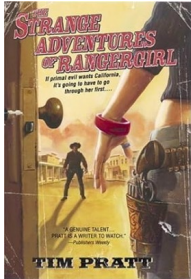




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



The Strange Adventures of Rangergirl By Tim Pratt *Discussed March 2007*

Characters

The Good Guys: Marzipan, Lindsay, Jonathan, Garamond Ray

The Bad Guys: Beej, Jane, The Outlaw

The Victims & Conflicted Figures: Alice, Daniel, Hendrix

The Landscapes: Genius Loci, Santa Cruz (in general), The Desert

Discussion Questions

1. As Wikipedia says, "In Roman mythology a genius loci was a protective spirit of a place. It was often depicted as a snake. In contemporary usage, 'genius loci' usually refers to a location's distinctive atmosphere or a 'spirit of place,' rather than necessarily a guardian spirit." In this novel, the Genius Loci is a coffee bar. Selected other names--Marzipan and Garamond Ray--are equally loaded. Does Tim Pratt follow through on the promise of his foreshadowing with these names or does the conceit fall apart?
2. The artists in the novel -- Marzi, Lindsay, Jane, and Beej -- all bring shape to the good and evil forces in the book with their creative vision. But, "The Outlaw" itself is purely destructive (or is it?) -- so, is art supposed to be a power for good or bad?
3. Marzi had a mental breakdown when she first opened the door, Daniel is a bit OCD, and Alice is a bit of a pyromaniac. Is Pratt, in general, presenting a productive or a destructive picture of mental illnesses.
4. Obviously, the heroes of this story are women. But, Jane is also a woman, and she invokes goddess power and other feminist language. Further, almost all of the characters are written in tension with a stereotype. So, is the novel really pro-women and positive towards GLBT people? Or, is it simply trotting out tired stereotypes for the sake of a good laugh?
5. Some call this a work of metafiction: it's a novel about a comic book series. Or is it? Does the label really work? How does Marzi's comic book series help or hurt the structure of Pratt's book?
6. Pratt rolled out this idea of the spirit of the west -- with both good spirits and bad spirits -- in his short story "Bleeding West." In that story, I think the spirits of lawlessness won. That worked in a short story, but would that ever work in a novel?

7. The publisher put effort into the book's layout: the first page of each chapter splits into two columns with a little picture in the middle. Does this enhance your reading experience?
8. Do you like the novel? Do you approve of its presence on the 2006 Best Novel shortlist for the Gaylactic Spectrum Awards?