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CLARION REVIEW ★★★☆☆ GENERAL FICTION

Committee for Undiscovered Findings

Frank Mungiovi
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This spellbinding but flawed novel is the story of Dr. Frank Gibson's adventure with a secret research group the Committee for Undiscovered Findings. Frank and his fellow scientists Dr. Kevin Dobson and Dr. Charles Furgisson are sent to the "dark side" of the moon to explore what appears to be an alien structure. (In fact there is no true "dark side" of the moon. Proper research would have shown the author that there is a far side of the moon that faces away from the earth at all times but it is illuminated by the sun.) While investigating the structure Frank and his team find that it somehow influences their emotions. "Before my emotional tone was low" Frank says. "Now it was rising toward the anger zone…I was dancing in my boots with frenetic energy."

The structure is indeed alien and the team attempts to research its origin and purpose. Back on Earth Frank suspects sinister machinations behind the moon mission. He thinks his every move is being watched and his conversations are monitored. By careful and candid observation he searches for the truth behind the Committee for Undiscovered Findings.

The brilliance of the moon exploration sequences is that the dialogue is written like a stage play which gives readers the sense of being part of the transmissions between astronauts and mission control creating a delicious reality that builds tension. The author allows his narrator Frank Gibson to explain why he wrote the dialogues in a stage play format: "The spacesuit's radios operated on two frequencies one for sending and another for receiving…When you speak the sending circuit automatically switches on. When you stop speaking the radio waits a second before switching off…I explain this so you will get the ideas as you read." Unfortunately the author continues this stage play dialogue technique long after the moon sequences and this too is distracting.

It's a shame when a book with such incredible potential contains an off-putting number of grammar spelling syntax and factual errors. For example the book's very first page contains this awkward sentence: "As a child of eight in the third grade my teacher had an interest in Paleontology." This dangling modifier gives readers the impression that when his teacher was eight years old she had an interest in Paleontology. Errors like this are inexcusable and detrimental to the reader's enjoyment regardless the power of the story.

The novel features an ever-quickening pace similar to books by Michael Crichton. Mungiovi is an excellent storyteller and should continue to write; the only thing that has kept *Committee for Undiscovered Findings* from being a great book is a lack of good editing.

LEE GOODEN (November 14, 2008)

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