



Clarke County, Space

Allen M. Steele

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Clarke County is a huge space colony, owned by the company Skycorp and orbiting Earth in the mid-21st century. Over the years, the colonists and pioneers there have evolved a community identity. Now Skycorp want to develop their economy with tourism and this brings about trouble.

Clarke County, Space Details

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Author : Allen M. Steele

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From Reader Review Clarke County, Space for online ebook

Charley Beans says

Good read

Thanks. Nineteen more words required. Get get grew kinds nieces hi-tech I'm f s Gregg hatch hefty hotdog :) hui

Russ Dumanovsky says

This one was better than the first which hopefully means the next three will be even better!

George says

This was an enjoyable read, if not too deep. It was written in the early '90s, so it was interesting to see how technology was expected to have advanced. Quite a bit of what's described we're well past, particularly in the field of computers, but others we seem to be behind where things were expected to be at. Some of the more intriguing science in the story wasn't explained at all.

Anyway, the story was enjoyable. The characters were pretty simple, although interesting. The 'plot twist' at the end was a little predictable, too. Like many of Steele's other novels, this is pretty close to a story that could easily have been set on Earth in contemporary times (or in the recent past), but there are a few elements that make this sci-fi rather than just fiction. There are also a few themes, like homesteading, corporate greed, government corruption, religious fanaticism, etc. that I've seen in several of Steele's other books, too. They weren't too blatant here though. So while I enjoyed the book and didn't feel like it was a chore to read, it wasn't an outstanding book that I couldn't put down, either.

Roberto says

Allen Steele is the best writer of realistic SF, a fact that can be seen clearly in this novel.

We are at Clarke County (a clear homage to Arthur C. Clarke), a Bernal type station orbiting the Lagrange point 5.

We are witnessing some lives intertwined in a crucial moment for the colony:

- * the sheriff began a relationship with the wife of the most important man of Clarke County,
- * a woman is on the run from her lover unaware to bring along vital information;
- * believers of a new sect that sees Elvis Presley as their god meet on the train for a special event,
- * a mysterious man controls events by communicating with artificial intelligence that controls the station.

There is a lot of ironies in the fire (perhaps too much), though the characters are very human and plausible

even in the context of terrestrial space, a setting very believable and charming, which is the strong point of the novel.

Unfortunately the plot is resolved in a quick thriller, which although well managed, is a bit disappointing. The ending then takes the reader to a further degree of Suspension of disbelief that frankly I struggled to reach

I trust more in the other novels of the cycle, hoping that they are at the level of Orbital Decay Orbital Decay.

Richard says

Steele riffs on The Moon is a Harsh Mistress, with some different elements which don't add much and, unfortunately, repeating the most implausible aspect of Heinlein's book with even less satisfying effect. It's still a decent poolside read for SF fans, but not one that will stick with you once you put it down.

Andreas says

Set in the same universe as Orbital Decay and Lunar Descent, this novel is set in an orbital habitat. It lacks any of the things that made the first two books good.

<http://www.books.rosboch.net/?p=1309>

George says

Steele does a wonderful job with details of the logistics, economics, and demographics of Clarke County, a recreational world in space. Writing style is witty and one must dig through that to get to the stories. The omniscient characters are annoying and distract from the scifi whodunit, which I think is the point? Some say that it ends poorly, but I wouldn't know because I never got there. Boring in the middle and I've got better things to do than spend time in that dimension. This two star rating is going downhill from the last 3 star rating of book #1; thus, I'm thinking that this "Near Space" series is done for me.

Craig says

This is one of the best novels in Steele's Near-Space sequence. It embraces Lunar sociological themes that Heinlein explored (without the dogmatic politics!), Native-American mysticism in space, time travel, and blue-collar life in orbit. All the aspects are neatly mixed together, wrapped in a familiar framework of journalistic exploration, and a compelling story with realistic characters results. This is a good one!

Michael Whitman says

Starts well, ends poorly.

Todd R says

A good hard scifi piece. Good characters with defined needs.

Scott Holstad says

This was one of the most absolutely delightful books I've ever read! I love Allen Steele! What a story!

The story begins with a older, veteran writer being approached by a stranger who wants to tell him the "real" story of Clarke County, a constructed space colony which I think is near the moon. In this story, you meet the Church of Elvis and its con man mastermind, a rich girlfriend of a mobster on the run with cash and important computer disks that he'll kill to recapture, the hit man sent after her, the Indian police chief of Clarke County, and many other interesting characters.

We first meet John Bighorn taking peyote so he can have interpretive dreams. When he wakes, he finds the wife of one of the local politicians who wants to bed him. He declines. We're then transported to the transport bringing the girlfriend in first class, and the assassin and the church in third class, where they're frozen "zombies" for the trip. Upon waking, the assassin talks with the Living Elvis and it's pretty funny. The FBI is involved, if only to ask Bighorn to keep an eye out for and on the girl, which he does. He finds "the golem," (the assassin) and warns him away, thus gaining his eternal enmity. Meanwhile, someone has distributed via the electronic bulletin boards a call for Clarke County to declare its independence from Earth and become a self sustaining nation, which elicits a great deal of controversy. In fact, this mysterious person can apparently appear in electronic form just about anywhere and while he plays some pranks at times, he's quite useful to Bighorn throughout the book.

The Church of Elvis is onsite for a televised revival, to grab more members and fill the coffers. The girlfriend, Macy, hides out as a cultist with these people, only to be spotted on TV by the golem, who goes after her. She's abducted by the police first to put her under protection, but there are only seven policemen for the entire colony and they don't even have lethal firearms, just tasers. Suffice it to say there's a great shoot out scene and a showdown between the golem and Bighorn, but the book also brings into play a nuclear warhead that's been hanging in space for awhile and which an Elvis hacker has broken into to and sent toward Clarke County. Zounds!

The story ends in a satisfying manner and we're taken back full circle to the beginning of the novel, where we find the two men talking. And we discover the topic of time travel. Interesting, and unexpected. If I could give this book 10 stars, I would. I just thoroughly enjoyed it and I strongly recommend it.

Michael says

This is the second book in Allen Steele's Near Space series. This book is about mankind's first space colony. It is in cislunar orbit about 200,000 miles from Earth. It is called Clarke County and was named after Arthur C. Clarke. Clarke County has decided to declare it's independence from Earth. Into this turmoil comes a woman running from a notorious gangster. She is being chased by a hitman out to kill her and retrieve some

tapes she has stolen which could send the gangster to prison for life. Meanwhile the Church of Elvis is holding it's convention at Clarke County and one of it's more zealous members has the codes to send a nuclear missile to destroy Clarke County. It is up to the local sheriff to save the girl and catch the killer while a mysterious man named McCoy and Clarke County's A.I. try to stop the missile. This book is a great read with plenty of action and I recommend it.

Kenneth Flusche says

Fast reading adventure story, similar to "A Moon is a Harsh Mistress" by Heinland but without the politics. Am going to re-read Moon to make sure.

Horia Ursu says

Excellent (as in very plausible) descriptions of an orbital habitat, but only three characters are developed enough to make the reader care about them. As always, Allen Steele gets the science right, builds a compelling intrigue, but the ending seems a bit rushed, and I have to read the rest of the novels in the Near Space series to see if the final revelation pays off somewhere along the way. Nice twist, anyway. And a very enjoyable read, in all.

Teresa says

The author Allen Steele got his master's at the University of Missouri and few small details of this story made it seem rather close to home for me, St. Louis ganster mob boss bad guy, Stephen's College co-ed mistress on the run...the flavor of Steele's world building reminds me of Varley, the plot twists and character development are completely engrossing, a very tight spacer tale. Steele's Native American lead character Sheriff Bigthorn comes off as very real, his connection with the mystical Coyote majorly fortuitous for Clark County.
