



Lent, Jeremy R.
**REQUIEM OF THE
HUMAN SOUL**
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The fate of mankind depends on a mere schoolteacher who must argue for his race's survival despite opposition from genetically "superior" humans.

150 years from now, Eusebio Franklin, a genetically unmodified "Primitive," faces the unfamiliar world of genetically modified "d-humans." The d-humans wish to consign Primitives to reserves and eventual extinction, but they pick Eusebio to speak on behalf of the Primitives to justify their existence. A believer in religion, romance, wonder and other impulses that the d-humans lack, Eusebio eagerly seizes the chance to plead the case. He struggles to make the d-humans understand the ineffable mysteries of the human soul, but this is something that genetic engineering has, in a neat explanation of pseudo-science just detailed enough to be believable, legislated out of existence. Though ostensibly an exemplar of the glorious, emotional, wonderful messiness that humanity has to offer, Eusebio's moral indignation and sensitively outraged heart make him a flat protagonist, especially against the equally cardboard d-humans, who are superficially perfect but morally bankrupt villains. There's yet another layer in this tale of apocalyptic philosophy. During a break in the hearing, Eusebio is tempted by an anti-d-human freedom fighter, Yusef. He begins to take Yusef's proposal—to resist extinction by setting off a bomb in New York City as an act of defiance—seriously. At the same time, Eusebio's innately human faith and love, exemplified in his soul mate-like relationship with his tragically dead wife, makes him think that perhaps he could turn the tables on the d-humans and save humans without violence. Because Eusebio embodies a rather simple belief in human goodness and progressivism, all narrative indicators suggest that he will triumph over the evil d-humans. But Lent is too cynical for that. Note that the title refers to an inherently funereal requiem. Despite some character flaws, Lent writes engagingly, moving the story along with the dramatic swiftness and clarity of a movie script.

A philosophical suspense story that exhibits quick pacing, moral nuances and unexpected twists.

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