



INDEPENDENT BOOK REVIEW

A CELEBRATION OF SMALL PRESS AND SELF-PUBLISHED BOOKS



The Extraterrestrial

By Peter Van Oossanen

Genre: Science Fiction / Action

Reviewed by Samantha Hui

A hero is not defined by alien power but by human compassion in *The Extraterrestrial*.

Peter Van Oossanen explores what happens when extraordinary responsibility collides with deeply human desires for love, privacy, and belonging. Telling the story of an extraterrestrial raised on Earth to combat crime and corruption, *The Extraterrestrial* examines sacrifice, justice, and the emotional cost of living between two worlds.

“Planted quietly, raised as a human, with no knowledge of who he is until needing to decide on a college to further continue his education. The hope was that, from within, he could combat the forces threatening your world—rising crime, corruption, terrorism.”

The novel follows Sam, an extraterrestrial from a distant, advanced civilization who is placed on Earth as a child and raised for the purpose of helping humanity combat organized crime and corruption. As Sam develops into a mysterious protector eventually dubbed “Guardian” by the media, he becomes entangled in increasingly dangerous conflicts involving the Scorpion Cartel.

At the same time, he struggles to balance his mission with his growing relationship with Michelle, a woman whose presence forces him to confront questions about the personal cost of heroism. A major thread throughout the novel focuses on optics and public perception as Sam grapples with media scrutiny, political criticism, and the burden of maintaining both a heroic reputation and a hidden identity.

“Some argued that Sam’s lethal response was justified, while others condemned him for acting as judge, jury, and executioner.”

Van Oossanen's prose is direct and highly readable, and the straightforward structure allows the story to gradually expand from an origin story into a romantically charged vigilante narrative.

One of the novel's greatest strengths is how tangible it makes heroism feel. While Sam possesses extraordinary alien abilities, the story repeatedly emphasizes that his effectiveness comes from years of education, training, and discipline. He studies engineering, medicine, physics, and martial arts, making his success feel earned rather than purely supernatural.

This attention to the practical realities behind heroism gives the novel a surprisingly human quality. The science-fiction elements are also particularly enjoyable because they feel based in genuine scientific curiosity. Van Oossanen's background as a scientist clearly influences the detailed descriptions of Sam's aircraft, propulsion systems, invisibility technology, and medical procedures. Rather than reading like vague futuristic magic, the technology feels engineered and methodical.

"Maybe your compassion, your dedication, your commitment to people in need—maybe those are part of it too."

At times, the novel leans heavily on familiar superhero conventions. Readers will likely notice similarities to stories involving Superman, Batman, and Spider-Man, particularly in Sam's secret identity, moral struggles, and attempts to balance heroism with personal relationships. While these influences are not inherently negative, some plot developments can feel predictable because of them. Additionally, certain emotional moments and transitions move so quickly that they could benefit from more subtle buildup and deeper introspection.

"Giving up wasn't an option."

The Extraterrestrial is an ambitious and heartfelt blend of science fiction, romance, and crime-thriller storytelling. Its greatest success lies in how it balances cosmic ideas with everyday human concerns involving family, education, love, and responsibility. It asks the question: What if heroism is not found in extraordinary power but in the discipline, compassion, and daily commitment to becoming better?

Readers should be aware that the novel contains violence, kidnapping, torture, and some sexual content. Fans of superhero stories, technically detailed science fiction, and emotionally driven action novels will appreciate the morally gray decisions of the Guardian and the novel's poignant exploration of heroism.