



The Radioactive Redhead

John Zakour, Lawrence Ganem

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In this final title in a hilarious trilogy--following "The Plutonium Blonde" and "The Doomsday Brunette"--the last freelance private detective has a new case to solve involving androids, future tech wizards, out-of-control artificial intelligence, and futuristic mayhem. Original.

The Radioactive Redhead Details

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Mike says

I loved this one too. I actually basically love all these books. And this has my favorite opening of all of them, and my favorite motive too actually(the reason the killer is trying to kill). Of course, I've always had a weakness for redheads so maybe that has something to do with it? But seriously it is very strong for being a third book in a series.(sometimes the third of anything seems kind of cursed. I'm looking at you Spider-man movies) You get a lot of very funny moments including the opening chapter with the performance of "Revenge Of The 47 Samurai" that doesn't go so well. And there's not only the weird "Let's make up swear words based off of current computer terms" thing that happens in every book, there's also the continuation of the Wodehouse references. In Sci-fi! There aren't enough Wodehouse references in fiction these days let alone science fiction. So, yeah, it's great, but with me you seem to get either "I loved it" or "It's dumb".

Wing Kee says

3.5 stars.

Yes, there is a character called Sexy Sprocket...it's true. As with the other books of this series it embraces/parodies the SF/Noir/Pulp books of the 60s and it's a fun thing indeed. There are all the things I liked about the other two books (witty dialog, over the top action, a ridiculous world) but through no fault of its own this book is a step back, and here's why:

- 1) The characters once again are hilarious and the HARV/HARA plot made me giggle throughout, the dialog of Roundtree's dialog is awesome also. The relationship status of Zack and Electra as further looked into and it makes them both (and their relationship) deeper which is good. This is not where the book takes a step back.
- 2) The world is fun and interesting and by now the rules have been established and there is just more and more brushes painted into the canvas to make it more detailed and fun. This is not where the book takes a step back.
- 3) The story, that's where this book takes a step back. Sure, there is the HARV/HARA and Zack/Electra stuff which is very good, but the issue is the main story. It's not a terrible story, not at all, I enjoyed it. The issue was that book 2 blew the lid on the world and the scope of it and...well book 3 just shrunk it all down again. I kinda would have felt that if this book was in fact book 2 than I would not be saying the things I am saying now. That's the step back.

It's a fun book and by now if you've read 2 you should keep reading them. Fun times!

Onward to The Frost Haired Vixen!

Benjamin Kahn says

Fun, light, quick read. It started a little slowly for me, but then the pace picked up and I was swept along with the story. It's not going to change your life, but if you want a humorous hard-boiled novel with a sci-fi twist, this is right up your alley.

Nai Wang says

This review is for the entire series I binged in two weeks like a crazy day on Netflix. So I must say I loved it! Humorous, campy and fun for all the right reasons. Zakour pokes fun at all the tropes and takes it to the next level, so much over the top you have to chuckle at it poking fun of itself. Just the right blend of Noir and Sci-Fi to make the universe come alive! I highly recommend a binge on this one if you want something light hearted and fun to read!

Johnny says

The Radioactive Redhead has similarities with Zakour's and Ganem's previous books about the last Private Investigator on earth. Once again, the supervillain(ess) appears to be a woman with superhuman powers to entertain, seduce, and oppress. Once again, protagonist Zach Johnson is forced to walk a tightrope between his very jealous fiancée and the femme fatale(s) around whom the plot(ing) resolves. Again, the technological turns of phrase replacing theological and proverbial turns of phrase have increased my risibility index: "It'll be a MAC day in DOS," "Don't be such a Pentium," or "Don't be such a worm in the data!"

This time, the interesting flavor is due to the fact that Zach's computer assistant, HARV, transforms himself/herself into a feminine form in order to serve Zach better. Naturally, this makes both Zach and fiancée uncomfortable, as well as HARV's (now HARA's) creator. It does, however, give a chance for Ganem and Zakour to address some of the sexist clichés found in private eye stories and "B" movies. Indeed, much of the humor in *The Radioactive Redhead* forces the thoughtful reader (though why a thoughtful reader would be reading this lightweight, though enjoyable, fare is beyond this thoughtless consumer of pure escape reading) to reconsider how we all tend to relate to people on the basis of appearances.

Yes, *The Radioactive Redhead* is pure escapism, but it's delightfully so.

Mohammad Aloufi says

If only I can give this book more than a five, seriously.

Ines says

Teen pop star Sexy Sprockets and Zach meet during a *killer* performance at the Oakland Kabuki Palace Theatre. As he is trying to save himself from Kabuki actors with real weapons, Zach also saves Sexy because, as he explains to HARV, she is a woman. Sexy is impressed by Zach and hires him as her personal

bodyguard as she is receiving some serious death treats while preparing her first farewell tour. HARV is also impressed by the way Zach acted and upgrades itself with hilarious consequences. The interaction between Zach and his personal computer are always funny and I'm often taken by surprise at some of the retorts. Another funny story that is more mysterious than I initially thought. Zach has to find who wants to kill Sexy, and at the same time stay alive from both killer robots and his girlfriend Electra who is not happy about his new employer. Very funny read, this series is very funny and entertaining.

Amy says

This one had so much drama, I almost started not liking this book. But, my doubt were assuaged in the end. I adored this book. Yeah, there was the drama, and I didn't know how I felt about some of the plot threads, but the emotional growth was fantastic. The core characters, as usual, were brilliant. I loved having more of Electra (I don't know how her name is spelled since I listen to the audio dramas.), as well as Carol. The twists shocked me. That's one of the things I love about this series, I'm consistently surprised by the twists, and then realize the clues were there all along. That's the mark of a truly brilliant author, as well as their story. I'm so glad this series is consistently great. Book 4 will just just as good, I'm sure.

Erika says

In the third book of the series Zach Johnson, Earth's last freelance private detective, latest case involves protecting a pop star and trying to survive a reality show based on trying to kill him.

I had a harder time getting into this one, the story seemed slight and felt a bit forced and I figured out most of what was going on pretty much from the beginning. I didn't hate reading it but it didn't have the same zip and freshness the first two did and I can't quite put my finger on why, though part of it may be that to me at least the music industry is so insane it's sort of hard to poke fun of it these days without coming across as cliched. I didn't find it a waste of time to read, but it wasn't as fun as the first two.

Violet says

Teen pop stars, killer androids performing Kabuki (and killing it! AND being killer assassins too!) and reality show, named 'Let's kill Zack!', HARV wants to be HARA and well he, oh, sorry she (it?), is the best damned computer to accomplish that - nothing that last private detective Zachary Nixon Johnson cannot handle. Witty, insane, explosive.

Marcus Calvert says

Probably the best of the series. It's just high-octane plot from start-to-finish. Guaranteed to crack you up. But - and there is a "but" - you won't appreciate it as much without reading (at least) one of the earlier bookss. Gives what happens to this poor guy some perspective.

Tasula says

The premise of the book is that Zach is the last PI on Earth circa 2060, and gets embroiled in a messy case - protecting a sexy teen idol from death threats while dodging assassination attempts against himself (as part of an unwanted and unrequested starring role in a reality TV show called Let's Kill Zach). It's kind of silly fun.

Julie Johnson says

this is my third book by this author and it was the best so far. I love books that take genres and play with them gleefully...these books are part old time PI, part sci fi schlock, part futuristic parable, and also very witty, sly 'in jokes' (like 'what the gates?'). It usually examines an interesting social concept (in this case, gender) but always light heartedly and tongue in cheek...all that, and android assassins with fire swords! seriously, a fun book, full of adventure and fun, and not to be missed!

Joshua Palmatier says

I just finished this book, the third in the *Zachary Nixon Johnson* series. He's the last private investigator in the year 2060 . . . and he's rather cool.

The first two books were good. Good enough that I kept buying the series. And I have to say that the writing is just gotten better. In this third installment, the plotting is exceptional. I felt the second book in the series was a little rocky and not as clear as it could have been, but this one was easy to follow and yet was still convoluted. There were at least three separate plot threads going on: bodyguard to Sexy Sprocketts, unwilling participant in a reality TV show called *Let's Kill Zack*, and clueless man in a relationship. And the three wove together seamlessly in this book. The authors have gotten much better with this type of thing.

And it rocks. I will definitely be moving on to the other 3 books already out in this series. The writing was smooth, the characters were fun and great, and the interplay between them--even the ones that aren't human--is spectacular. I laughed at moments, and the authors balance the humor with the serious moments perfectly. I STRONGLY recommend reading this book if you're remotely interested in humorous SF.

Not to say there weren't a few problems, but all of my problems were with cosmetic things. The first book in the series had a ton of typos in it that should have been found and corrected before publication. This one didn't have as many . . . but they were still there. I don't mind a couple in a book, because I've been there and done that and no matter how many people read a book there will always be typos. But there were enough that it became noticeable and reached the "touch annoying" line in my head.

In addition, the tag line on the book is . . . misleading. In a big way. It states: "How do you stop a superhuman villain who knows what you're going to do before *you* do?" Now, this isn't technically inaccurate . . . but the book isn't really about the superhuman villain. In fact, that superhuman villain only gets found and dealt with in the last few chapters of the book. What grabs you and holds you in this book is all of the other characters and their relationships and plot threads.

Again, notice that those two quibbles have NOTHING to do with the actual writing in the book. One is just

cosmetic and the other has to do with marketing. So, if those are the only things I can find to complain about, you see how good the book is. I gave it 5 stars after all. *grin*

So go get this book! Get all of the books in this series. The first four are now offered in two omnibus editions, so they're even cheaper than when I bought them!

Katy says

Please note: I read and reviewed this book in 2007. Copying over review from Amazon.

Overview: It's the not-too-distant future, but the world is a very different place. Reality TV is the preferred entertainment of the masses. Entertainment moguls will go to whatever lengths necessary to procure their next "big" star. Teen pop sensations rise to meteoric heights on their looks and dancing ability - singing talent need not apply. Teen slang is impenetrable to adults . . . wait, that's not so very different, is it?

Well, they have hover-cars. Blasters. Laser knives. How cool is that? Not to mention maid-bots, Kabuki androids and interactive computers that are intelligent enough to be your personal assistant.

Synopsis: Zachary Nixon Johnson is the last practicing private eye in the world and he loves his job - most days. Today, he's not so sure. He accepted an anonymous meet at a Kabuki theatre, only to be attacked upon arrival by the entire Kabuki android cast. In the process, he stops to save a luscious redhead, who we learn is named Sexy Sprockets, a teen pop super star. The next day she contacts him and announces that she needs a bodyguard, that she has received death threats. He agrees to take the case. To make matters worse, HARV - his computerized personal assistant, the most powerful computer in the world - has decided that he wants to "experience" life as a woman. As a long, lean, gorgeous red-head woman who calls herself HARA. Throw in Sexy's three back-up dancers - Missy, Sissy and Lusty, all themselves redheads - and Zach's niece Carol and he is surrounded by redheads. To make matters worse, the Faux network has decided that their new reality TV show will be called "Let's Kill Zach!" and they keep sending assassins after him. Between protecting his client and himself and trying to make peace with his increasingly wrathful girlfriend, Electra Gevada, Zach can't seem to win for losing.

b>Review and Recommendations: Zakour and Ganem are geniuses with the English language and playfully flex and pull at it as much as possible to create some truly awe-inspiring puns and word by-play. This is definitely a book for those who love pulp sci-fi, detective noir or just a fun, well-written novel.
