

## Space Bull

**Gary Kaupie**

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Science fiction and humor can be a marvelous combination. It is a genre limited only by the scope of the universe and the wit and creativity of the authors. In *Space Bull*, author Gary Kaupie proves that both his wit and creativity are up to the challenge. This book is the epic comedy of the “fortunate forty” and their journey through the universe to find bliss in the hole of the Cosmic Donut. Led by Captain Bob, a group of wealthy academics each drinks a cyanide cocktail and quietly dies aboard their spaceship, which, just for good measure, proceeds to blow up. Surprisingly, this is just the beginning of the tale. All forty people, plus one shoe salesman who got caught in the blast, are then beamed aboard a Voltarian spaceship where their molecules are reorganized to bring them back to life. Consequently, instead of a peaceful journey into bliss, they find themselves facing hostile aliens and dangerous planets.

*Space Bull* is a zany and irreverent journey into the imagination. The many characters all have interesting back stories and quirky personalities. Included here is Stick, who chews garlic constantly and lives his life according to the philosophy that nothing has meaning, Susan, who is very uptight but also surprisingly tough and loyal, and Captain Bob, who wants only to experience the joy of pure freedom but instead rapidly descends into madness. The nonhuman characters are just as colorful. Particularly amusing is Kate, a banished angel and Keeper of the Left, who is in trouble for bad-mouthing God, and Annabelle and Betsey, two cows that accompany the humans on their journey. The cows are smarter than the humans and they are full of attitude. Their endless and often crude commentary on the events of the story, not to mention their frequent cow puns, provide much of the humor in the book.

Underlying the humor, however, is a huge dose of cynicism. All of the characters in the story are searching for happiness but few of them really believe that they will find it. One character, Harold, sums up the attitude that permeates the story with this thought: “Life sucks. Life is the Messenger of Death leaving muddy footprints on the carpet. Life is a day-old donut without a cup of coffee. Life is a beautiful day being interrupted by the sun dropping from the sky. Life is a walk on the beach during a hurricane. Life is a trip to the woods during a forest fire. Life is a parade of endless disappointments with all of them waving white flags. Life sucks.”

Readers searching for a wacky, 500 page adventure will not be disappointed, but most will come away from the book somewhat depressed, as the humor is of the laugh-rather-than-cry variety.

CATHERINE THURESON (November 1, 2010)

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