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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆ HISTORICAL

Archimedes' Claw

Theodore Morrison Homa
AuthorHouse
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Homa is a physician and a history, science, and science-fiction buff; he is also an intelligent and spiritual writer. In *Archimedes' Claw*, Homa marries the sci-fi techno-thriller with philosophy and theology. The narrative is not weighed down by the historical and scientific detail evident throughout the text. In fact, the author's use of actual names, facts, figures, and dates gives the novel a vivid authenticity and adds dynamics that are imperative to the story's theme.

The book opens in earnest when the protagonist, Professor Finn McGee, is abducted off the street by government agents and thrown into the back of an SUV. He is interrogated about his mentor Frank Hayhurst's mysterious disappearance from a laboratory—mysterious because it was locked from the inside. Hayhurst and Finn had been contracted to create a matter transport device. During an archaeological dig, Finn discovered evidence that such an apparatus had already been designed and built by the ancient Greek Archimedes, a mechanical and engineering genius. Finn and Hayhurst manage to recreate the transport machine within their lab, and the results are astounding: the mechanism appears to generate an anti-gravity field, and later Finn surmises that it might also be used as a time machine.

Finn prepares to test his hypothesis—to travel back in time to critical periods in the world's history and in his own life. He comes to realize that his entire adulthood may have been manipulated by sinister forces that have coerced and molded him into becoming a scientist. These manipulators also may have been instrumental in the death of his beloved wife Claire. Determined to cut the strings pulled by the puppet-masters that have controlled his life, Finn sets out on his mission.

The first part of the novel contains some awkward, clunky language that could have been smoothed by better editing. It is also somewhat distracting that references to the main character change from "Finn" to "McGee" and "Professor McGee" so often. Fortunately, though, as the story progresses and the action of the plot gains momentum, the errors and clumsy language lessen and eventually disappear.

Archimedes Claw is one of those novels that teaches as it entertains. Homa creates a believable and heroic protagonist and offers a storyline peppered with history, science, philosophy, and religion. With all these ingredients—and the addition of time travel—Homa manages to intrigue readers with his knowledge and thrill them with a great yarn at the same time.

LEE GOODEN (February 9, 2012)

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