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CLARION REVIEW ★★★☆☆ GENERAL FICTION

Rollan

Geraldine Stith
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Rollan is the name of this novel and *rollin'* is what it does. With the exception of the first chapter which drags slightly due to an excess of misplaced back-story the plot of this book is its main strength. Protagonist Rollan Clark a man of small faith but enormous undeveloped powers is a sympathetic well-rounded character whose actions drive the story engine at a thrilling pace. Readers will shiver in their armchairs as dark powers threaten Rollan his family and the little community of Blue Mound Kentucky.

The forces of evil are not omnipotent however as angels in the form of departed loved ones and even a precocious three-year-old child can attest. Readers will feel fairly confident about the ultimate triumph of good over evil although the author skillfully leaves room for doubt (and in fact for a sequel.)

One of the author's more interesting ideas is that God would send a modern prophet (Rollan Clark) to help save human souls. "'There has always been a reason for the way things happen…Times are changing and God needs for us to understand him and do his will.'" God also gives humanity a disturbingly pertinent message: We destroy whatever we touch. "[Man] had invented fire steel powder and now atomic energy. What was next? With each of these weapons one man could do harm to another." As the book is set in 1945 the characters are told that a hideous weapon of mass destruction is about to be invented which they later learn is called an "atom bomb."

Although the characterizations in *Rollan* tend toward absolutism (words like "always" "all" "never" "absolutely" and "totally" are flung about in double handfuls) a trick twist that pertains to two of the secondary characters toward the end of the novel is a welcome surprise. And anyone who has lived for long in a small town will recognize the gossip-loving slightly insular citizens of Blue Mound.

It's a pity that the author was unable to have the novel proofread before its publication as this is really too engaging a story to be tarnished by obvious errors such as run-on sentences misspellings ("the breaded lady" at the circus and a character who is not "sacred" of the demon are two examples where the errors are unintentionally comedic) or English usage confusion between lose/loose wring/ring their/there/they're and to/too.

Due to the drawbacks of the story's confinement in an imperfectly-grasped written form readers may not enjoy it as much as they could if it were polished until it shone. However *Rollan* is an entertaining story that if told orally around a campfire or inside a coffeehouse on a rainy night would produce sheer pleasure.

Geraldine Stith is the also the author of Alien Legacy a non-fiction account of the Kelly Green Men incident which can be found at www.alienlegacy1955.com.
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