Clarion Review

Science Fiction

Righting Time
Kat Jaske
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Three Stars (out of Five)

The eventful third book in the *Honor Bound* series *Righting Time* extends the adventures of Alexandre Dumas' *Three Musketeers* into a future both strange and familiar. Time travel is controlled by refined psychically able people from the twenty-sixth century under the leadership of protagonist Jala Brenhaven. She enlists the aid of classic literary swashbucklers Athos Porthos D'Artagnan Aramis and the latter's fiancée French super spy Laurel d'Anlass. They're transported from 1641 to 2060 where the body of the conflict plays out. The group must proceed cautiously against a female-headed Crime Syndicate and a wily grudge-bearing assassin who has himself time-traveled from 1640.

Aspects of the culture in 2060 suggest overall progress. Profanity is out of style average lifespan is on the rise opportunity is equal in practice between genders and races. The Syndicate however exerts a troubling amount of power of Congress the courts and D.C. city politics. As the action heats up they're poised to consolidate power over national governments in the U.S. Russia and Japan simultaneously bent on crushing a popular international unity movement called Global Outreach.

The musketeers partially adapt in speech patterns and behavior to the future's updated norms. They shave off beards and learn to use advanced technology but they retain their core code of honor and unshakable affection for the lasses. Personalities are nicely differentiated from one another. Tricky issues of genealogical descent and strict prohibition against altering history exacerbate the heroes' challenges. One musketeer raises the ick factor unaware of his familial relation to Jala: "Making out with her great-grandfather even though many times removed sat distinctly ill with her."

Chapter headings feature epigrams by literary titans such as Ralph Waldo Emerson H.G. Wells and Twain but also ironic quotations from former Mayor Marion Barry. One frown

inducer is the immediate repeat of characters' thoughts in following dialogue. For example: "That situation bore watching. 'I will definitely look into that situation' Konrad replied." Also noticeable is a pattern of pointing out nonwhite characters' race or ethnicity many times over. The senior leader from the Guild of History and Time Observation Jala's stepfather Keith is religiously identified as black-skinned. A thick helping of secondary characters are kept straight by an appendix.

This speculative-historical adventure ties up conflicts evenly but leaves some threads to be pursued in the next installment of the series. Author Kat Jaske is an English and French teacher in the Vegas area with an active interest in fencing. Her view of the future is more optimistic than otherwise. Familiar team-oriented figures in *Righting Time* help illustrate that problems will continue to flow from weak people whose credo is *each for themselves* rather than Dumas' iconic tagline of esprit de corps: "All for one and one for all."

Todd Mercer