Clarion Review

Science Fiction

Galaxy Killers: Living Planets: Book 1
Amber Wokaty
AuthorHouse
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Three Stars (out of Five)

V'Let and D'Las M'Kaz are orphaned twins, the last survivors of the destruction of their planet Loora. Held in check by a brutal intergalactic council, these twin Galaxy Killers unwillingly annihilate worlds of sentient beings that the corrupt interstellar government deems a threat. When the pair is tasked with obliterating Earth, they encounter unexpected resistance in the form of vampires, witches, and other supernatural beings who dwell among the humans. Chief supernatural players include Erik the vampire, Rosalie, who can shift between planes of reality, and Matlinda the witch. As the story hurtles onward, it remains to be seen whether V'Let and D'Las can be freed from their horrible servitude and whether Earth's non-human inhabitants can save the planet from doom. Amber Wokaty chronicles the struggles of the Galaxy Killers and Earth's paranormal entities in her multi-layered debut, *Galaxy Killers: Living Planets: Book 1*.

Wokaty displays complex world-building and character formation capabilities, far above those of other first-time sci-fi authors. She creates nuanced and sympathetic beings in V'Let and D'Las, even as the pair has been responsible for carnage all their lives. Additionally, she makes clever use of their unique relationship, refusing to fall into the stereotypes of fictional twins. Although it takes too long to find out that V'Let and D'Las are pawns of the council, the pair's tenderness with each other and the internal conflict sustains readers' empathy until the nature of their predicament is revealed.

Rosalie, Erik, and Matlinda are equally multifaceted. The planes of reality Rosalie travels among are all fascinating places. The notion of supernatural characters living alongside ordinary humans and protecting them is an ingenious one. One wishes, however, that there were more individualized human characters to root for, along with the multitudes of differentiated aliens and supernatural Earthlings. In fact, the novel's many complex characters represent the story's strength and its weakness. *Galaxy Killers* is told from too many points of view, and the

author constantly introduces new elements. Without a list of characters in the beginning of the novel, it becomes increasingly difficult to recall relationships among characters as the plot progresses. Wokaty is so gifted with dialog and world-building, that in her excitement to include myriad marvelous elements in her narrative, she plunges the audience right into the action. Unfortunately, though, the author often only provides sparse descriptions of settings and history when more context would help the audience become further engrossed in the manuscript. The snippets she does offer are juicy; however, one feels the author crammed several books' worth of plot into one novel.

Moreover, Wokaty excels at creating and maintaining suspense, making the novel a page-turner. Yet, the cliff-hanger aspect becomes diluted as readers become confused at the sheer abundance of supporting characters and motives. If the author can harness her propensity to include every single idea she has into her novels, the Living Planets series will be a killer success.

Jill Allen