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Radiance: A Novel



Synopsis

Radiance is a decopunk pulp SF alt-history space opera mystery set in a Hollywood-and solar system-very different from our own, from Catherynne M. Valente, the phenomenal talent behind the New York Times bestselling *The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making*. Severin Unck's father is a famous director of Gothic romances in an alternate 1986 in which talking movies are still a daring innovation due to the patent-hoarding Edison family. Rebellious against her father's films of passion, intrigue, and spirits from beyond, Severin starts making documentaries, traveling through space and investigating the levitator cults of Neptune and the lawless saloons of Mars. For this is not our solar system, but one drawn from classic science fiction in which all the planets are inhabited and we travel through space on beautiful rockets. Severin is a realist in a fantastic universe. But her latest film, which investigates the disappearance of a diving colony on a watery Venus populated by island-sized alien creatures, will be her last. Though her crew limps home to earth and her story is preserved by the colony's last survivor, Severin will never return. Told using techniques from reality TV, classic film, gossip magazines, and meta-fictional narrative, *Radiance* is a solar system-spanning story of love, exploration, family, loss, quantum physics, and silent film. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Quite possibly the most original novel of 2015, and the most compelling I have read since James Morrow's brilliant but regrettably overlooked - "Galapagos Regained", Catherynne Valente demonstrates why she has been dubbed the "Ray Bradbury of her generation" by noted critic and fantasy writer Lev Grossman in "Radiance", her first adult novel in years. Billed as Valente's first genuine science fiction novel, "Radiance" is instead, a superb science fantasy novel, set in an alternate history recognizable to students of pre-20th Century science fiction, one in which virtually all of the Solar System is inhabited by human colonies resembling the frontier towns of the late 19th Century American West and Asian colonial outposts of the British Empire. It is also a brilliantly realized, compellingly readable, love letter to Hollywood history, recounting the exploits of the greatest female documentary filmmaker of her time, Severin Unck, in a visual cinematic style that echoes repeatedly, classic films from the likes of Georges M'li's, John Huston and Billy Wilder, that may remind some of Brian Selznick's "The Invention of Hugo Cabret", and its superb cinematic adaptation, Martin Scorsese's "Hugo". An exceptionally memorable love letter replete with Valente's superb storytelling and exquisite, often lyrical, prose, that relies upon film scripts, interviews, and post-modernist metafictional narrative told in first and third persons, in recounting Severin's childhood and tragically brief adult career as the foremost documentary filmmaker of her time.

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