ForeWord Reviews

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Homicidal Aliens and Other Disapointments
Brian Yansky
Candlestick Press
978-0-7636-5962-2

This is not your average alien invasion story, with humor, darkness, and symbolism that will satisfy teens of both genders.

Teenage martial artist and newly clairvoyant, Jesse continues his battle against the polite but deadly Sanginian alien invaders in this sequel to Brian Yansky's *Alien Invasions and Other Inconveniences*. Facing a new alien enemy, The Hunter, and a pressing deadline—thirty million more Sanginians are on their way to colonize Earth—Jesse seems to be the only person on the planet with the skills and opportunity to save the fate of the human race. Despite the grave apocalyptic scenario, Jesse's quest unfolds in a straightforward and humorous first-person narrative with nonstop action sequences that will keep teen readers turning pages.

After a brief prologue that fills in the backstory from the previous book, readers find Jesse has joined a group of telepathic rebels who consider him the latest incarnation of their "Warrior Spirit" and thus destined to lead them to their future. Some rebels want to fight their way to freedom, others to find a place to hide until the alien threat has ended, but everyone is looking to Jesse for leadership, and he is not feeling up to the task. The self-named Running Bird, a man who describes himself as "Navajo, Hispanic, White, African-American American," shares some of Jesse's abilities and guides him towards new relationships and powers that will help him be more successful in his battle.

Yansky, an established YA author and writing teacher, writes from Jesse's perspective, exploring the seriousness of his predicament in a lighthearted way. He stretches the boundary of humorous, young adult science fiction by incorporating a romantic subplot and offering natural symbolism that nourishes Jesse in his darker moments. Seeing animals such as bugs and baby deer remind him that "everything didn't die when the aliens conquered us."

While Jesse narrates his experience in a simplistic and amiable tone, the alien invasion theme invites the reader to consider the kinds of serious issues—the boundaries of telepathic thought, time travel, genocide, fight vs. flight—that will capture the imaginations of young male teens like the protagonist. The accessibility of the text combined with the exposure to more

philosophical thoughts about our existence on earth make this title an appealing one for book clubs, especially those looking to attract teen readers. Teens of both genders with an interest in alien themed science fiction will enjoy this satisfying read.

Carolyn Bailey