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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆ GENERAL FICTION

Artisans of Time: Books I, II & III

M. Jude Gove
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“The hardest thing for you to understand said [King Ec’ron] would be that not only are you on a different planet but that you are some sixty-one Earth years in your past right now” the author writes.

Thus goes the twisted and adventurous storytelling in *Artisans of Time: Books I II & III* by M. Jude Gove. This trilogy of science fiction and fantasy is an epic tale of friends transported to another time and land. The book tells the story of their friendship with each other and with the people they meet in the Nur’ a world on the brink of destruction.

Gove writes this tale with bold detail as he takes seven high school students from a cave-exploring field trip to a planet that faces war and violence. Beginning with Rick Lloyd Johnson in 1993 the teens must face kings and queens rivaling factions and battle. Transported to the year 243 of the Nur’ Project they are thought to be seven warriors prophesied by the village ancestors. From there the story unravels for these teens who feel compelled to help the villagers: “No one had spoken a word for over two hours. Finally Ronda broke the silence. ‘We can’t just leave! I would never forgive myself if I didn’t try to help them somehow.’”

The book is written as a trilogy and includes the stories “Rings of the Gods” “Time Friend and Foe” and “Genetic Code.” In the first book Gove focuses on establishing the characters and the plot and introducing the history and people of the Nur’. The book includes a story of seven rings passed down from generation to generation. In “Time Friend and Foe” the teens journey through strange lands and time travel is explored. In “Genetic Code” technological destruction encompasses the Ge’mell and the teens offer their help.

Gove writes with a keen eye for detail which helps readers easily understand the story. He also explores the history of the characters and builds credible relationships between the friends and with the people and cultures they encounter. Gove also offers an alternate ending to the story and an appendix full of useful information such as a time line and a dictionary of words.

While Gove’s writing is easy to read the story is sometimes confusing because of the changing voice and tense. Parts of the story are told in first-person by the characters while others are told in third-person by a narrator. Transitions and sectional breakdowns of the passages help to clarify the changing voices in some parts of the book.

Artisans of Time is a creative fantasy full of twists anticipation and thoughtful plots. The characters form a bond that carries through the three books and allows the reader to get fully involved in the story. M. Jude Gove is an artisan of time-travel science fiction storytelling.
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