



Pallas

L. Neil Smith

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True to his namesake, Emerson Ngu follows the way of individualism, making him the hero of Pallas, a libertarian paradise atop an asteroid, and the enemy of former senator Gibson Altman, the jealous leader of a communist dystopia. Reprint.

Pallas Details

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Author : L. Neil Smith

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From Reader Review Pallas for online ebook

Richard Foster says

Probably one of the best things I can say about a book is that I want to read more. That's certainly true here. While the setting was pretty interesting, it was the characters which really drew me in - especially that of the main protagonist Emerson Ngu. I see more of the Ngu Family Saga books in my future.

jackie fails says

Pallas

This story was very hard to stay with. There were times I almost put it up and stop reading, but kept going. There were good / parts but I have to admit I stayed confused most of the book. Sorry

Greg says

Libertarian fantasy fiction from L. Neil Smith. Stand alone novel following the exploits of Emerson Ngu, first a virtual slave, then escapee, inventor, adventurer, and business tycoon on the hypothetical asteroid, Pallas. This is a fast-paced, entertaining, and provocative novel highlighting some of the underlying principles of libertarianism. Greatly enjoyed it!

Bob says

Another excellent Prometheus Award winner. Sometimes the time shifts in this novel were disconcerting or hard to follow. But it made up for that with good solid science fiction content along with enough freedom philosophy to make any diehard libertarian happy. It is about how one individual can dramatically improve not just one world, but two -- any, with the passage of time at the end, probably many worlds. Outstanding!

Pat Cummings says

I enjoy the way science fiction novels will present a single cultural or technological change, and pursue the results of that change to its eventual conclusions. One of my favorite sub-genres shows a free society opposed to a socialist one. "Pallas" presents just such a contrast between those who live in a free society and their neighbors who do not.

On the terraformed asteroid Pallas, most are free people living as they please, according to the founding document they all signed. That life includes hunting (and eating) the wildlife that was brought to Pallas for the specific purpose of being hunted. It includes the right to innovate, compete, and succeed as one is able—or to fail and starve if one is not able.

All is not Eden in this paradise of freedom, however. A regimented farm enclosed within a Berlin-like wall houses the agrarian society of the GUMP: the Greeley Union Memorial Project, which hopes to show that manual labor and a meatless diet in a preachy communal setting will result in a better life for all.

The story takes off when Emerson Ngu, a rebellious child of the "ant farm" (as the free people of Pallas name the Project), makes it over the wall to freedom. His coming of age in the greater society of Pallas illustrates the paths each of us must take to become truly free, as L. Neil Smith presents that state.

The founding philosophy of the colony, which Emerson uses to guide his growth, comes from Mirelle Stein (the character is an obvious homage to Ayn Rand) and Raymond Louis Drake-Tealy (a similar homage to Robert Ardrey, as the novel's epigraph makes clear.)

The controlling force at the "ant farm," on the other hand, is one-time Senator Gibson Altman, a remittance man exiled to Pallas by sexual scandal. Altman's control of the Project's populace is a good illustration of the Daniel Webster quote, "In every generation, there are those who want to rule well — but they mean to rule. They promise to be good masters — but they mean to be masters."

We may dislike the Senator, but eventually Emerson Ngu accepts that all three of these larger-than-life characters, Altman, Stein, and Drake-Tealy, have a hand in making him the free man he becomes.

Lisa (Harmonybites) says

Pallas is a terraformed asteroid on which there are two contending groups. One is a colony founded by the United Nations, the other is a colony founded by the entrepreneur who terraformed Pallas. The back flyleaf claims in the novel Smith is "carrying on the legacy of Robert A. Heinlein's Libertarian Science Fiction tradition" and that's not unapt, especially given his *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, although Heinlein doesn't strike me as quite as enthusiastically uncritical of anarcho-capitalism as Smith. This is definitely libertarian pornography that, unlike the case with Heinlein, I doubt would appeal to a more mainstream science fiction readership. That's OK with me, since I do consider myself a libertarian, and in a lot of ways this is a crackingly adventurous and imaginative tale, but I admit it's sometimes a bit much in ways that I can't imagine rereading this. His pro-gun stance gets to me. I read a review (on Amazon I think) from someone who said he's a NRA member and it was too much for him. It's not simply that Smith supports gun ownership, in this book he makes a fetish of hunting--positing that what's wrong with the world is that we don't all go out to hunt and butcher our meat ourselves.

wally says

great story! a resistance movement w/a somewhat happy ending. pallas is an asteroid...a kind of new frontier for those settlers from earth who want to start fresh, have human dignity and personal freedom.

there's two groups on pallas, compare and contrast. power, politics and the destiny of humankind.

Zach says

Way too much libertarian theology to be enjoyable. It seemed like Smith was trying to follow in Heinlein's footsteps, but ended up following Ayn Rand's. The occasionally fun story just gets overshadowed by the proselytizing and gun porn, without any of Heinlein's thoughtfulness to save it.

Andy says

Excellent ideas. Not just libertarian fiction, but some amazing invention ideas, and cool places to settle, if we ever stop hiding on Earth and start colonizing off planet.

Capitalismissexxy says

ideas good

writing bad kinda high schoolish

lots of soppy monogamy

ineteresting ideas

wish he would do one where kid sleeps with many women

Ryan says

A well-conceived book that conveys the benefits of a libertarian society although not very efficiently--it could easily be 25-30% shorter and not only retain its storyline but enhance the quality of the book.

Warning: there is some profanity and sexual immorality.

Jim Strasma says

The first 50 or so pages were hard to get through, because they described folks whose ideas I hate winning. Then the story shifted to the views of their opponents, and from then on it was a great read, full of memorable ideas to underline.
