one as annoying as Io, and although she can't physically do anything about it, she tries her best to simply ignore the voice in her head, a voice that is trying to order her around. Ella has literally had to survive on the streets, and so she doesn't take shit from anyone, especially a stranger. Over time, their relationship becomes more civil, but Ella continues to make it clear that she's on her side first and foremost.

As he did in the Tao books, Chu begins each chapter with a short description of quasing life, this time told from Io's point of view. Io tells of her long journey to Earth and how for millions of years she occupied creatures like plankton and eventually animals, before finally moving to a human host. Io's tale is one of failure. She has tons of ambition but she's never been lucky enough (or perhaps talented enough) to influence her hosts into doing great things. It was sort of sad, but I love the idea that not every quasing is as smart as Tao, and eventually Io grew on me.

I loved that Chu used India as the setting this time. The Tao books have always had a global feel to them, and this one fits the trend of showing how far the quasing reach is. Crate Town especially was a brilliant invention. The people who survived the war did whatever was necessary to keep going, and eventually they took over abandoned shipping containers and turned them into houses. The containers are stacked four or five high, to create a sort of city, and I could easily imagine what this looked like.

This brings me to one of my few issues with the book, however, and the reason that I didn't give *The Rise of Io* a full five stars. Because the story takes place exclusively in Crate Town and the surrounding area, there wasn't the feeling of movement that I got from the first series, which had the characters changing location quite a bit. After a while the story seemed to go in circles as the characters continue to cover the same ground over and over. I understand that the outcome of the story hinges on what's going down with the Genjix and the Bio Comm Array, but it would have been nice to change up the location a bit more.

But this is only a small thing, and most readers probably won't be bothered by it. Chu brings back several characters from his Tao books, which was very cool, and he introduces a terrifying woman named Shura, who won't let anyone stand in her way of seeing the Bio Comm Array project through to its end. Chu also gives us an unexpected twist in the form of a character who may be a double agent! Politics, changing loyalties, secrets, lies and high stakes—*The Rise of Io* has it all. At the end it's chillingly clear what the purpose of the Bio Comm Array might be, and we have a good sense of what's in store in the next book. (At least I hope there's a "next book.") I personally can't wait to find out!

Big thanks to the publisher for supplying a review copy.

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## **Mogsy (MMOGC) says**

Update: Yay, the Rise of Io is out now, my full review to come!

I was a beta-reader for this book, so it wouldn't feel right to post a review or my rating at this time. That being said, I **strongly** recommend everyone go out and get this book when it comes out, it's Wesley Chu's best yet :)

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## **Andy says**

Loved the first series with Tao & wasn't sure how I would take to this series as the lead is a female but having enjoyed the concept & humour of the first i had to give it a go & was well pleased when my local library splashed the cash (unusual for them to pick up this genre of read) .

Jus a short review as it's still a newish book & wont give much away..... I DO miss the interactions (evolved) between Tao & Roen & can't help but feel that a lot of the early book is a complete rehash of the opening chapters of the Tao series jus with female leads/protagonists & a lot of ground is revisited..... having said that its enjoyable enough & i DO like the notion/humour of having an alien in yer head so I stuck with it. It does fall into the same genre as the Rebirth of Tao in that it becomes a spy/action thriller as the plot unfolds but it goes deeper into the Quasing psyche (if thats the right word) which is an interesting development.

All in all a great continuation to the Quasing series of which I recommend you pick up the Tao series first before starting this one. 3.5 stars rounded upto 4.

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## **Ron says**

“No guns in Container Town.”

See? It can be done. Kick off a series with an enjoyable, self-contained story--not a chopped-off cliffhanger. A near future dystopia with aliens, set in the universe of Chu's Tao books. Why wasn't this Hugo Award finalist?

“It was one thing to witness a slum, it was another to see a beautiful city reduced to one before your eyes.”

Even if you haven't read previous stories in this setting, Chu focuses you on his protagonist and gently fills in the background as the story develops. The data dumps are appropriately placed and paced.

“Stop acting like life is some precious gift from a higher power. Everything dies, Ella. Everything is expendable.”

Totally immerses the reader in the setting. Captures the sights, smells and tastes of a slum in India. Relatable orphan heroine. (Aren't they all? Orphans, that is.)

“All people here cared about was survival and profit, not ethnicity.”

A wonderful, but false sentiment. While crises bring out the best in many; it brings out the worst in a few. And many of those few use ethnicity--theirs or others--as a wedge to divide. Another thought on character identity: Chu describes many characters and shows them in action, but doesn't label them. He leaves that to the reader.

“.. a round body that looked like it had its own gravitational pull.”

Nice, evocative cover art. Unfortunately it misrepresents Ella's appearance.

“Stick with me, Kid. We'll introduce you to a bigger world with all sorts of new people who will want to kill you.”

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## **Bradley says**

This is a totally enjoyable return to the Tao universe. Or, I should say, to the Earth set up in the Lives of Tao with all its sparkly aliens still fighting a civil war using humans as their bodies. :)

Hey, and not only do we have a new personality to get to know and love (or hate) in Io, but Tao himself shows up and plays a big role! Woo! Cameron!

But it is Ella who really shines here. Our Indian thief has all the trademarks of an underdog hero. It has the feel of the first Tao book with one HUGE difference. The lines of engagement, of just who is good and who is not, are VERY blurred. :) Or at least, Io believes so. This makes for some very interesting conflicts going forward.

I already have huge trust in Chu for this universe and loved the previous Tao books. They went crazy with the action. :) This one is shaping up to be one hell of a great series. :)

Total popcorn SF. Easy and fun. :

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## **Suzanne says**

3.5 stars - I enjoyed this book, and I really like the concept of the Prophus and the Genjix, but I didn't feel compelled to keep reading for about the first half. Once things really started happening in the second half, I had a much harder time putting the book down.

The Ella/IO combination is a much different combination than in the first trilogy, which is good. Ella is a feisty, street-smart heroine, and her attitude and spunk were the high-point of the book for me.

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