Clarion Review

General

Hell Came on a Pretty Day
Bryce Thunder King
iUniverse
978-0-595-53331-2
Two Stars (out of Five)

In Bryce Thunder King's second Jamie Page novel Jamie and his wife Angie McAfee are fed up with watching their beloved country fall prey to terrorists and criminals. They vow to take action quitting their jobs and beginning a rigorous physical fitness regimen. In the first of this novel's wild implausibilities they convince the American president to issue them a secret special appointment under the "National Security Agency Special Task Force for Terrorism."

Continuing along the track of the unbelievable Jamie and Angie are sent to Marine Corps bases "to train to be super humans and hunt down the bad guys operating in the United States." They are handed an unlimited budget to build a bulletproof house with a fully outfitted lab firehouse pole and shooting gallery. They rent an office and hire a secretary and housekeeper and buy special vehicles and spy gear like camera rings.

Their first assignment is to round up a treacherous colonel and his minions who are "giving away Pentagon secrets." They track down the traitors fill them with bullets and blades retrieve packets of paper stamped "Top Secret" in red and proclaim "This country is not for sale."

The first novel in the series *Jamie It's Our Dance* was published in 2007 and carries some plot threads into volume two. While King calls his books "thrillers" *Hell Came on a Pretty Day* is more like a fantasy targeted at teenage boys. The characters are one-dimensional. The protagonists' personalities consist of their love for each other their parents and their country; the housekeeper's only traits are her cooking skills and her insistence on calling her employers by the old-fashioned "Miss Angie" and "Mr. Jamie"; the antagonists are faceless "bad guys."

Violence is a necessary part of being a secret government superhuman fighting machine and King doesn't skimp on graphic descriptions of the altercations. In fact the book comes with a tongue-in-cheek warning disallowing responsibility "for medical expenses caused by reading"

the final chapter. However each violent scene is so lacking in suspenseful build-up that the blood bombs and grappling hooks aren't as shocking as intended.

The author describes what Angie and Jamie eat and wear in detail yet glosses over plot developments rapidly. There are strange sub-plots involving a crime lord whose organization has a history with Angie as well as several strains of personal vengeance. The novel lacks structure character development coherent plot advancement consequences and redemption. It's an episodic video game on the printed page.

This simplistic novel will appeal to red-blooded teenage boys who indulge in "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" style fantasies. Adults seeking a thriller read should stick to Crichton and Grisham.