ForeWord Reviews
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GENERAL

The Silent Partner
Terrence King
Trafford Gold
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Three Stars (out of Five)

Homer, a disgraced angel, has only seven days to publish a book that will prevent humanity from destroying itself. To do this, she must somehow convince its author, Tom Summers, to rewrite his toxic last chapter to provide humanity with hope, a task that seems especially futile because Tom has based the book on his belief that all long-term relationships are doomed.

The society in which Tom exists is vapid in the extreme, replete with characters that would not seem out of place in the literary universes of Swift or Thackeray. A book agent thinks Tom is disrespectful, so she uses her industry clout to blackball him. A co-worker plagiarizes Tom's work and schemes to have their boss, Andre, taken out by a hit man. Although Andre's love affair with urban vernacular may indeed warrant his demise, he continues to conduct business in "bro lingo" designed to conceal his "embarrassingly white blood." "We got skills and don't do this smack here, pimp!" When Tom's fiancée, Jamie, admits her reliance on her "CrackBerry," one suspects that the author has fallen prey to the creativity of pop-culture neologisms himself.

The book's caricatured characters suggest a satire of the magazine and publishing industries, and the indignities inflicted on Jamie by her "sexually frustrated … evil stepsisters" at an advertising agency imply that the entire media establishment is equally corrupt. However, plausibility suffers as new obstacles and misunderstandings pile up like collisions at a monster truck rally. By the time Tom's brother is waylaid by the homophobic relations of his Latino lover and Jamie is nearly date raped by a stoned, drunken lout in a scene involving a capsized wheelchair, a locked van, and a flatulent rescuer, all pretense of subtlety has fled.

As these multitudinous tidbits suggest, *The Silent Partner* is cartoonishly constructed. Its characters think in Tweets, talk like Facebook posts, and have the attention spans of sound bites, creating a jittery experience as the reader struggles to follow the narrative's distracted streams of consciousness. An entire paragraph is devoted to Jamie's opinion of public restrooms, and another character pauses during an argument to attest to the reliability of Fox News.

Although such tangential minutiae may at times irritate, it certainly lends credibility to God's frustration with humanity and his determination to ensure that Homer completes her mission. People in Los Angeles may not be as authentically connected to one another as are the characters immortalized in *It's a Wonderful Life*, that other story of an insecure angel assigned a tough task, but then again, God never said it would be easy.

Elizabeth Breau