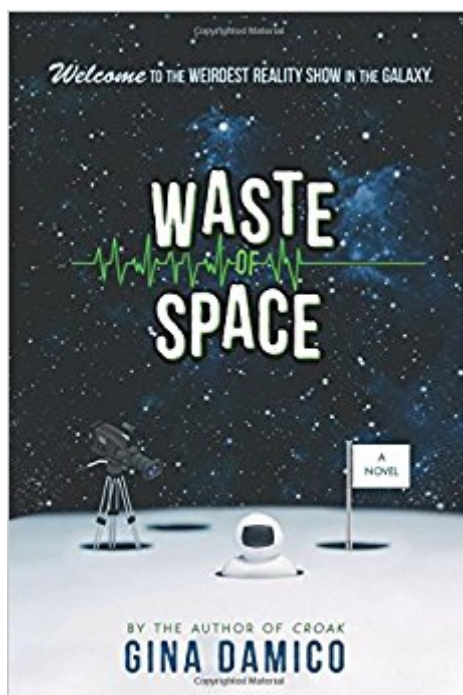


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Waste Of Space



Synopsis

Cram ten hormonal teens into a spaceship and blast off: that's the premise for the ill-conceived reality show *Waste of Space*. The kids who are cast know everything about drama and nothing about the fact that the production is fake. Hidden in a desert warehouse, their spaceship replica is equipped with state-of-the-art special effects dreamed up by the scientists partnering with the shady cable network airing the show. And it's a hit! Millions of viewers are transfixed. But then, suddenly, all communication is severed. Trapped and paranoid, the kids must figure out what to do when this reality show loses its grip on reality.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This edgy, madcap romp will have wide appeal. By turns chaotic, lampoon-ish, hilarious, melodramatic, thoughtful, and suspenseful. . ." VOYA "A sure pick for fans of sci-fi spoofs, black humor, and unusual formats." Booklist "Intriguing and at times hilarious . . ." SLJ "Damico does for media frenzy and outer space what Libba Bray did for glamour pageants in *Beauty Queens*, taking this adventure all the way from comedy to sharp satire." Bulletin

Gina Damico is the author of *Hellhole*, *Wax*, and the *grim-reapers-gone-wild* books of the *Croak* trilogy. She has also dabbled as a tour guide, transcriptionist, theater house manager, scenic artist,

movie extra, office troll, retail monkey, yarn hawker and breadmonger. A native of Syracuse, New York, she now lives in Los Angeles with her husband, two cats, one dog, and an obscene amount of weird things purchased from yard sales. Visit her website at www.ginadami.co.

Waste of Space is a fun and snarky story that entertains while making fun of the reality TV entertainment that some of us ;-) are addicted to! It is sarcastic, witty and over the top from start to finish! Complete enjoyment!"Chazz: All right. What's that in your hand? What are you drinking?Hibiscus: [sips from a terracotta mug] Artisanal mud tea.Chazz:

What's mud tea?Hibiscus: It's silt from the bottom of a top-secret bog in Manitoba, Canada. Steeped in water from that very same bog.Chazz: What does it taste like?Hibiscus: Socialism."

* Bram Stoker? Like *Dracula*, this isn't a standard narrative, rather, it's a compilation of transcripts through the voices of different characters similar to Stoker's *Dracula* which is written in epistolary format (that means a compilation of correspondence as written in the voices of various characters). * Jonathan Swift? This is unabashed satire (and sarcastic as all get out) and as written takes apart the reality TV industry, rich people, and modern media in general. * Frederick Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth? See *The Space Merchants* which satirizes and expands 1950's advertising into the future. These three sets of authors popped into my head as I was reading *A WASTE OF SPACE* and contemplating of what it reminded me. The book definitely has Stoker-ian, Swiftian, and Pohl-Kornbluthian overtones in one strange melange. Our intrepid [sic] "spacetronauts" consist of the usual array of jocks, nerds, nymphos, the disabled (though the "disability" is an amputated single middle finger), etc. These teens are slightly less than believable characters, but pretty standard and likeable for a Young Adult (YA) novel. For the adult reader, I'd recommend Damico's book for those who like flaky cult novels. In the end, it easily passes my greatest test for all media: it wasn't boring. Sometimes stupid, often funny, occasionally biting sarcasm, this book oddly works. The plot plows along at breakneck speed even if it's not very believable. Check that. The most believable thing about it is the proper disdain it holds for the media producers and consumers of our day. Fun!

This is a perfectly adequate semi-satire of the reality TV industry. It's got some snark and some humor, a laughably selfish rich jerk running the thing for you to hate, and so on. The characters are diverse and at least somewhat fleshed out, their motivations exist, the premise is mostly believable. The conceit of leaked footage/records is fine, but draws comparisons to *Illuminae* and very few

books compare well to *Illuminae*. Ironically, what makes me so tepid about this book is that it tried to add a little unexpected depth right at the end. If it had stayed in its lane as a light-weight send-up of modernity, with some kicker at the end to induce one last eye-roll about materialism or the entertainment industry, I might have had a lot more nice things to say about it. Instead, it tries to be *Something More*, and ends up undercutting itself.

This book is a wild ride, and not because the characters are jettisoned into space. Far from it. It's a satirical look at "reality TV" giving the complete lowdown from the able assistance of a low-level PA who got fired and handed enormous amounts of raw footage of the *Waste of Space* TV show produced by DV8 studios. The premise is this: DV8 wants to make a show about regular kids on a space station, but that's unrealistic, and expensive, so they partner with NASAW--a shadowy conglomerate whose scientists know lots about space and time--to build a fake space station (complete with IKEA furnishings) that can house ten teens for two months. Along the way, DV8 management bullies and coerces everyone to insist that this show is taking place in space. Kids line up in malls hoping to become part of this cast; some are fame-hungry, some are looking for a way out, others are looking for a new life altogether. The teens are cast to fulfill certain roles, and the stereotypes they reflect. It's a weird mix of *Big Brother* and *Space Camp*, and the audience is in on the joke from the get-go. That said, there's still lots of surprises in store. Like, what happens when the uppity/vile nephew of the TV show's producer is going to get axed? (Bring on the big guns...) What about the party girl--any more bras to display? The token minorities are messing up the chemistry, and there's plenty of clueless to go around. The telling of this story is a disjointed collection of transcripts from video recordings, cell phone calls and business meetings. There are roughly 15 POVs, so that's a jumble. It took me a while to settle in, though I caught on to the sympathetic POVs in the early going. Nico and Titania are the heart and soul of the story--two kids who've been altered by tragedy. They are searching for more---meaning and acceptance, and they don't go in for DV8's shenanigans. The DV8 exec, Chazz, and his nephew Clayton are the typical reprehensibles, pulling all the strings and cutting despicable deals. I was pleasantly surprised by "Bacardi" and "Snout" and saddened by Louise. I had thought I wasn't touched much by the book, then the end hit me like a sledgehammer to the chest. The storyline was a sleight of hand that morphed from zany and unpredictable into intense and emotional. I'm not going to belabor the plot; some of the kids are desperately hoping to be a part of a space mission. Others know it's gotta be hoax. The DV8 and NASAW folks are doing their utmost to convince the world their show is "real." In the mix some true connections are made, and dare I say: the most fervent wishes of several of

the cast are made real. I was pleasantly surprised how all the seemingly random plot threads were stretched and connected and eventually woven into an unexpectedly picturesque tapestry. For fans of reality TV, this book is a piercing commentary on the genre of entertainment, and how we consume fiction--in any medium. Expect plenty of showmanship, and deceit, and double-crossing. Expect subtle commentary on American xenophobia and racism. And if you read through to the end, expect to be surprised, and maybe delighted. Like I was. I received a review copy via NetGalley.

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