



Coyote Rising

Allen M. Steele

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The continuing epic of Earth's first space colonists--and their fight against a repressive government to reclaim their world in the name of freedom.

Coyote Rising Details

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From Reader Review Coyote Rising for online ebook

Michael Bates says

I had to stop. Allen Steele lost all signal integrity to his neocortex. I'm willing to forgive many things, even minor character mistakes, but authors MUST write believable characters.

First: An android that cannot see a rainbow!? Now I suspect in the 23rd century we won't be relying on CCD or CMOS cameras for robotic eyes, but given the current technology used in robotics and believing they would not be improved up and exceptionally kick-ass by the time we can create androids... well.... that makes no sense whatsoever. If one wants to argue artistic preference, well, yes it is artistic preference to write stupid things, but don't be upset when your audience calls you out.

Next, the "good guys" decide to dispose of the android by tying him up and dumping him into the river. OK, really? REALLY!? These guys are so stupid that they don't realize this android is coming back? How could they, on the one hand, be so clever as to master the wilderness, and on the other be so stupid as to think dumping an android in a river will take it out of play? For that matter, having subdued the android, what is gained by dumping the android? There was no reason that that decision needed to be made.... really really really bad writing.

Finally, I had to just stop. I couldn't go any further in this book. The "good guys" are about to have a shoot-out; out-numbered 6 to 5. Good guys have the element of surprise and can initiate the commencement of the fire-fight. All of the sudden the protagonist has a thoughtful moment of reflection about killing the enemy... So, point one in this passage. Element of surprise: choose long range sniper-like fire to remove your enemies. You don't get to argue better tactics and complex plans. In war, you don't get to make up complex plans. You don't surround an enemy at close range (yes, bullets tend to continue past a target if missed, and if your ally is across from you missing your enemy might result in shooting your ally... so nobody makes those kinds of plans). Furthermore, it is far too late in the story to set up moments of moral reflections about killing one's enemy -especially an invading enemy. I can only imagine what followed was botched raid on the bad guys where some good guys got captured (possibly the protagonist) to prolong this out of control drive. But I don't know because I had to stop reading this book. It was an assault to common sense.

Advice to authors of the world: When you create characters, you cannot arbitrarily make them do stupid things. Adult characters don't get to arbitrarily make juvenile mistakes. Stupid characters die. That is how life works. There is a fundamental limit to the number of times you be stupid in life threatening decisions. When you plot that curve you see the limit is 1. So if you want to have your character do something stupid, remember you are creating a character whose IQ is at best 70. So don't make great plans for such a character. Or you could always make your characters teenagers. But not middle-aged men and women; the stupid ones are already dead in whatever world you are creating. (Or if you are creating some reality where evolution isn't happening... but then you're writing to a very particular audience). So have some respect for your audience. We can forgive a lot, but there is a threshold. If you want to write science fiction then you really need to get your stuff together. We already know that if humanity survives another century our baseline intelligence will be at least an order of magnitude greater than it is today. The gene-pool will be ejecting the unfit swiftly and without mercy. Remember this when you create characters in such a world and quit pretending your readers will just suck down whatever tripe you serve.

Ben Babcock says

I'd like to love *Coyote Rising* more; Allen Steele has created a very original tale of interstellar colonization. Unfortunately, I found the plot and the characters lacking the substance required to truly distinguish a novel, no matter how original its premise.

The first book in the series, *Coyote*, depicted a fantastic new world, Earth-like in so many ways yet also devastatingly alien. Even as the original colonists began to settle the planet, more ships from Earth arrived, bringing with them a social collectivist philosophy that threatened to undermine the existing colony's stability. Thus, Steele sets the stage for *Coyote Rising*, tagged as "a novel of interstellar revolution."

Therein lies the problem: *Coyote* was interesting by virtue of the world the colonists were exploring and the challenges they had to face; *Coyote Rising* is almost purely driven by plot, and I enjoyed that far less. There are still some environmental elements to the conflicts faced by our protagonists, most notably a volcanic eruption that cools Coyote's climate, but they seem secondary to Steele's need for the original colonists to revolt against the tyrannical administration of the "Western Hemisphere Union," personified by the irrational Luisa Hernandez.

In the first book, we meet Hernandez only briefly toward the end. As the leader of the second wave of colonists, she seems to honestly believe that social collectivism is the best form of government, and Robert Lee's decision to abandon the original colony and take the original colonists into hiding is prudent. Yet in *Coyote Rising*, any hint of depth in Hernandez's character is gone. She's a scheming, shallow antagonist whose only desire is total oppression and control. Where's my complex villain who agonizes over her actions, questions whether her morals are correct, then decides her course of action is the only just one?

The antagonists also suffer from an unfortunate tendency to go rogue. Over the course of *Coyote Rising*, a significant number of people in positions of power with the WHU colony switch sides and join the original colonists (this doesn't count the droves of people fleeing to the original colony because the new colony is a slum). On the surface, this makes sense. Steele's emphasizing how collectivism has failed the colony in the face of the challenges of settling *Coyote*. Yet the very fact that the collectivist stance seems so indefensible has two unfortunate consequences: firstly, it makes the actions of die-hard antagonists, like Hernandez, even more unconvincing; secondly, it undermines the threat of the antagonists. Steele's trying to make a big point about how humans will fight for freedom, even if it means death, but his protagonist's easy philosophical success undermines his efforts to advance this theme.

If I seem overly negative, it's only because *Coyote Rising* was so good that it could have been so much better. The book isn't beyond redemption: it has great action scenes, as well as truly moving ones. My favourite scene, the most touching one, occurs near the end of the book, as Robert Lee confronts Luisa Hernandez. I read it as if it were in slow motion, knowing what would happen, and it still moved me. That's why I'm critical of this book: it had potential. Here's hoping *Coyote Frontier* improves my opinion of this series' literary merits.

Mihai says

The second installment in Allen Steele's "Coyote Trilogy" starts right where the seminal first book left off, namely the separation between the original arrivals to the one habitable moon in the Ursae Majoris 47 star

system and the subsequent waves of ill-prepared and ill-equipped colonists that follow them. This separation eventually degenerates into a planet-wide conflict as the authors spins an increasingly ambitious narrative around the clash of fundamental ideas like social collectivism and personal freedom.

However, even though *Coyote Rising* succeeds in assembling the stories published in "Asimov's Magazine" from 2003-2004 into a coherent and highly entertaining story, much like its predecessor *Coyote* did, at the end of the day it is a novel almost entirely driven by plot. As such, the new world and its attendant environmental and physical challenges take a back seat to the interactions of various human characters, which Steele uses to make one philosophical point after another with varying degrees of success.

I thought the considerations of how does one build a brand new society in a completely new setting constitute a good overall theme for the parts 1 and 2 of this saga, but towards the end of *Coyote Rising* the story begins to drag, forcing Steele to accelerate both human and natural phenomena to the point where their credibility is undermined by the need to 'wrap it up'. The best example of this is the conveniently timed volcanic eruption that forces an armistice between the two warring factions.

For the rest of this review, I'm just going to shamelessly copy and paste from Justin Howe's spot-on discussion of the entire Coyote Trilogy at Strange Horizons.

"It is in the first half of the second novel that Steele introduces his more far-reaching social ideas, as well as renewing his investigation of the idea of personal freedom. There are the post-human Savants who have downloaded their intelligences into machines and serve as advisors to the forces of Social Collectivism. There's a cult that worships a physically altered human as the Church of Universal Transformation. With both of these, Steele crafts cautionary tales. He clearly finds the Savants to be pitiable for having lost their humanity. Each character forced to deal with one of the post-humans experiences some degree of revulsion. As for the church, well, for that story Steele takes his inspiration from the Donner party and other gruesome tales of wilderness survival. In between and around these wonders are the human stories of colonization in the face of the grim truths of Social Collectivism. Political exiles, geniuses, drifters, and misfits have all found themselves on another world. Their struggles feature many harsh realities, as the chapter "The Garcia Narrows Bridge" clearly illustrates. Plus, in the background, the other sentient inhabitants of Coyote have started to notice they are no longer alone upon the world. Along with Social Collectivism come the twin troubles of exploitation and sabotage. Like the tyranny last seen on Earth in the first book, this form of government does not embrace the freedom that the Alabama colonists typify. Guerilla raids led by Carlos Montero soon develop into open conflict between the two factions. The second part of *Coyote Rising* details the revolution that ultimately leads to the planet's independence from Earth. At this point, Coyote is a changed world on the verge of a new era of exploration.

As a storyteller, Steele has established his name with his ability to create compelling, everyday characters in a hard science-fiction setting. Like Joe Haldeman, Steele writes such accessible prose that we're willing to go along wherever it may take us. The first two novels abound with believable and well thought out technologies. There's nothing that reads as out of place, and Steele has found a framework upon which to investigate the mythology of his country. As it turns out, this is both a curse and a blessing. On one hand it's a mythology in need of exploration, but on the other hand it's just too easy to have things turn into "the American Revolution in space." But Steele is attempting to do more than that. He's concerned with the nature of governments and the personal freedoms of the individual. Throughout the series, he's shone a wary light upon methods of social control. We've seen a repressive future America that pays lip-service to personal freedoms, the threat of Social Collectivism, misplaced trust in leaders and technology, and the birth of a new community. By the end of *Coyote Rising* the stage is set for the adventure to continue, even if the main story has been told. Things can move forward. The characters are free to explore the world."

So, even though the stage is set for the remaining characters to go back to building their society and resume exploring their new home, it's probably safe to assume conflict will return in some form or another. But that's for part 3 to detail. Overall, *Coyote Rising* is an entertaining read and a good follow-up despite the fact that, like most sequels, it is unable to match the novelty of the original. It is worth 3.5 stars really, more than what I gave it here, but not 4.

Jamie Collins says

An okay read, worthwhile for people who particularly like colonization sci-fi. Like the first book, this is a collection of short stories and novellas pieced together to make a novel. I think the writing is a little improved this time, but the stories are not as interesting. What the hell is with that story about the worshipers following a crazy man who found God after he was kidnapped and mutilated into the form of a giant bat?

There is surprisingly little politics in the book, considering that the plot pits the original settlers, who arrived on a spaceship named *Alabama* captained by Robert Lee, against the newly arrived Matriarch, whose spaceship is named *Seeking Glorious Destiny Among the Stars for the Greater Good of Social Collectivism*. The colonists rebel against the Matriarch's oppressive authority, but mostly she's just tyrannical and corrupt. There's not much political discussion about it.

Devero says

Un buon romanzo nel complesso, molto "spazio: ultima frontiera" per certi versi e per certi altri un western vecchio stampo. I richiami alla Rivoluzione Americana sono molti e comprensibili anche a i non espertissimi, e in fondo *Coyote Rising* è proprio questo: un inno alle idee che hanno reso l'America quella che è nel senso positivo dell'accezione. Non poteva non piacermi.

Max says

I think that *coyote rising* is a really good book. Like I said in my other review, this series is really cool because of the idea and that all this could possibly happen. I think *coyote rising* is cool because they used the newest technology to travel that far, and they now have to use very primitive ways to survive on a new planet like *coyote*. I personally think that the war was a waste of resources, including when the *Alabama* blew up fort Lopez, killing thousands of people and many new technology aircraft. I think the war was necessary for freedom, but they could have saved resources they would need later.

Stephen says

4.0 stars. A satisfying sequel to the original *Coyote*. While not quite as spectacular as its predecessor, this is an excellent novel and puts the series as a whole among the top colonization works in science fiction (in my opinion). Excellent characters, terrific world-building and a healthy dose of politics. Recommended!

Robert Burns says

This is a book about the settling and development of coyote, instead of a story about people who happen to be on another planet. Much better than the first book! Bat-jesus was a bit hard to get through, but it was worth it to explain bat-god.

Edward III says

Taking a break before finishing off the trilogy. Good stuff, as always from Steele.

Kerry says

Published 2004. Second in the original series (now expanded). A little choppy with the individual character vignettes at the beginning. It says some of it was published as individual stories in "Assimov's Science Fiction" so maybe that has something to do with it. Afterwards the balance of the book flows better.

Michael says

This is the second book in the Coyote series by Allen Steele. This book is about revolution. The colonists of Coyote are fighting for their freedom against the oppressive Earth government that they left Earth to escape. This book is a series of stories from the viewpoint of several different characters which lead up to the revolution which will attempt to free them. It would take too long to review each story but I will say each one is well written and entertaining to read. They tie in together to make a very good total story.

I have read several reviews that don't like this book because it was originally published as a series of short stories in a science fiction magazine. I'm not sure if it was actually published this way but I personally don't mind this type of story telling. In the Golden Age of science fiction it was common practice to first serialize stories this way and only later to novelize them. Many of the books we now consider classics were published this way. I recommend this book to all Allen Steele fans.

Gregg says

I could quibble about a few details that don't seem logical. I could take issue with the author's technique of writing some chapters as if a different character was writing the story. None of my nitpicking should prevent anyone from reading this enjoyable series.

Linda says

I love reading about this amazing planet, can't wait to read the next book.

John Boettcher says

A more than good follow up to the first.

So many great stories to be told here on Coyote now that it is being settled. Governments to be built and challenged. The planet itself throwing things at the colonists. New, interesting, and weird characters which make you want to come back for more.

His sophomore follow up to Coyote was more than adequate. Again, my only true criticism is that he could have made the book a bit longer and more comprehensive, but that is personal taste I guess.

If you read the first one, you will be hard pressed not to read several more.

AngeloFra says

Secondo libro della trilogia di Coyote: anche questo mi è piaciuto molto come il primo.

Pur non avendo un'idea particolarmente originale come base, la struttura è solida, la scrittura avvincente e convincente e mi piace molto anche il fatto che la storia continui a essere costruita con episodi che hanno protagonisti, trame e approcci diversi diversi (dalla delicatezza di sentimenti del primo all'azione della parte finale). Non vedo l'ora di leggere il volume conclusivo.
