ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

SCIENCE FICTION

Pixel
Arthur Hughes
AuthorHouse
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Three Stars (out of Five)

In Arthur Hughes's interesting tale *Pixel*, the nation's new independence is not the only historic event during the year 1776; it is also the time when an alien comes to Earth to study humans.

Pixel is a young explorer from the tiny planet of Larth, a utopia where everyone is treated equally and there is no war. Science and technology on Larth are far more advanced than that which exists on Earth in the eighteenth century. Pixel is also roughly one inch tall, a characteristic that proves most convenient as he unobtrusively explores the planet and the "giants" who inhabit it.

The tiny visitor befriends a young family, and the association leads to many illuminating adventures. In the rustic America in which he lands, the technologies that allow Pixel to fly, use a laser, and carry people and objects around while tethered to his melon-sized spaceship are all mystifying to the human beings who witness his actions. Most of those that he comes into contact with, however, are quick to accept his presence without fear or much question, a choice that strains the book's credibility.

The story is constructed well and progresses at a comfortable pace. Although there are a few instances where large periods of time are glossed over or summarized quickly, the transitions are sufficiently achieved so that the effect is not excessively jarring. Pixel and his friends face and conquer several conflicts over the course of the novel, and all of the story lines are brought to acceptable conclusions.

There are a few typographical errors and awkward shifts in point of view. The dialogue works well for the most part but is occasionally stilted. While some of this can be attributed to Pixel's halting use of the Earthling's language as he learns it, the stiff tone is sometimes present even when he converses with other Larthans. There is also a tendency for characters to constantly address one another by name in conversation, a habit that makes the dialogue sound unnatural.

The novel's action is neither fast paced nor thrilling but is generally interesting enough

to maintain reader interest. Pixel is a likeable little guy with a big heart, and his overall goal is to help the inhabitants of this more primitive planet. His solutions to problems rarely go awry, and the humans he chooses to befriend all benefit from the experience.

While the basis of the story may be hackneyed—a visitor from another planet comes to Earth to learn and share knowledge—the time period in which it occurs is less typical, as is the physical size of the alien visitor. The decision to give a common trope a fresh twist serves to make the story more intriguing and unique. The whimsical tone of the story is most likely to appeal to middle-grade and young adult readers who are sure to find Pixel's adventures entertaining.

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