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CLARION REVIEW ★★★☆☆ SCIENCE FICTION

Hollywood Planet

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In the realm where science fiction and pop culture meet, creative writers congregate to share their fantastic tales. More entertaining than scientific, these stories are the arena for superheroes and comic book villains. Implausible plot line or not, no fan of this esteemed genre questions the structure of a novel intended as a lighthearted, fun read. *Hollywood Planet* is one of those highly commercial romps across a literary playground. Fast-paced and quirky, this is an action-filled exploration of a fantasy too weird to be taken with anything but a sense of humor.

Retired Major General Woodrow “Woody” Jackson is called back to duty by the US government to stop a runaway planet heading toward earth. Ordered on a twenty-year mission into space, he and his crew are put into suspended animation until they reach their destination. They come out of this controlled state no older, but with regained youth and vitality. His team consists of eight skilled women from various military and civilian backgrounds; beautiful and vivacious companions for General Jackson’s voyage.

The novel is full of unexpected twists, mischievous sex, and strange encounters. The dreaded aliens are Hollywood lookalikes, and General Jackson, a Clark Gable double, finds his own squad physically transformed into famous icons. The women treat him as though he were Gable, flirting and coming on to him as they would a movie star. Though amusing and intended to be arousing, most of these sex scenes are disjointed and gratuitously placed without furthering the plot.

Eichman’s strongest characteristic is a succinct style that favors action over introspection. Perfectly suited to science fiction, he knows what to emphasize and what to leave out, except for the sex scenes. He’s good at strategic placement of surprises and has the ability to hold a reader’s attention. A visual writer, his descriptions give a powerful sense of *being there* in crucial situations, an important quality in mass market fiction.

Lawrence Eichman is the author of five books, including the 2009 release of *Return to a Country at War*. He served in the US Air Force during the Vietnam War and later established a career in the international banking industry. He has traveled throughout the world.

This far-fetched novel will appeal to aficionados of save-the-world popular fiction. The enjoyment in reading *Hollywood Planet* is similar to watching *Ironman* in a Clark Gable disguise.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (September 27, 2010)

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