

Geodysseus

Joe Costanzo

Giuseppe Costanzo (Feb 22, 2022)

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In the musing science fiction novel Geodysseus, a scientist races to uncover the truth about a vehicle that crashed in the desert.

In Joe Costanzo's science fiction novel *Geodysseus*, a Death Valley find prompts fears of a Russian attack.

At the height of the Cold War, the Atomic Energy Commission sends Frank off to investigate sites in Death Valley. The coordinates he's asked to track were gleaned from wreckage of unknown provenance. Due to the cryptic nature of this evidence, the American government fears Russian involvement.

Frank scours several locations with a member of the Army Corps of Engineers, Bobcat. The men learn that each coordinate they're tracing indicates another piece of the item's wreckage, each seeming to be a component needed to power the device back on. Then Frank discovers that the writing in the wreckage is identical to the symbols engraved on his uncle's briefcase. The book's sense of mystery deepens as Frank struggles to understand his own connection to the potential extraterrestrial object he's helping to rebuild.

In this measured tale, Frank goes up against mindless bureaucracies more so than anyone else, and he is most impeded by a lack of information. He's forced to keep his secrets close, and he opens up to Bobcat alone. Together, they worry about the secret of the wreckage getting out.

Vibrant details about nuclear tests and the quiet, dangerous desert are both surreal and grounding, while Frank's uncle's notions of creation are strange, leading him to misappropriate university funds to construct related devices. Frank's lack of childhood memories is an enticing part of the puzzle. In comparison to these narrative features, though, Frank and Bobcat's exchanges with each other and others are sterile in tone—even though the duo's friendship is a source of abiding strength.

As the book progresses, its science fiction and Cold War-era intrigue elements give way to a more personal story about Frank's pursuit of ultimate truth, particularly as it relates to the wrecked object and his family stories. Frank's sanity is tested during his travels in the desert, especially as he connects with locals who tell their own versions of the truth. By its end, the book has become akin to a contemplative quest. In the book's thrilling conclusion, all of the questions posed throughout the book are answered.

In the musing science fiction novel *Geodysseus*, a scientist races to uncover the truth about a vehicle that crashed in the desert.

JOHN M. MURRAY (April 6, 2022)

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