

ForeWord Reviews

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SCIENCE FICTION

Tego Arcana Dei: Keeping God's Secret

Andrew Man

AuthorHouse

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Three Stars (out of Five)

Tego Arcana Dei does not start out as or even truly hint at being a work of science fiction until some forty pages into the book. Once author Andrew Man's protagonist, James Pollack, discovers he can use "astral travel" to jump through time and space, the exploration and use of his power becomes the driving theme of the novel.

Over the course of fifty years, across five continents, and through the financial and political crises of the modern world, Pollack gradually learns how to use his special abilities. He sleeps with a bevy of beautiful women, and each helps him unravel the mystery of a complex network of wormholes. Pollack's "guardian," Deepak, describes these sites as "the old astral ways which connect Rome, to the church here in Sofia and on to the Hagia Sophia in Turkey, then across to the Temple in Jerusalem and down to the City of Ur, or Babylon." Pollack and his associates make use of these tunnels in time and space to disarm Saddam Hussein's giant space cannon, to alleviate a financial crisis, and sometimes just to have hot sex.

Another of the book's themes involves quite a combination of major elements: particle accelerators, the "wobble" in the Earth's rotational axis, Freemasonry, the Knights Templar, and the Vatican. Perhaps a statement from one of the story's own characters is appropriate here: "I'm sorry my dear, but you are losing me with this detail."

The story is fun, enjoyable, entertaining, and well-written. The author does have an odd habit of adding a question mark to the end of sentences that are not questions, although this may be to indicate the speaker is delivering the line in an uncertain, quizzical manner. Other than a few minor typos, the text is clean, clear, and, for the most part, crisp.

The story's exotic locales—the Caribbean, Europe, and the Middle East—as well as the assortment of beautiful women Pollack encounters there, brings to the book an atmosphere of a James Bond adventure. This is not meant as criticism. The Fleming inspiration sets the mood in the first chapter, when, in 1967, Pollack, a young merchant marine at the time, has a fling with a sexy shipboard siren in South Africa. For the next forty-three years and five chapters, Pollack jumps in and out of time, trouble, and twin beds, using his “remarkable gift” to skip across the planet and the calendar, sometimes even without a wormhole.

Andrew Man has Pollack do all this in a fairly breathless two hundred pages. The reader can't help but agree with one of Pollack's conquests—as she exclaims in a Fleming-like last line—“Wow, James, you really do get around, don't you!”

Mark G. McLaughlin