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CLARION REVIEW ★★★☆☆ GENERAL FICTION

It Isn't Easy Being a Lion: Revised Edition 11/21/07

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*And the eagle flies with the dove / And if you can't be with the one you love / Love the one you're with —*Crosby Stills Nash & Young

The second book in the Rob Grant Trilogy features a lead character in the process of finding a deeper sense of value. Now. scaling the face of big four-o Rob is in a mid-life transition away from the indiscriminate wick-dippery evident in *Deliberate Steps* and towards mature love based on inner character. His progress is two moves forward to one back and the tone often sometimes serious. The line "In bed there was no loving this night" indicates that this drama won't avoid challenges. Most notably Rob frankly verbalizes responsibility admitting to his elder son Mike: "…with the parade of women through here I'm not being a very good father."

The dispassionate facts: In 1969 and 1970 Rob Grant is a recruitment manager for a mining concern headquartered in Manhattan. His international business travel includes hellholes of leisure like Fiji Australia and London. A twice-divorced single parent to two teenage boys he commutes from suburban Connecticut. The younger son Greg very much wants a stepmother despite Rob's blissful second bachelorhood. At thirteen he is familiar with hard drugs already.

Women everywhere want to share straws with protagonist but the starting lineup holds at three allowing for substitutions. In the audacious spirit of Bill Clinton's infamous *Leaves of Grass* duplicate gift faux pas Rob buys Marianne Kim and Justine identical South Pacific opals and allows them to decide the significance. When efficiency consultants shake the workplace into layoffs and young Greg commits a desperate act for attention Rob responds with unexpected strength and shows human frailty as well.

Puffery and prowess-related superlatives are simply part of the package when following Rob's amorous exploits. It's a touch of camp—the clockwork achievement of untoppable climaxes the cavalier proficiency. It can generate terrific pillow talk. For example third place love interest Justine asks during afterglow "I wasn't too noisy was I?" To which Rob responds "No way of knowing. I wasn't listening." And remarkably she doesn't hand him his posterior on a plate. Who can get away with that besides Jack Nicholson? Roll with it people.

The middle acts of trilogies are a shade more ominous or less comic as this is. *It Isn't Easy Being A Lion* has fewer excesses than its predecessor *Deliberate Steps (Along A Familiar Path)*. It offers a more dynamic more complete protagonist. Check out *Imprints (On a Healing Heart)* to see Rob Grant reach for resolution to a life heavy on surface pleasure and scarce of lasting substance.
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