

Looking for Life



Review by Artisan Book Reviews

Looking for Life by Clayton Graham is a fascinating work of science fiction with seventeen uniquely different short stories. Each story has a magnificent and powerful message within its intuitive concept and narrative. It's an extraordinary work that encompasses stories in which the settings are otherworldly, involving supernatural, futuristic, and other supremely imagined elements. Clayton Graham has created well-developed, in-depth characters drawing attention to their thoughts and psyche's which brings a relatable human element to his otherwise bizarrely unfamiliar, action packed, transfixing and addictive stories. These characters, whether human or alien, find themselves in all sorts of terrible quandaries and places.

With an elegant, yet exhilarating writing style Clayton Graham has cleverly created a superlative collection of original stories each with twists, turns and surprises. Each story is woven together magnificently. Every meaningful word held me fully engaged while each short story held special depth to the characters allowing me to have an amazing feeling of warmth and a deep connection to them. His descriptive writing style transports readers to shocking otherworldly lands which declares the author's strong world building skill. Then, to provide readers with satisfying and thought-provoking conclusions to each and every one of his stories is truly fascinating and displays the brilliance of his overall creativity, intelligence and outstanding writing ability.

Looking for Life by Clayton Graham is the very best collection of short stories in the science fiction genre that I have ever read. In fact, I would prefer it over a full on science fiction novel. Graham has the incredible talent, creativity and smarts to take readers from one extraordinary, staggering, unbelievable and entertaining story that satisfies the soul – to the next!! Truly amazing!!

Artisan Book Reviews recommends *Looking for Life* by Clayton Graham to all those who desire to have an incredible, meaningful and thrilling reading experience!

Review by Joel R. Dennstedt for Readers' Favorite

5 Star Review: Purists often prefer the original designation, science fiction, for books like *Looking for Life* by Clayton Graham, but the less definitive, more contemporary label, speculative fiction, best describes the wonderfully engaging work proffered herein. The very best creations in this unique genre, no matter the designation, occupy themselves with the psychology of 'human being' rather than the accoutrements of war, technical toy-making, or scientific theory. While these highly intriguing elements of necessity clothe most imaginative stories of

speculative fiction, the spirit of great science fiction is best found when exploring the foundation of life itself, whether alien or human, robotic or organic. This means telling living stories and in this glorious genre telling them with a twist.

Clayton Graham tells living stories and in his latest collection, *Looking for Life*, once again he tells them with a twist. Like the special secret friend of one little boy, the friend perceived as one floppy rabbit, calling down from space. Or like the alien animal collected to repopulate Earth's barren devastation due to mass extinction, who turns out to be not just intelligent, but 'chosen'. Or like the fellow member of a spaceship crew who lets himself be adopted by a planet, only to find himself repopulating the world with others who will certainly drive him mad. These are all stories of hypnotic speculation dressed in easily discarded clothing, provided only for some context amidst eager speculation while the reader tries to guess what might be coming next. Most often, 'next' comes with a delightful twist. Something to make the reader sigh, then remember why it is he loves science fiction.

Review by Grady Harp: HALL OF FAME TOP 100 REVIEWER

Australian author Clayton Graham, born and raised in Stockport, near Manchester UK, earned a degree in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Salford attaining a Student Apprenticeship with English Electric Aviation. He moved to Victoria, Australia in 1982 and worked as an aerospace engineer, working in the field of efficient lightweight structures and watching them fly around the world. His interest in Science Fiction and where it places humankind within the universe we know and love gave entrance to his debut novel *MILIJUN*. Subsequently he has published *SAVING PALUDIS*, *SILENTLY IN THE NIGHT*, *AMIDST ALIEN STARS*, and now *LOOKING FOR LIFE* – a new collection of short stories,

This is one of the more sensitive, caring and penetrating collections of Sci-Fi short stories before the public – less interested in the bizarre psychedelic manifestations of thinking beyond our galaxy and instead encouraging us to expand our concepts of what will doubtless one day be discovered. Pair those kudos with attention to Graham's wry wit and imaginative spectrum of topics and join in the infectious fun of exploring these seventeen unique stories.

As the synopsis tempts, 'From a stranded alien comedian to the darkest depths of the human psyche; from a mind-blowing galactic adventure to clandestine extraterrestrial behaviour on Earth. With tales of alien invasion, deep space mystery, time travel, and dystopian future Earths, this is a collection which takes inspiration from the much respected 'old masters' of Science Fiction. Here be new realms to explore—can you cross the void and challenge your dreams?'

An example of his colorful prose follows, the opening lines of *THE WEAK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH*: 'Chanuk gazed with wide, bright eyes as the twin moons rose slowly over a purple horizon. The celestial bodies sprinkled the panorama with silver dust, which they did every night if there were no clouds to hide them from sight. He sat in the forward part of the city, away from the hum of the engines, his head cupped in firm, strong hands, and his lungs breathing

the cool fresh air of the evening. He loved this time of the year – the time of travel and adventure, of exploration and sunny days...It was almost three days since he and Marilla had seen their child, and there remained another eight before they would. The minimum of eleven days between 'child-contact' was another Corlen law: 'Children shall be brought up together, with others of their own age. It is better for them and better for the community...' Strange, but inviting intro – the manner in which Graham opens each of these superb stories.

Clayton's way with words and his descriptions of both place and characters in this distant and strange encounters and worlds are painted with elegance and authority. He leaves us with not a 'what if' attitude, but with a 'when?' and that is the essence of a fine science fiction author.

Grady Harp, June 21