

Reviews

The Great Planet Robbery

CRAIG DILLOUË. Salvo (www.salvopress.com), \$16.95 paper (231p) ISBN 978-1-930486-79-9

Dillouë (*Paranoia*) flavors Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King" with a dash of Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* to create this rollicking military SF farce. Lawrence Dobbs and Timothy Muldoon are long-service NCOs in the Colonial Marines—very long service, over 800 years. They're the kind of men who can conquer a planet all by themselves, but times have changed, and it's just not the same Federation they signed up for. When they hear of a world where the natives have discovered the secret alchemical formula for gold, they gather up a team and make plans to rob the place blind. DiLouie spices up Dobbs and Muldoon's adventures with loony ideas, from a computer virus that plays dice games with fate to a doomsday machine containing the maniacal consciousness of the last emperor of planet Xerxes. Fans of humorous science fiction will find plenty to enjoy in this time-traveling, galaxy-crossing romp. (May)

Hidden the Gap: A Novel of the Hidden Cities

CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN AND TIM LEBBON. Bantam Spectra, \$12 paper (400p) ISBN 978-0-553-38469-7

Dark fantasists Golden (*The Myth Hunters*) and Lebbon (*Dawn*) pair up for the first time in this macabre tale that recalls Holly Black's acclaimed *Valiant*. As wary teenager Jasmine Towne runs from the mysterious Uncles who killed her mother, an impulsive dash into an Underground tunnel takes her to Deep Level Shelter 7-K, where she falls in with a group of homeless thieves led by the raggedly elegant Harold Pilkington Fowler. Jazz knows to fear the Uncles, who are stalking her for some magical purpose, but she never expected to see ghosts or hear "the restless spirit of the old city" wailing in the tunnels. With the help of enigmatic burglar Terence, Jazz investigates her mother's murder and her own mysterious origins and powers. Occasional gaps in the story logic are easy to miss amid the super-fast pacing and creepy touches that give this teen adventure plenty of character. (May)

The Immortal Prince

JENNIFER FALLON. Tor, \$27.95 (496p) ISBN 978-0-7653-1682-0

First in the Tide Lords series, this complex saga, like Fallon's earlier Hythrun Chronicles, intertwines several vividly realized plots. One follows Arkady Desean, the "Ice Duchess" of Lebec and a scholar of ancient Amyranthan lore, as she interrogates Cayal, a hanged man who inexplicably did not die. She soon encounters legends of the immortal Tide Lords who created the human-animal hybrid slaves called the Crasii—canines to serve, felines to fight, amphibians to pull watercraft—and a thousand years earlier caused the Cataclysm that nearly destroyed the world. Arkady's husband, Duke Stellan, guards his own deadly secret as he maneuvers through palace intrigues and interkingdom clashes. Royal spymaster Declan Hawkes secretly aids renegade Crasii and preserves the Cabal, humanity's only protection from the Tide Lords. With snappy dialogue and deft characterizations, especially of her sympathetically drawn canine Crasii, Fallon neatly pulls the story threads together into a multihued tapestry of myth, deceit and ambition. (May)

The Tempest Tales

WALTER MOSLEY. Black Classic (www.blackclassicbooks.com), \$19.95 (180p) ISBN 978-1-57478-043-7

Mosley, best known for his gritty Easy Rawlins mysteries, explores cosmic questions of justice and redemption in this odd tale of Tempest Landry, a black man shot dead by police when they thought he was pulling a gun. Landry throws the afterlife into turmoil by refusing to accept St. Peter's judgment that he must spend eternity in Hell. Three years after his death, Landry is returned to Manhattan, with a new face and an angel named Joshua to watch over him. As Landry sets up one morally complex situation after another, Joshua engages him in discussions of situational ethics, trying to get Landry to accept that he is a sinner and deserves damnation. Eventually, Landry recruits Satan himself in his cause. The interesting concept is not matched by its execution, but some readers may find Landry a humorous creation and appreciate his eventual solution to his dilemma. (May)

MASS MARKET

The Atlantis Prophecy

THOMAS GREANIAS. Pocket Star, \$7.99 (352p) ISBN 978-0-7434-9192-1

After astro-archeologist Conrad Yeats and Vatican linguist Sister Serena Serghetti survived a disastrous Antarctic expedition in *Raising Atlantis*, Conrad falls on lean times: his reality TV show, *Ancient Riddles*, is canceled, and he buries his USAF general father at Arlington National Cemetery. Serena interprets Conrad's father's oddly sculpted tombstone to contain a cryptic message. Intrigued, Conrad investigates and discovers George Washington entrusted a treaty sealed in a celestial globe to the care of one of Conrad's ancestors—but Conrad is not the only one looking for it. And when, according to the Atlantis prophecy, the stars' align on July 4, 2008, with Washington, D.C., monuments, his sinister rivals' new world order will begin clicking into place, if they manage to get hold of the globe. Greanias keeps the pace breakneck and the coincidences amazing, sweeping readers right into Conrad's struggle. (Apr.)

Corpse Pose

DIANA KILLIAN. Berkley Prime Crime, \$6.99 (288p) ISBN 978-0-425-22090-0

Acrime solver armed with a yoga mat, Anna Jolie "A.J." Alexander, 35, is a Manhattan marketing consultant by day. She's recovering from a messy divorce when Det. Jake Oberlin of the Stillbrook, N.J., Police Department calls with terrible news—A.J.'s beloved aunt, Diantha Mason, has been murdered: she was found in "corpse pose" at her posh New Jersey yoga compound, Sacred Balance. A.J.'s actress mum, Elysia Alexander (aka Easy Mason) arrives from Britain, hoping to help sort out who'd want to kill Aunt Di. As the primary inheritor of the immense estate, A.J. is on the suspect list, along with an angry heir-apparent yoga teacher; an Olympic hopeful with a bad habit; an unstable teen; and a farmer whose dairy products were vilified by Aunt Di. Killian's light yoga twist enhances a simplistic but nicely executed cozy. (Apr.)