

[Free pdf] Kings of Infinite Space: A Novel

Kings of Infinite Space: A Novel

James Hynes

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James Hynes : Kings of Infinite Space: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Kings of Infinite Space: A Novel:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Was it all a dream?By B. Bunyard++++SPOILER ALERT++++If you do not want to have any part of the plot or fun of this story ruined do not read any further.This is only the second book that I've read by this author (previously read Lecturer's Tale). While I did enjoy it, it was a fun read with some pretty good dialogue and I enjoyed the characters for the most part, I was not totally wowed at the story. In fact it was

of course totally implausible--which I can understand is why many really enjoyed it. No problem. But one thing not really mentioned in any of the previous reviews here or elsewhere in newspaper or magazine book reviews was that it seemed pretty obvious to me (of course I could be completely wrong) that the entire story was a figment of Paul's mind. Most likely he dreamed it one day during his breaks in the bathroom. He takes books in there to read (he'd just read *Island of Dr Moreau*--and the characters in this story, curiously, repeat dialogue from that book...coincidence?). I think the main character has a great imagination and is a writer, but he is totally stagnating in his going nowhere job. So...I think his imagination begins to go wild...eg. the cat, the post it notes, his noticing ceiling tiles moved...or were they? Then he falls asleep in the toilet and dreams the entire thing. I'm still thinking about this story (even reread "*Moreau*") so if anyone wants to point out the flaws in my thesis, I would not be insulted to hear them.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Didn't quite live up to the hype

By Ryan Baechler

After reading a number of reviews that described this book as hilarious, incisive satire and just generally excellent, I began reading it with high hopes. I wouldn't say that I was completely disappointed (I did give it the benefit of the doubt and assign it 3 stars rather than 2), but I did feel that Hynes didn't realize the full potential of his clever premise.

Down-on-his-luck academic Paul Trilby, through a series of disastrous infidelities, finds himself living in a seedy apartment complex, driving a decrepit Dodge Colt, and working as a temporary typist for the Texas Department of General Services, or TxDoGS. His coworkers, whom he loathes, include a conniving former prom queen, a bombastic ex-military man, a snivelingly devout Christian, and an oafish frat boy type. But he finds himself intrigued by the mail girl, Callie, and begins a tentative romance with her despite his past failures. As the relationship heats up, things at TxDoGS become increasingly bizarre. Whispers about what goes on in the building at night, and how certain coworkers get their work done without seeming to actually do any work, combined with glimpses of seemingly surreal goings on in the ceiling panels of the office put Paul on edge even as he gets promoted at work and grows closer to Callie. Sounds like a pretty intriguing premise, right? I felt the same way through the first half of the book. Unfortunately, the progression from Paul catching fleeting glimpses of things he can't believe to his witnessing blatantly supernatural phenomena is handled incredibly poorly. Even when repeatedly and directly confronted with evidence of what's going on, Paul unconvincingly keeps telling himself he's only dreaming, and goes on as though nothing out of the ordinary is happening. This despite the fact that he openly acknowledges that he's haunted by the ghost of his ex-girlfriend's cat, which he drowned in a bathtub as revenge for the cat exposing his infidelity. So he's already accepted one supernatural event, but rejects the possibility of others. Also, the TxDoGS building security guard even asks him if he's witnessed anything strange going on in the building, and still Paul clings to his "It's all a dream" theory. While I'm often frustrated by characters in books and movies who react to the supernatural without freaking out at all, Paul's state of denial was equally absurd, and frustrated me to the point that I wanted to throttle him. Finally, once Paul acknowledges what's going on, the book comes to a climax with a fairly predictable but entertaining final confrontation, and a satisfying denouement with an absolutely perfect final line. This definitely saved the book from a negative review from me, but couldn't fully make up for the frustration of the book's middle third. Also, as another reviewer mentioned, Hynes's writing style really conjures up a mental movie in your mind, moreso than some authors, and, in fact, I think *Kings of Infinite Space* would make a better movie than a book, so if that ever happens, check it out!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Parts of it stuck with me.

By Epiphyllum

I bought this book because of an earlier reviewer's dismay at its "ritual cannibalistic content". While the novel is not nearly as lurid as I'd hoped, it's still a pretty decent read. Cynical, absurd; darkly humorous, though not really laugh-out-loud funny. The characters are believable. (No, not necessarily likeable.) Perhaps it drags--but so would, I imagine, a miserably hot Texas summer during which your entire life collapses in a pile around your ankles. I finished it and traded it for another book, but somehow it's back on my mind. Maybe I should have kept it around.

"Immensely witty...thoroughly entertaining."--The Washington Post Book World

Paul Trilby is having a bad day. If he were to be honest with himself, Paul Trilby would have to admit that he's having a bad life. His wife left him. Three subsequent girlfriends left him. He's fallen from a top-notch university teaching job, to a textbook publisher, to, eventually, working as a temp writer for the Texas Department of General Services. And even here, in this land of carpeted partitions and cheap lighting fixtures, Paul cannot escape the curse his life has become. For it is not until he begins a tentative romance with the office's sassy mail girl that he begins to notice things are truly wrong. Strange sounds come from the air conditioning vents, the ceiling bulges, a body disappears. Mysterious men lurk about town, wearing thick glasses and pocket protectors...*Kings of Infinite Space* is a hilarious and horrifying spoof on our everyday lives and gives true voice to the old adage, "Work is Hell."

From Publishers Weekly

Paul Trilby is still haunted by the ghost of Charlotte, the cat he drowned in "*Queen of the Jungle*" (included in Hynes's 1997 story collection, *Publish and Perish*), in this hilarious supernatural sendup of office life. An affair having destroyed his marriage and promising academic career, Paul now temps as a tech writer in the General Services Division of the Texas Department of General Services (TxDoGS) in the Austin-like city of Lamar. One hot summer morning, stuck in traffic, he has an encounter with a peculiar homeless man who repeats a question

from H.G. Wells's *Island of Doctor Moreau*, "Are we not men?" This is but the first of a series of uncanny incidents—a corpse in a cubicle no one appears to notice, a recycling bin that seems to have no bottom—that dog Paul at TxDoGS. The romance he strikes up with Callie, the appealingly goofy company "mail girl," provides the novel's emotional center. When the feckless Paul is put to the ultimate test, a Faustian bargain with zombies to surrender his soul and sacrifice Callie for a free ride at TxDoGS, readers will be on the edge of their seats wondering whether he'll do the right thing. Amusing incidentals include the subversive sentences Paul pens for a textbook and the cat-related fare that is all Charlotte allows him to watch on TV. While the office may not be quite as juicy a subject for satire as the academic world skewered in the author's last novel, *The Lecturer's Tale* (2002), the same literate wit should have wide appeal. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From *Booklist* According to Paul Trilby, there's something weird going on at the Texas Department of General Services, where he slaves away as the lowliest-of-lowly corporate workers, the office temp. Of course, Paul also thinks his apartment is haunted by the ghost of his ex-wife's cat, and that egg-headed aliens wearing pocket protectors are stalking his daily commute. Yes, ol' Paul's grasp on reality is none too secure, but that's understandable. Divorced, destitute, and driving a rattletrap clunker amidst a sea of sleek SUVs, Paul's down-and-out existence is a far cry from his former glory days as an up-and-coming university professor. Confronted by his smarmy co-workers (who are not above selling their souls for a better gig), Paul is introduced to a mysterious world of former employees, equally downtrodden middlemen downsized in state budget cuts. The only difference is—they're dead. In the best tradition of Baum, Carroll, and Orwell, Hynes crafts a mordantly incisive satire on a corporate America where incompetence is rewarded and talent ignored. Carol Haggas Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved.

"This macabre, funny, and very twisted satire of office life displays James Hynes as a wonderfully eccentric and entirely original writer." *Esquire* "Hynes nails it... *Kings of Infinite Space* is Wells updated for the 21st century." *The Washington Post Book World* "Hynes must moonlight as a fisherman for he has mastered the art of luring, hooking and reeling readers in with his salty style and quick wit." *USA Today* "The *Kings of Infinite Space* is social satire that slides smoothly into horror." *Time*