Clarion Review

General

Red Moon: Looming of a New World Order
Ron Roman Riales
iUniverse
978-0-595-45503-4
Two Stars (out of Five)

Dr. Jennifer Bently has just completed her service on a Hopi Reservation after medical school and lands a research gig at a secret military base in the desert. Two of her patients prophesize that she will meet two men: one an enemy and the other a friend. Readers immediately see who will play each role when Jennifer arrives on the base.

Despite two references to her sandy brown hair and a steamy description of her assets in a peignoir she had the foresight to pack for her new assignment our heroine is a two-dimensional stock character. She is thirty-four years old but speaks and drinks like an older woman quaffing Scotch and purring “darling” to her commanding officer the much older General who is her soul mate after only two days in his company. Although she holds graduate degrees Jennifer’s an airhead. She blathers on about her top-secret job to her patients doesn’t know what 0600 hours means and reveals secrets over the telephone. The General’s also more brawn than brains: he downs two double Scotches before attempting a complicated entry to a secret door made of alien technology; these two are made for each other.

The book’s dialogue is stilted from the start when Joseph kisses his waking bride and tells her “I go now to greet the sun with the music from my flute as I have greeted you this morning with love.”

This kind of thin characterization and pat dialogue works in a comic book but a novel needs more descriptive writing to carry the reader along.

Even though this is speculative fiction too many improbable scenes plague the pages. Jennifer shows up at her first meeting with her colleagues and takes charge by jumping onto the conference table stamping her foot and making a righteous speech. This gymnastic address garners a round of applause and even convinces her fellow female scientists to join her in donating one egg each to create hybrid human-alien infants. On the day of the clones’ birth she

sneaks in for a glimpse of her egg child and despite being a newborn he (she sneaks a peak under the diaper that he somehow needs while floating in a liquid tank) smiles and looks longingly after her.

There are brief interludes of lovely writing as when a grown clone has long philosophical talks with his adoptive father. These short bits about Hopi Indian ideas and myth are engaging and thoughtful.

Overall *Red Moon* is a book badly in need of an editor to snip out cliché-ridden descriptions and clumsy dialogue. A software program may have zapped the misspellings but there are many distracting grammatical errors and strange punctuation marks throughout. An editor would also have rid the book of the overuse of stock phrases like “jacking my jaws.” Although the book’s premise is interesting cardboard characters and leaden dialogue ultimately make *Red Moon* unsuccessful.

Rachel Jagareski