

Apocalypse How?

Galen Surlak-Ramsey

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Galen Surlak-Ramsey's comedic *Apocalypse How?* is the thrilling, clever first entry in a series of space romps.

Hapless treasure hunter Dakota has made it her mission to unlock the secrets of the Progenitors, a race of mythical, godlike beings. But she's not the only one with that dream, and others who share it do not share her morals. When Dakota stumbles across a Progenitor artifact, she and her alien best friend Tolby use it to evade rival treasure hunters and escape an ancient spaceship before it blows up with them inside.

The text jumps straight into its nonstop action, though the book balances between tense action scenes and quieter moments of exposition. It makes frequent references to science fiction classics, both explicitly and with a Douglas Adams-inspired sense of humor.

Dakota is equal parts ambitious, loyal, and just plain unlucky. She proves tough and brave, willing to explore unknown territory that's feared by others, but she also shows vulnerability as she tears up in dangerous or upsetting situations. Her attempts at time travel are utilized well. Those whom Dakota meets along the way are distinct, memorable, and—except for the villains—charming.

The book's primary setting—a futuristic museum where visitors can earn lifetime memberships by becoming exhibits for a few hundred years—is so developed that the book could have revolved around it alone. The glimpses it offers of alien beings and cultures are by turns engrossing and humorous. The book culminates in a rewarding, explosion-filled conclusion that leaves plenty of material for future installments.

Apocalypse How? blends science fiction and humor into a fun, high-stakes adventure quest.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (September / October 2019)

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