



Brain Drain

Leonard Gaultois

FriesenPress (Sep 25, 2014)

Softcover \$16.99 (264pp)

978-1-4602-5248-2

This funny, original satire on the aliens-among-us story is perfect for anyone who enjoys offbeat sci-fi.

What if everything we know of history was engineered by a race of ragtag aliens just waiting for us to come up with something worth stealing? In *Brain Drain*, Leonard Gaultois makes our ideas, not our natural resources, a galactic hot commodity in a fun and fresh take on the classic alien invasion story.

The tale follows Dec, a Drak alien who has been scoping out Earth for centuries waiting for humans to come up with something original enough to make him a profit. Neither coldly evil nor cartoonishly naive, his character is instead a relatable scavenger who might just be out of his league. He soon starts to go native, even meeting a girl and getting a fancy new truck. This makes it even more aggravating when he realizes a rival gang of galactic pirates has its own plans for Earth and its people. With humans starting to take notice of the strange occurrences seemingly out of their control and other pirates trying to cut in on his profits, Dec begins to regret not seizing the opportunity to cash in.

The story uses some often-used sci-fi tropes—aliens going undercover as humans and Earth as a backwater part of a galactic civilization—but that's where the similarities end. Making human ideas the sought-after resource allows the story to recast Earth's past, right back to the accidental extinction of the dinosaurs. Though most of the story takes place in the present day, it is given more depth with funny historical references and traditionally sci-fi, near-future tech.

Much of the book is broken into small sections of just a few paragraphs, particularly the first chapters, which tends to give the text a choppy, fragmented feeling as it bounces quickly between plot lines, characters, and locations. Occasionally the perspective switches to another character without a section break, which can be quite confusing, and inner monologues are not differentiated from regular text, requiring some careful reading to stay on track.

However, Gaultois's fun, accessible style immediately grabs attention and pulls it along for what is clearly going to be a fun ride. Thinly veiled but lighthearted satire, like humanity's insistence on carbon-based fuels long after their relevance passes, helps balance some characters that don't develop as far as they could.

It's not what you'd expect from an alien invasion story, but the author knows how to spin a good yarn. *Brain Drain* is a lot of fun and recommended for anyone who likes offbeat sci-fi that knows better than to take itself too seriously.

ERIC ANDERSON (January 29, 2015)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.