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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ SCIENCE FICTION

Kethani

Eric Brown
Solaris (May 6, 2008)
Unknown $15.00 (304pp)
978-1-84416-473-8

"A year of turmoil had followed the coming of the Kéthani. The human race, suspicious and hostile at the best of times, did not trust the alien race that had arrived unannounced bearing its gift from the stars…we were, of course, judging the Kéthani by our own standards…the divide happened on a global level: some countries accepted the gift, while other rejected it. Many nations were torn by internal opposing forces." So begins Eric Brown's multi-faceted and brilliant philosophical sci-fi novel, *Kéthani*. Through *Kéthani*, Brown shows us the ramifications of the human race being granted the gift of immortality. Our true nature of superstition, violence, narcissism, and self-destruction rears its ugly head. Even as we have supposedly scaled the rungs on the ladder of betterment through millions of years of evolution, we are desperate to acclimate while holding onto our old values.

Kéthani is a hybrid of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Ray Bradbury's *Martian Chronicles*, in that Brown, like Chaucer, maintains that a pub is the nexus or meeting place of their character's lives where they swap stories and glean information. Ray Bradbury's *Martian Chronicles* are a series of interlocking short stories not necessarily about the planet Mars, but about people. The red planet is secondary in Bradbury's narrative, similar to how Brown writes about average and everyday people going through their average and everyday lives with the Kéthani in the background adding new and interesting dynamics to the human condition. Like Bradbury's *Chronicles*, Brown's novel is masterly interwoven from many short stories that he connects for a single narrative. Brown has written Kéthani stories for other periodicals within the time span of a decade. The Kéthani have been on his mind for a long time.

Brown's first novel, *Meridian Days*, was published in 1993. He has won the British Science Fiction Award twice. He has published twenty-five books: SF novels, stories, collections, books for teenagers and younger children. Brown writes a monthly SF review column for the *Guardian*.

Eric Brown's *Kéthani* is an excellent illustration of what sci-fi readers have known for years and what *Wired* magazine's Clive Thompson said in a recent article. He writes, "If you want to read books that tackle profound philosophical questions, then the best—and perhaps only—place to turn these days is sci-fi. Science fiction is the last great literature of ideas."
(April 11, 2008)

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