

# BAY AREA REPORTER

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## Octoprissy

by Jim Provenzano

### *The Hair-Raising Adventures of Jayms Blonde* by Robert W. Cabell; iUniverse, \$14.95

You have hand it to self-publishers like Robert W. Cabell. Even when they get it almost right, they forge ahead to get their books to readers. Points for enthusiasm; really. He's got a great concept — *The Hair-Raising Adventures of Jayms Blonde*, a cute cartoon gay action-hero who doubles as a hairstylist to the stars. Blonde does battle with Zaroya and her evil henchmen and women, as she plots to assassinate Miss Galaxy, force Pakistan and India into war, and ruin the environment by destroying corn/ethanol products.

Huh? Yeah, it doesn't make much sense, but Blonde's nemesis, a former beauty pageant queen with a convenient private island headquarters, isn't the most logical of archvillains.

This isn't a serious book by any means, and it's often sexist in its depiction of women, even cartoonish ones. The book has some fun illustrations by Cabell and two other artists. But upon second glance, most don't really serve to further the story or illustrate enough pivotal points. It's not a graphic novel, but a comic story with illustrations.

Nor is *Jayms Blonde* graphic in a sexual way. Despite a lot of innuendo and one tasty illustration of our hero in bed with a hunky Latino politician — one of many instant-coffee servings of sex that are truncated before a chapter's end — Cabell spends more time describing characters' fashionable clothing and subsequent gruesome murders.

It's an uneven mix for a genre that needs to flow swiftly. The repetitive repartee between Blonde's nemesis Zaroya and her mother grows tiresome after one round.

Despite a single back-story chapter about Blonde's former lover and some talented dolphins, we don't learn much about Blonde, other than that he's impervious to injury, despite multiple near-death adventures. Having bullet-proof gel comes in handy.

For all the attempts to be hip with current gay pop-culture humor, Cabell loses a few crucial points by misspelling names like Madonna and Evita Peron. With all the Hollywood celebrities blurbing his book, it's too bad none of them were proofreaders. A fully illustrated comic-book version may have brought forth more of a sense of economy and fun to what, in book form, despite the great packaging, is a repetitive formula that suffers from split-ends, split infinitives and general need of zhooshing (the *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* term for a light touch-up).

Perhaps future editions will hone the streaks and tips; unless, of course, this is just a treatment for an animated film, in which case, it's ready for development.