

BOOK REVIEW

Aliens Land in

Puslinch

By George Harris

That is the premise of *Triptych*, the first published novel by Jessica "J.M." Frey, granddaughter of Roy and Evelyn Winer (nee Gilmour) of Puslinch. In a *Publisher's Weekly* starred review, *Triptych* is called "a deeply satisfying debut." This is a novel about aliens who escape a dying planet, and land on Earth where they introduce advanced technology, including time travel. Because of their close contact, aliens and human scientists begin to form intimate relationships, and an intermingling of the two different cultures occurs. The general society of Earth, however, is not ready for such new social structures. Fearing that their way of life might be threatened, they begin to react with anger and soon violence erupts. Time travel is used to attempt to kill the most successful human scientist.

The best science fiction must be grounded in reality in order for the reader to relate to the characters and their conflicts. The main character of the novel, Gwen Peirson, becomes involved in a secret organization that attempts to help the aliens who have arrived. Ultimately the story focuses on her relationships. It involves romance and heartbreak, as well as the joys and agonies of family.

Frey's interest in science fiction began at an early age with the television series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. She was attracted by the idea that everyone, no matter what they looked

like or what their talents or limitations were, had a contribution to make to society.

As a new author, Frey had to deal with lots of frustration in order to get her book published. There are tens of thousands of prospective writers but only a few hundred agents and even fewer publishers. The large publishers do not accept unsolicited manuscripts, so for this novel, Frey approached the smaller ones. After many rejections, Frey happened to be in the right place at the right time. While attending a convention, her conversation about her novel was overheard by the acquisitions editor of Dragon Moon Press (DMP) of Alberta. This personal contact turned out to be a major plus, as the editor requested a copy of the book. The manuscript was initially rejected, then revised, and resubmitted. Finally, DMP announced that her novel had been picked up at Ad Astra 2010, an annual science fiction literary convention. Exciting stuff for a beginning author.

Although Frey was initially hesitant about going with a smaller publisher as it reduces the possibility of having a huge international best seller due to the smaller marketing budget, she soon realized that with DMP she would get the personal

attention of the editor and publisher and would be able to collaborate in the design elements, which she highly enjoys. "I'm quite type-A," she admits, "I like to have a say in everything. The small press experience is perfect for that."

Another major advantage her relationship with her editor means she has someone to work with her to polish her five other completed manuscripts (and two works-in-progress). Most of Frey's evenings are now spent on marketing *Triptych*. To hopefully free up some time to actually write again, Frey is currently looking for an agent who can take over the hours and hours of paper work that it takes to submit manuscript to publishers, managing contracts, and setting up marketing.

Triptych will be on sale on April 9th. Try it. You may find you enjoy Sci-fi. Failing that, you can at least enjoy the warm descriptions of Puslinch through the eyes of an alien.

\$19.95, Trade Paperback - ISBN-13: 978-1-897492-13-0

DragonMoonPress.com -
ISBN-13: 978-1-897492-13-0
<http://www.jmfrey.net>



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