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Apocalypse Maybe

REVIEW BY CHUCK FRANKLIN

In his newest work, Henry Flesh serves up the end of the world with an unusual combination of biblical predictions about the last days and the angst of a gay 49-year-old New York City proofreader named Stephen.

In spite of the title, Stephen remains the central character throughout, while Michael enters the picture only briefly near the end. And the end comes quickly in this relatively short work, more akin to a short story than a novel.

The plot is simple. Stephen does not realize it, but the end times are quickly playing themselves out. He meets some heavenly characters, has some sex, meets some not-so-heavenly characters, runs away from sex, then meets Michael and has some more sex. Finally, he rises up into the heavens wrapped in the arms of his resurrected lover, Robert. (Actually, they are a little more than wrapped in each others arms, and Flesh gives the term "rapture" a whole new meaning.)

For those who might want a more detailed synopsis, Stephen wakes up one day three years after his lover, Robert, died of AIDS, worried about his own HIV status. His TV is blaring news about a crisis in Russia. Three misty and somewhat mysterious characters show up, claim to be Children of someone called Michael, and tell Stephen the end of time is near. They also tell him Robert will soon come back along with this Michael.

Of the three characters, young, blue-eyed Timothy comforts Stephen the most... in the way you might expect a young, blue-eyed good-looking hunk can comfort an aging

gay man. Sure enough, the encounter ends up with them entwined in bed together. Again, Flesh gives new meaning to the notion of angelic comfort.

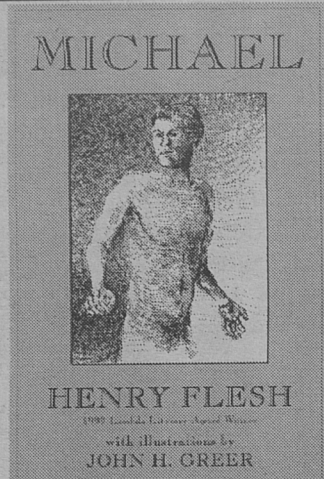
Stephen then has some semi-mystical experience while looking at some photos of young, nude Czechoslovakian youths called Dewy Boys, and one in particular called Dano. He recalls much of his life with Robert as he stares at Dano, whose picture transforms into none other than Robert.

Stephen next ventures out to a bar called Muffins, where he encounters yet another young, handsome youth, Davey, as well as bartender Ron and three handsome men, who remain unnamed. In a somewhat confusing rendezvous, which includes items called "X pills," Davey performs oral sex on each of the unnamed men and Ron the bartender. When he gets to Stephen, something gives Stephen the heebie-jeebies (maybe that X pill?) and he runs out the door.

The mysterious and long-awaited Michael finally appears to Stephen after he returns to his apartment. Not surprisingly, they are soon enmeshed in the flesh—supposedly the beginning of Stephen's so-called spiritual awakening.

Stephen's erotic epiphany finally culminates with Robert's return, now gloriously young and handsome. He reunites with Stephen, and no sooner can you say "rapture,"

Henry Flesh
Michael
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they are copulating en route to heaven. Hallelujah!

Flesh combines homoeroticism and biblical writing about the end times in a story that can titillate some readers and offend others. However, if you think you won't be put off by the explicit sex, Flesh's book will give you a truly different perspective on how the world might end.

But is this novel really about the end of the world or just the end of Stephen's life? Did all these events really happen, or were they only in Stephen's mind? In any case, the author's work can engender significant controversy and lend itself to a multitude of interpretations.

The book also includes 31 black-and-white illustrations by John Greer done in cross-hatching style, some of which include full frontal nudity and depict sexual acts. ▼

Feng Shui continued from page twenty-three

If you have a room at the end of a long corridor, generally you'd be facing killing energies—chi gets desperate when it rushes down a long hallway and ends up with nowhere to go. You can simply counteract these 'killing' energies by painting the door the bad color for the direction it faces—got to love the escape clause once again.

Back into the boudoir. If you're in the early years of your relationship, you should decorate your bedroom using reds. Seasoned couples should use more muted yin colors, although this does not mean everything should be draped in black.

Feng shui certainly can make for some very interesting paint jobs, but you'll make it fabulous, of course. A word of caution to the décor elite: faux finishes, sponge treatments, texturizing, and glazes are tricky and covered only in advanced feng shui manuals, so proceed at your own risk!

Outside the home

Of course, your home isn't the only place you spend significant time, and there are many ways to apply feng shui in the office or workplace as well. Your research and efforts toward enlightening your managers and staff will undoubtedly pay off. Certainly, you'll be given highest priority for the

newly created position of Vice President of Feng Shui, as long as you remember to hang a crystal above your computer, add plants and fish tanks, and make sure your desk is facing the entrance.

Travelers may also want to take the art on the road. If you're headed for a northern destination, burn incense. When traveling to the southwest or northeast, you should plant trees at the back of your yard, but you only need to light a candle if you're headed west. Southbound voyagers should throw a bucket of water in that same direction. My favorite, and a sure hit at airport security checkpoints, is to slice the air with a curved knife if you happen to be going to the east or southeast.

Remember, this is just the beginning; there is a wealth of information out there from which to learn more. I highly recommend Lillian Too's books as great starting points; they're perfect for those with a short attention span. She also has several illustrated guides, and a Web site, too. For monthly doses of advice, magazines abound, and you can also pick yourself up a Feng Shui Wall and Desk Calendar set, complete with instructions on the proper locations for displaying both. ▼

RESOURCES

BOOKS	WEB
<i>Little Book Of Feng Shui</i>	lillian-too.com
<i>Little Book Feng Shui At Work</i>	worldoffengshui.com
both by Lillian Too	



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