

SPECULATIVE FICTION REVIEW by Stephanie Young

TITLE *Sky Coyote*
AUTHOR Kage Baker
PUBLISHER Tor
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COVER ART Paul Youll

Précis Joseph, one of the older facilitators in the Company, travels to California in the year 1700 to be the lead contact in a mission to bring a group of Chumash Indians to the future and preserve their culture. The Chumash are not a quiet little Indian tribe with teepees; they are businessmen, entrepreneurs, entertainers and manufactures of many products.

But they do believe in gods and Joseph assumes the role of Sky Coyote to explain why they are being brought to live with the Sky People. Joseph is good at this and has them convinced, until a zealot from a neighboring tribe tries to undermine Joseph but in the end he prevails.

Mendoza is also along but has a minor part in this book. The inner plot delves into how the mortals from the 24th century who created Joseph, Mendoza and the other immortals are not happy with the decadent lifestyles the immortals live or with humanity of the past for that matter. Rumors about what happens in the year 2355 and the sudden transfers of "problem" operatives abound.

In the end, Joseph succeeds with the mission, Mendoza stays in the New World to study the wondrous flora of unspoiled California and the questions remain.

Protagonist - Joseph - facilitator grade one

Antagonist - The Company mortals - Bugleg primarily

What I liked - The blowing away of the Native American stereotype is deftly achieved by Baker in this book. Joseph, a strong supporting character from the first Company book, gets a chance to shine and we find out a lot more about the mortals who make up the Company.

What I didn't like - The pace was slow, and the humor from the first book was subdued in this one. I also wanted more info on what is happening in the future but I suspect that is coming in future books I have not read yet.

Comments - I enjoyed the book, but not as much as the *In the Garden of Eden*. The first person style works well and I assume Baker uses it in the rest of the series. The best part of the book was the denouement as the story of what happens in California over the next century and a half is told in a humorous way and the next novel - *Mendoza in Hollywood* - is set up. If you like the Company novels you will enjoy this and I still plan to read the rest of the series. I just hope the stories are more interesting.

Rating 