



Intruders

Zhen Lyu

XLibrisAU (Jan 27, 2016)

Softcover \$24.19 (394pp)

978-1-5144-4407-8

Intruders is a solid and suspenseful adventure with satisfyingly complex themes and vividly imagined protagonists.

The “ancient aliens” theory gets new life in Zhen Lyu’s challenging but imaginative fantasy adventure novel, *Intruders*.

The story begins when five college friends decide to explore a local cave. The cave turns out to be deeper and larger than expected and is inhabited by hitherto undiscovered giants large enough to hold the adventurers in the palm of one hand. The friends escape and, when evidence suggests the giants are hunting humans in the vicinity, report their findings to authorities. The military arrives en masse, and soon the battle for control of the planet is on.

The book’s pace is initially brisk. Clare, Wendy, Bryan, Gordon, and Leo are fascinated by the giants even as they strive to escape from them. The novel makes the giants interesting and the narrative is always at its liveliest when they are on stage.

Good storytelling instincts are also on display, and there are enough surprises and complications to keep the plot moving. There’s not just one race of giants sharing the cave but three: one that is human-friendly, one that is indifferent, and one that looks upon humans as small game to be eaten.

The friends begin to question the military’s goal of annihilating a species that it has not even tried to communicate with or understand. When a second exploration of the cave convinces the friends that giants and humans have descended from the same race of ancient aliens, they resolve to intervene on the giants’ behalf.

Enjoyment of this promisingly complex adventure is diminished by the fact that *Intruders* is written in language that is hard to understand. Meandering and awkward sentences, poor word choices, and confusing translations slow and obscure the action of the text.

Once the giants become the object of rescue, disappointingly little is seen of them. Rather, a subplot involving the friends’ attempts to deceive the army commandos and prevent them from accomplishing their mission is needlessly prolonged and conveyed through dialogue rather than action and revelation. The final means by which the friends accomplish their mission does not live up to the sophisticated premise of the book’s first half.

Despite some stilted delivery, *Intruders* is a solid adventure with satisfyingly complex themes, vividly imagined protagonists, and enough suspense to appeal to young adult and adult fans of sci-fi.

SUSAN WAGGONER (April 5, 2016)

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