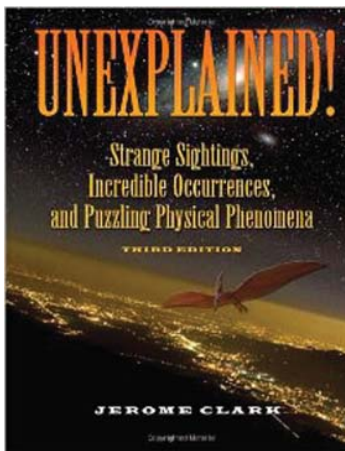


BOOK REVIEW

Unexplained! Strange Sightings, Incredible Occurrences, and Puzzling Physical Phenomena by Jerome Clark. Canton, MI: Visible Ink Press, 2012 (third edition). 600 pp. \$22.95 (paperback). ISBN 978-1578593446; Kindle 978-157859290; ePub 978-1578594283; PDF 978-1578594276.

Clark is widely known and highly respected for authoritatively reliable and judicious discussion of anomalous phenomena. This volume is a treat for connoisseurs of the genre, and should be read by everyone interested



in trying to understand unexplained and often seemingly *unexplainable* matters.

The Introduction of 11 pages is worth reading and re-reading. It reflects Clark's considered judgments, which I don't hesitate to describe as wisdom acquired over decades of grappling with reports and other evidence about matters that most of mainstream science and scholarship find too difficult to handle.

Clark begins by acknowledging that human beings find it very difficult to say, "I don't know." Yet that is the proper conclusion about many unexplained matters. Often it is the most expert and

the most knowledgeable specialists who have the confidence to say it, and Clark exemplifies that.

Although this is labeled a third edition, it really is a new book, as the Foreword explains. There are fewer than half as many individual topics as in the first edition, and they are treated discursively in essay fashion rather than, as in earlier editions, as shorter encyclopedia-type pieces. The present approach allows Clark to underscore with particular cases the general insights offered in the Introduction.

The contents are organized into three parts: Mysteries, Curiosities, Fables.

Mysteries include Anomalous Clouds; Black Dogs; Lake Monsters; Living Dinosaurs; a couple of dozen topics in all. The evidence for the reality of reports is generally considerable, and reasonably possible

explanations are often suggested. Curiosities include some that have been entirely debunked as spurious, like Green Children or the Jersey Devil, but also a cryptozoological creature, the Onza, that turned out to be quite real albeit “only” a distinct variant of a known species. Among Fables one finds largely claims that never really deserved the credence some gave them, like the Cottingley Fairy photographs or the assertion of Hollow Earth.

This book deserves to be on one’s nightstand and subsequently on one’s shelves. The many topical essays offer innumerable points of interest, and the Introduction bears re-reading at intervals. Readers already familiar with Clark’s work can reliably expect to relish this volume, and anyone not yet familiar with Clark would do well to begin their acquaintance with this book.

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