

Nemesis

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Isaac Asimov was in general a great author, and Nemesis certainly isn't an exception. He is one of the few authors who can get away with so little romance or action.

Imagine if Alpha Centauri weren't the nearest star. What if there was a red dwarf hidden by a dust cloud, even nearer?

No, the book doesn't deal with an encounter between Nemesis, the newly discovered star, and our Sun. Instead it supposes that a space Settlement decides to go live there without telling the rest of the world of the new star's existence. The goal of the Settlement's leader is to build a new society without all the squabbling caused by differences on Earth. We won't get into the odds of that working, especially since that isn't the point of the book.

The daughter of the astronomer who discovered Nemesis has an unusual ability to read body language. She can tell when people are lying, no matter how they try to hide it, or how they really feel about something they're talking about. Not a very comfortable person to be around for those who prefer to keep secrets.

But back on Earth, there are those who feel the Settlement's inhabitants deliberately and maliciously did not reveal the presence of Nemesis, and they intend to follow them.

Now, if you aren't familiar with Asimov's style, you may find his stories dry. As I said above, there is very little romance or action in his stories, and this is no exception. Many readers dislike how often he emphasizes that Marlene, the daughter of the astronomer, is quite plain and that no one can hide anything from her. But I enjoy this book quite a bit. Maybe it's the exploration of human nature.