



**Hatz, Diane**

**ROCK GODS OF ACHT:**

*A Music Meltdown*

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An edgy, experimental parable depicting the overarching avarice and corruption of the gods and monsters behind the corporate-music industry of the '90s.

A cast of caricatured characters shapes the workforce of the music giant Acht. There's Alex, a secretary with mood ring-like hair who must deposit her brain every morning in a jar; she spends most of her time cleaning up her villainous boss's blood when his vessels erupt in a rage. There's Weena, a music executive who literally falls apart at every meeting and constantly relies on medical repair and reattachment glue to keep her limbs together. And Skeeter, an A&R exec toting a taxidermied ferret; he may be the sole employee who actually cares about music. Finally there's the head of Acht, Vinny DiMachio, and his permanently attached "sidekick" Jeremy Wickett. When Acht is bought out by a green-tinged race of extraterrestrials called Yakadans, they create a seven-foot-tall clone-bot named Big—with an uncanny resemblance to Elvis—who is slated to dominate the record charts despite his inability to sing or dance. And, in accordance with Acht's highly paid executives scheme, Big becomes a worldwide phenomenon. They all seek a piece of Big's success—the executives want to become richer and more powerful, and the underlings seek to move up and out of their hellish clerical stations. When Alex finally scores a promotion through a cringeworthy encounter with a creepy executive, she finds her goal is not as rewarding as she had hoped. In a monumental performance, Big melts down—literally—on stage and vanishes. Infuriated, the Yakadans do some housecleaning, leaving the bloated executives to receive their much-deserved comeuppance. Though the book is a slightly predictable assessment of corporate-music greed, this is overshadowed by the highly imaginative populace of Acht. Once readers orient themselves with the idiosyncrasies in Hatz's darkly whimsical—yet ultimately relatable—novel, they're in for a fast-paced, entertaining comic treat.

Character-driven, this loopy satire is a droll examination of the corporate-music world.

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