Clarion Review

Autobiography & Memoir

Casino Run: A series of baffling events
Forrest Haskell
CreateSpace
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Two Stars (out of Five)

Even following the tragic loss of his first wife and love of his life, it is comforting and uplifting to know that Forrest Haskell still believes he has "already hit life's jackpot." His memoir of three fun-filled days at a casino spa on the Red River with his late wife is a paean to his past princess. *Casino Run* is a very personal story, but it is neither the "Series of Baffling Events" that the subtitle promises, nor is it likely to be of much interest to anyone who doesn't know the author personally.

While those readers who also battle the slot machines and buffets at the El Dorado, the Horseshoe, and similar establishments may find themselves on familiar ground, not much happens here that hasn't happened to anyone who has gone on a family vacation. There are run-ins with prickly hotel desk clerks, room nightmares ranging from mice-infested mattresses to methane leaks, and sad stories of those players who find they have gambled away the gas money to get home.

There are incidents involving a tornado, tennis, and Tom Jones, and while unusual, they are hardly baffling events. Haskell's tale would make for pleasant enough dinner table conversation, but it does not make for a particularly interesting read.

Haskell has five novels to his credit, and he promotes and summarizes them in the last eight pages of *Casino Run*. His style is very conversational, but he gets a bit too familiar with his audience, as if he is telling them the story, drink in hand, at a bar. His tale is not told badly—it is just not unique.

There are a few formatting errors and typos, especially in the pages Haskell tacks on to promote his other books. A few passages concerning his "Tallywacker" and bodily functions could make some readers uncomfortable. His own daughter remarks on one such passage about Haskell's tendency for giving out TMI (too much information), especially of a personal or

sexual nature. These are perhaps minor quibbles, but readers may find them to be what they remember most about *Casino Run*.

It may not have been easy for Haskell to write this memoir. It undoubtedly stirred up strong emotions and memories of a lost partner. Thanks to the support of his family, the love and understanding of a new wife, and the helping hands of his friends, this genuinely nice man has indeed “hit life’s jackpot.”

Mark McLaughlin