



Clarion Review

Short Stories

Still awfully fond of Nanny

Ian Hutson

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Three Stars (out of Five)

Old Doc Runningduck encourages the reader to drop the words “subtle sophisticated deep meaningful and plot” in the “T” introduction” of his book *Still awfully fond of Nanny*. This is perhaps some very good advice because reading any of the twelve short stories in this book can be compared to taking a walk on a cloudy spring day only to find that instead of bringing an umbrella in case of rain a laser pistol and a half gallon of milk would have been better preparation. The storylines within this book take more than simple and justifiable twists and turns; they veer and meander. The utterly unexpected arises only to transform into the bewildering — all while being casually humorous and extremely intelligent. One of the most pleasing aspects of this book is to realize the “unimaginable” truly can be imagined by someone and it can only be done without fully explaining why laser pistols and milk make better preparation than an umbrella on a cloudy spring day.

What is predictable in *Still awfully fond of Nanny* is that homosexuality will be a recurring theme in its stories. This is readily apparent in the short piece “Made from real fruit not concentrate.” This is a story about a young man named Joe who comes to terms with being gay. True to his usual style Old Doc Runningduck a.k.a. Ian Hutson creatively describes how Joe is recruited into The Foundation For Homosexual Supremacy by a secret agent of the organization. Poking fun at some of the stereotypical views held about the gay community the secret agent relays to Joe that the purpose of the organization is to undermine the institutions of *The Family* and the *Status Quo*. “With your help we’ll get rid of the current warm and cuddly way of life the Family way of life and we’ll impose our own cold cruel and peculiar agenda a world where nothing is nice anymore and no one wants to just get on living without dictating to others how they should live...Some days I forget exactly what it is we’re supposed to be fighting for so I have to read it off the back of Evangelical agendas” reads the tongue-in-cheek

prose. After just two short years of secret agent training Joe earns degrees in Particle Physics Hand-Stands and Boy Bands. As straightforward as this may sound the secret agent element of the story is wildly mixed between a talking hamster and a blatant reference to the Kung Fu television series starring David Carradine.

This is Hutson's second book. His first *Still Barking Despite the Lithium* was published in 2005. *Still awfully fond of Nanny* is an adult read because of its sexual descriptions and language. And if there's any doubt to its contents this warning is included on the back cover: "Contains nuts occasional swearing of an appalling nature and mild peril."

With story titles like "Math Teachers with mutable codpieces" "Seagulls with whiplash" and "Get away from him you BITCH!" this book will be greatly appreciated by those who enjoy a sharp wit and sarcastic humor. Anyone interested in some of the most fantastical and creative storytelling ever put on paper will value this material. Individuals with more conservative tastes may shy away from this book but someone who's heard the phrase "There is a fine line between genius and insanity" and wants to have a glimpse at that fine line should surely read this book.

Brian Douthit