



Starseed

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An Earth-born dancer, Rain McLeod lived for her art. Dancing was her dream and her destiny - until nature betrayed her body, destroying all hope that she could ever dance again . . .

She had one last chance: The Starseed Foundation.

As a volunteer, she trained for the ultimate step in human evolution - joining with a symbiotic lifeform that provided all food, water and air . . . that allowed humans to live in the vacuum of space . . . and could turn a mortal like Rain into a Stardancer beyond the laws of gravity.

But every miracle has its price

Starseed Details

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From Reader Review Starseed for online ebook

Dragondreamsjen says

Love this book and the series even though part of the book makes you gasp in dismay. Life does that too and the Robinsons handle it beautifully.

Elana says

I have the sudden urge to be absorbed into a mass of red space-goo and become telepathic. Or even just to meditate and go from there. Really amazing. I only wish someone could put together a CD of the Songs to go with the book.

Kathryn says

I was pleasantly surprised when I started this book: I liked it. I liked it a LOT better than the first one. I think that's mostly because I was meeting brand new characters in a (mostly) brand new situation. "Stardance" was based on a short story that I LOVED, and while it was interesting, it also messed with that original story in ways I didn't always like. "Starseed" is its own story, filled with neat characters and fascinating tidbits about life in zero-gee. It almost made me a little sad at times, because I don't have much faith that the average human will be able to visit space in my lifetime, and it all sounds like it would be so much FUN.

Then, four fifths of the way through the book, something bad happened, and then I didn't like it so much any more. And I KNOW that's a terrible way to behave, but I can't help it. There's something sadistic about authors that can do something like that to their characters, and it was out of the blue because the rest of the book had been so lighthearted. I loved the interactions between the characters, and all the fun they were having, and then...that. Afterwards the book became something of a spy-action-drama, and then it got weird, and then it wrapped up in half a page. Done.

I'm sure I'll read the third book in the series, but I'll be a little more wary about it.

Jillern says

love how they talk about the book writing process in the first few pages of the book...

Christina K says

[And yet.... Okay, thi

Jeff Yoak says

I'm starting to really like Spider Robinson.

In the Stardance series, the really important thing upon which the novel centers that allows humans to transcend their traditional existence and evolve into space-faring masters of the universe is... dance. There is approximately no chance that if I had been privy to this description that I would have embarked on the series, Variable Star or no Variable Star. But somehow, in the first novel in the series, Spider Robinson made me really love this story.

Building upon that somber basis, this second installment in the series could only be called fantastic, mystical and perhaps a little silly. Adding to the transcendental aspects of dance, we uncover the power of the zen mind and then leap off plausibility buildings when our characters actually reach enlightenment. They find themselves suddenly in telepathic rapport with their previous friends in the novel and an absolutely hopeless plot situation is solved by a combination a sudden ability to move at many times normal speed and to summon nearby Buddhist monks like Aquaman calling for fish to fight underwater crime.

I still liked the novel. Rather a lot, especially given that I would have been willing to bet long against it if I could have been exposed to the description above.

I think what it is that the really good ones can go a bit insane because there is something in their personality that comes through no matter what through characters, tone, etc. Robert A. Heinlein was certainly capable of it, but novels like Assignment In Eternity and The Number of the Beast are still readable and even lovable. They're not as good as most of his other work, but there is something of the author that comes through even through a lot of silliness that makes it worth reading.

I think Robinson is turning out to be like that for me.

Melody says

I enjoy listening to Spider Robinson read his own stuff. Not every author can pull it off, but Spider can.

This is an engrossing and mostly good follow-up to the inimitable Stardance. There are broad similarities in plot, and one can see bits of Callahan's here too. She says vaguely, not wanting to have to check the spoiler box.

It's a little too tidy, the ending, but not so tidy as to completely demolish what went before.

Lara says

SPOILER WITHIN, HUGE GIANT SPOILER!

I loved this book just as much as I loved Stardance. I loved the stardancers, the way society is evolving around them, the process of learning to live in null-gravity and the mental adjustments required, Rain's dancer-mind finding new ways to move. Then Kirra died. I threw the book across the room, crying (in my

defense, I was 17) and vowing to write the Robinsons a very mean letter. I *loved* Kirra, she remains a character who is vibrant and real in my imagination, and the feeling that she (and Ben, alas!) died tragically more to spur Rain's plotline than anything else will never not be frustrating. I reread the book last year, and it remained one of the more painful fictional deaths in my reading memory. Everything else about the book I enjoyed tremendously, but this one event sucked the joy out of it for me.

"Black and white and red all over." *shakes fist*

MissM says

Note: I'm actually reading this version: The Stardance Trilogy but I'm adding them separately so I can review them individually. Though, WOW, I remember this exact cover when I read it originally as a kid.

This book was written in 1991 (versus 1977 of the original) so while it's still a bit dated in 2013, it's much LESS dated than the original. It's also reads a lot less straight out of the Summer of Love mentality. (Though it's still quite a bit "free love" mentality in that there are no sexual taboos and public nudity is A-OK because you're all going to be telepathic and thus "naked" when a Stardancer so feel free get it on! *eyeroll* Apparently anyway.)

I liked the main character in this one better. And it felt more complete a story. Though it's still weirdly un-PC; calling people "Oriental", bad guys being bad Chinese and Muslim stereotypes, weird part where a character dies because she's too politely Japanese to say she's running out of oxygen (hu??), etc. And it wraps up and ends VERY quickly. Like big finish, next page it's over.

It's still a neat idea and you don't need to read the first to read this one. But it's definitely not a current book and it's still a little odd and quirky at times, inspiring some annoyance and eye-rolling. Not all the quirks are amusing, some are aggravating.

I read this when it first came out and I was 14 or so and it was interesting to read it again. I found I remembered the feel and gist of it, but a lot of it was "new" to me after so many years. I'm glad I re-read it simply because I remembered it fondly as such a neat idea as a girl. I still think the idea was neat though I'm a tougher critic at 36 than 14 and so I wasn't as blindly enamored by it this time around.

Scythan says

Spoiler:

Again, a great book that disappoints me with transcendental or inane parts to make it seem meaningful (or something).

The main character in this book, when about to be killed, attains satori, or enlightenment, allowing her to connect telepathically with anyone, despite her not having the symbiote that supposedly allows telepathy. She becomes able to repair her body rapidly, and moves with superhuman speed to kill her captor by snatching his poisoned dart out of the air and shoving it down his throat (!). It was an exciting, realistic, reasonable book until this scene. Sorry for complaining; it was predominantly a good book.

Jovvi Fuu says

This was a tough book to review.

I think, if one character hadn't been part of the story, I'd have flat out given it 2 stars - because the main character is boring as chalk, her lover is twice duller, and the likelihood of the story happening as it does is so small that microscopes can't detect it.

However.

Kirra.

And because of her I shot the story review up to 4 stars because what a breath of fresh air, fun and life!

So of course... THAT happens!

And PEW PEW!! A star is mortally wounded and falls off my review, leaving it at 3 stars in total!!

Aaah I was crushed like a bug under a wheel of "That's just so unfair!!"

Sure, true life isn't fair, but having Rain get through everything with hardly a hair ruffle and for Kirra and Ben to...

I protest most strongly!!!

Fur puffs up!

I'll re-read this many times for Kirra and Ben, skipping gaily past Rain and Robert, adios suckers, but that ending will ensure I can never give it the full dollop of loving I so wanted to.

Kjirstin says

I picked this book up many years ago on a whim, based on the cover (seems like I found it in an airport bookstore). And it's been one that I've read and re-read many times since. I greatly enjoy the dance themes but what I love so much is the deep exploration of what it would mean to really live in a weightless (OK, microgravity) situation. How would people adapt? What would normal stuff look like, once you let go of the gravity field? It's for that exploration of what-could-be that I've read this over and over, easily twice or three times the number of times I've read the other books in the series.

The romance is a necessary plot point but never seemed very gripping to me (but I read this first in my teens, so perhaps the subtlety of adult romance eluded me at the time), and the triumphant ending is thrilling on many levels. An excellent read!

Denise says

The middle book of the Robinsons' Stardance trilogy (which is now available as an omnibus edition); a used-bookstore crawl turned up a copy of this, since my copy had gone walkabout a long time ago. I'd reread books 1 & 3 in November and had resolved to get my hands on this one as soon as possible.

The fact that I have had to purchase these novels ten or twelve times over the years should tell you something; they are on the list of books you buy copies of just to give away, because they have something so very important to say. This is one of those books that doesn't just exist to entertain. It has a message, and the message is vital: *we can't keep going on like this; we have to get right with each other.*

Stardance is the best book in this trilogy, hands down, while Starmind is the weakest, but this one stands as a solid middle; it's a logical extrapolation from the world of Stardance, and the research and worldbuilding is stunning. Like most of Spider's protagonists, Rain is a contemporary person blinded by the pains and anguish of living in this modern world, until her eyes are opened to the truth of the matter: that our world and what we do to it (and to each other) is just not sustainable, and we have to change before we destroy ourselves.

Spider's a welcome anodyne to the trend of bleak sf; his reality is *real*, not more or less pessimistic than what we see in the newspaper and the headlines around us, and his work always carries a thread of hope and redemption. This one's no different. I read these because they reassure me that there *are* people like this out there, and they encourage me that it is possible to live like this.

If I have any criticism of this novel (and many other novels Spider's written), it's that sometimes he does resort to a reductionist viewpoint; people are either Total Saints (of a very specific sort of mold: lovers of the arts, creative people, who have a very specific worldview and outlook), Misguided Potential Saints (blinded by living in the Crazy Years, but with the potential to move past it), or Total Sinners (everyone who doesn't fit these molds). It's as though he sometimes forgets that enlightened people can come in all different types of enlightenment.

It's only now and then, though, and I can perform the particular mental gymnastics necessary to keep it from bothering me. If you can too, this series is worth it. Even if you can't, give it a try anyway. I'm not exaggerating when I say that these books, when I first read them, changed my entire outlook on the world and my responsibilities to the people within it, and they've shaped so much of my adult behavior. And I'm not the only one they've spoken to; Spider and Jeanne are actually raising money to produce the first zero-gravity dance, and it's a project I'm watching eagerly. Because if we don't have art, we aren't anything.

Lucy Takeda says

I have little knowledge of dance, so parts of this novel fly over my head. I greatly appreciate the Robinsons' mastery of language. In this novel, the phrase explaining that someone's speech pattern was like a "happy machine gun" reverberated in my brain.

I read Stardance when it first came out. I also read this novel decades ago, so I knew what was coming. I still found the characters, word use, and plot compelling. If you can handle frequent references to Zen and other diverse beliefs plus telepathy, read this!

Natasha Duncan-Drake says

I love this book. I read it a long while ago and I just re-read it yesterday. It is deep, complex and yet moves forward at an incredible pace. I love the concept of the humans going into symbiosis that allows them to live in space and the descriptions and concepts of zero g are brilliant.

I never saw the end coming, which for me is saying something indeed. Great book.
