Clarion Review

Historical

Past the Last Island: A Misfits & Heroes Adventure
Kathleen Flanagan Rollins
CreateSpace
978-1-4793-0826-2
Five Stars (out of Five)

Past the Last Island, by Kathleen Flanagan Rollins, is a fascinating return to the beginning of society and a poignant reminder of the power of love. In vivid detail, Rollins depicts a place and time in which modern humans perish, a raw and natural existence on desolate terrain some fourteen thousand years ago in the South Pacific. The story explores experiences now hidden in the depths of the human collective unconscious.

Driven from their homeland in a tidal flood, a group of seventeen villagers seek a better life elsewhere and embark upon a journey into the unknown. The vast, endless sea and the rough, hostile land ruled by potential enemies await these early explorers. Though a bombardment of characters prohibits in-depth development of any protagonist, the book does not lose its ability to attract and hold reader interest.

Steeped in mysticism and superstition, the story delves into primal fear, spiritual awakening, and sensory enlightenment. Rollins's evocative descriptions play on all five senses, bringing to awareness every hardship our technologically advanced world no longer easily comprehends. She writes, "Morning brought just enough light for him to see the heavy sky swelling with the next storm. The seawater sloshing in the boat smelled foul. Remains of his food baskets floated in soggy masses around him: snake fruits, root bundles, bits of fat-berry cakes, a broken basket lid, bark cloth, one of the waterskins. Thirsty, he lifted the skin and took a long drink."

Entertaining and informative, Rollins's writing demonstrates her extensive knowledge in an intense, artistic exploration of a lost civilization. A former professor at Mott College in Michigan, her travels across the globe have fueled her thirty years of academic achievement in composition and literature.

Top-notch editing enhances the sophistication of this polished novel. A washed-out

cover design, however, keeps the book's packaging from matching up to its exceptional content.

Though Rollins's writing has been compared to the work of Jean Auel, a likely inspiration, this novel in the Misfits and Heroes series is unique in its creativity and style. The author's original blend of lyrical storytelling and courageous realism make this well-researched book a must-read for fans of adventure and romance.

Julia Ann Charpentier