

(Read now) Roithamer's universe: An Encyclopedia Mouse novel

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Tom Whalen

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Tom Whalen : Roithamer's universe: An Encyclopedia Mouse novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Roithamer's universe: An Encyclopedia Mouse novel:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Roithamer's Universe is unlike other universesBy ZomaiRoithamer's Universe is unlike other universes. Its only rule is madness. It intrudes on reality, sucking up established story lines like a bot would vacuum a stray gluon. It defies time and space, unhinges physical existence and rages against its own narrative. The voice of reason, the Encyclopedia Mouse, spinning the tale, binding together the elements he must be destroyed at the behest of the individual.The book, unlike the universe inside it, is not ruled by madness. Its rule, however, is not straight forward either. It is guided by a complex associative network rather than traditional story lines. It draws from post-structuralist trace theory and humorous moments in equal measures. It binds together a veritable host of individual stories in a way I could not coherently relate, but feel strongly I have gained deep insights from. It employs dazzlingly beautiful language to paint an impressionist painting, the motif of which only becomes apparent at a distance.Tom Whalen has written a book that writers can relate to, and readers will enjoy, so long as they:- like non-linear story telling- appreciate absurd irony- value beautifully written tales that defy literary genre.There's a timeless intelligent mouse, a temporarily possessed bot, desiccated universes inside liquid logic planets, unperturbed massacred dromedaries, projections of worlds and the realities that flow out of them. I realize this list doesn't seem to make much sense. But if you read the book, you will understand.

The main character of Tom Whalen's Roithamer's Universe, and of its precursor, *The Camel's Back*, is a super-intelligent rodent, the Encyclopedia Mouse. In *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael tells us that second mate Stubb believed that "the wondrous whale was but a species of magnified mouse." Whalen's bewhiskered narrator, who balks at insults to his kind, would surely turn Stubb's disdain for cetacea to a mighty compliment. And a whale of a book this is. In the company of the mouse, we meet Homer, Hegel, Wittgenstein; witness the death of an old man in Switzerland; do battle for the fate of the universe(s); meet Mrs. Benson, who will bake a pie (one she'd rather not bake, as the mouse "would rather not have had to tell, not to mention live" his tale); and go to the movies in Germany with one T.M. Whale. Wait, kids, there's more: for poetry lovers, there's a Cowper-esque "Interlude," and, for all us students, an exam and a quiz. Last but not least, there is throughout some of the finest writing we're likely to find south of Relix, the oneiric water-planet where the novel's villain, Roithamer, resides, imprisoned in his dessicated madness. Allusive, punning, intricately plotted and exponentially self-referential, Roithamer's Universe is a science fiction novel which ultimately explores the science of fiction or, more aptly, the art of narrative. Clued in by its wide range of reference, from Homer to Joyce and the Swiss writer Robert Walser, the reader, along with the novel's characters, embarks on a grand quest in miniature through various modes and genres of story-telling and tale-spinning, all connected, all humanized and humanizing. -- Brad Richard, *American Letters Commentary*, 1998

From the Back Cover

The fate of the universe, as readers learned in *The Camel's Back*, depends on a single creature, the Encyclopedia Mouse, who in Roithamer's Universe is more "ratlos (at a loss) than ever before." Ripped out of the Binding Nexus Drive, his storytelling nest, the mouse will encounter insidious scientists working for Petro Dent, Homer in old age, Hegel upside down in his study, a possessed bot, a young Little Rock housewife whose life is about to be changed forever, and R2, an avatar of Roithamer, ex-ruler of Relix, whose goal is to drink our hero's "blood to the lees." Comic yet darkly disturbing, rich in character and plot, Roithamer's Universe also offers the reader parodies, puns, allusions, monologues, meditations, poems, and a wealth of myth and madness. "So grab your hyper helmets," as the Encyclopedia Mouse says, "tuck your dictionaries under your arms, and set sail ... to the edges of the universe's winedark sea."