Hollywood Moon: A Novel (Hollywood Station) by Joseph Wambaugh

Better Than Ever

Theres a saying at Hollywood station that the full moon brings out the beast--rather than the best--in the precincts citizens. One moonlit night, LAPD veteran Dana Vaughn and Hollywood Nate Weiss, a struggling-actor-turned cop, get a call about a young man whos been attacking women. Meanwhile, two surfer cops known as Flotsam and Jetsam keep bumping into an odd, suspicious duo--a smooth-talking player in dreads and a crazy-eyed, tattooed biker. No one suspects that all three dubious characters might be involved in something bigger, more high-tech, and much more illegal. After a dizzying series of twists, turns, and chases, the cops will find theyve stumbled upon a complex web of crime where even the criminals cant be sure whos conning whom.

Wambaugh once again masterfully gets inside the hearts and minds of the cops whose jobs have them constantly on the brink of danger. By turns heart-wrenching, exhilarating, and laugh-out-loud funny, Hollywood Moon is his most thrilling and deeply affecting ride yet through the singular streets of LA.

My Personal Review:
As the story begins the reader is re-introduced to numerous characters from earlier Wambaugh novels such as cops Hollywood Nate... surfer dude/cops Flotsam and Jetsam... and the late great Oracle who was a legend in his own time... and who is still revered by current cops... who superstitiously touch his framed photo as they leave the precinct to go out on duty. The Oracle in days gone by had termed a full moon... a HOLLYWOOD MOON... the night when the craziest arrests would be made. In loving memory... there is normally a free extra large pizza with the works presented to the team that comes in with the craziest arrest on a HOLLYWOOD-MOON-NIGHT. Its normally a closely competed contest...
since as they say in the Hollywood precinct... HEY! THIS IS FREAKIN HOLLYWOOD!

As the reader is bedazzled with the normal daily chit-chat and insanity that the cops take as common sense and logic... simultaneously multiple criminal characters are developed and the author deftly shifts the characters and the cops from foreground to background... and then with a literary synergy they all... good guys and bad guys... merge and overlap like rivers heading to the sea. There is Ruben Malcolm Rojas (aka Clark) a nineteen-year-old who lives with his drunken Mother... has eyes on a fourteen-year-old girl... gets upset and boils when his Mother pets his hair... and one of the ways he relieves himself is to attempt rapes on older women. He has a job in a store where he has become handy with a box cutter as he unpacks boxes all day. Then we have Dewey Gleason (aka Jakob Kessler aka Ambrose Willis aka Bernie Graham) who runs multiple crews of lowlifes heavily populated by tweakers and minorities... that specialize in stealing mail... forging checks... counterfeiting checks... phony real estate deals... and bogus ordering of products through multiple channels. Deweys (aka see all aliases above) wife of nine-years Eunice (aka Ethel ) who believes she is the brains behind the operation (Dewey thinks he is) as she operates multiple computers... all for illegal criminal gain out of their apartment... while simultaneously smoking four packs of cigarettes a day. Since Eunice alone knows where their $500,000.00 - $1,000,000.00+ illicitly gained retirement nest egg is hidden... it adds another level of intrigue as their hate for each other grows... and Dewey dreams of killing her... but he is stuck with the enigma of how to find his money before he offs her.

If youre a Wambaugh fan you will be fed your usual non-stop diet of politically incorrect slurs as well as an absolutely hilarious conversation between Flotsam and Jetsam regarding Jetsams surf date with a hot IHOP waitress that went awry... when it turns out every part of her body was artificially enhanced. Without giving this classic scene away... Ill just share with you Jetsams summary to his partner: MAYBE YOU JUST SHOULDN'T TRUST SOMEONE WHO WEARS RINGS ON HER INDEX FINGERS.

In the end... Wambaugh is able to compellingly bring all these diverse characters together in an entertaining crescendo... but HEY!... THIS IS FREAKIN HOLLYWOOD!

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