



Free Space

Sean Dancer

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In the follow-up to *Admiral*, the intergalactic war has ended and hostilities between the Evagardian Empire and the Commonwealth are officially over, but the admiral is far from safe. . . .

"I'd impersonated a prince, temporarily stopped a war, escaped a deadly planet, and survived more assassination attempts than I could conveniently count. After all that, there shouldn't have been anything simpler than a nice weekend with a charming Evagardian girl.

However, some corners of the galaxy aren't as genteel as the Empire, and Evagardians aren't universally loved, which is how I ended up kidnapped to be traded as a commodity.

Their timing couldn't have been worse. I'm not at my best, but these people have no idea whom they're dealing with: a highly trained, genetically engineered soldier in the Imperial Service who happens to be my date."

Free Space Details

Date : Published May 2nd 2017 by Ace Books

ISBN : 9780451475800

Author : Sean Danker

Format : Paperback 320 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction

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From Reader Review Free Space for online ebook

Sophia says

A stellar first book full of intense action, intrigue, survival on a hostile planet, and fab characters led me to delight in opening the sequel and diving right back in for more.

As I said, Free Space is the second book after Admiral in the fast-paced sci-fi Evagardian series. I think a reader would feel rather lost jumping in with this book particularly when it comes to the galactic politics, cultures, and storyline.

So yes, Free Space picks up not long after the events of Admiral. The enigmatic Admiral and Salmagard are back on a new adventure joined by a new pair of colorful characters in the persons of military personnel, Diana and Sei. It all started when they just wanted to take an R&R trip together, but before you know it being poisoned, being kidnapped and sold, and a host of determined government types on their tails makes for quite the escapade across space. For much of the book, the pair are separated as Salmagard and Diana are trying to rescue the Admiral and Sei after the two women are underestimated and get away from their captors first. I do love how Salmagard is part aristocratic princess type and part warrioress paired with Admiral's layers of complicated scheming.

And just like the previous book, there is nearly non-stop excitement, but also the underlayer of intrigue regarding who the Admiral is and what he is doing. Salmagard and the Admiral's pasts are opened up and explored more. They don't fit together on paper, but there is promise there if they can ever get their lives untangled and get through the galactic war going on.

The first book had more a do or die survival quality to it, but this one, though different, was a cover to cover good one. There is a cliffie, but it wasn't out of the blue as the plot was steadily heading that way and the main storyline was wrapped up. Can't wait to see what comes next.

Light Sci-fi/Space Opera fans are a good match up for this series and I can easily recommend it.

I rec'd this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.

Donny says

I won this book from a Goodreads Giveaway. I for some reason missed this was a sequel when I entered for it, though it lead me to read not one but two great books so far.

Free Space picks up a little after the first book, the Admiral and Salmagard are meeting up for the first time since. They are on a date on a Free Trade Space station. While in transport to their next location they, and another couple, are kidnapped. The boys are separated from the girls and the story alternates between the Admiral's and Salmagard's viewpoint as they try to free themselves and get back to the other.

I just finished the Wheel of Time series before reading these novels, and they are exactly what I needed. Free Space (and the first in the Evagardian series, Admiral) are fast paced and action packed. There's a small cast of characters, so it was relieving not having to keep track of dozens and dozens characters.

Free Space also dove deeper into the culture and setting of the Admiral's universe. I know lots of people don't mind or care too much for world building, but it's always a selling point for me.

The only thing this book didn't give me that I wanted from it was the Admiral's name! It's a good thing the next book just came out, cause I can't wait to see if we figure that out and see what happens after the exciting cliffhanger at the end of Free Space.

Costin Manda says

Imagine a space pulp "escape from a room" story and you get The False Admiral (also known as simply Admiral). Sean Danker writes a short and fast paced story about three Evagardian space navy members that find themselves on a derelict ship on an unknown alien planet. From start to end the hero of the story, helped by the other younger three, must solve problem after problem in order to keep them alive. It's a short, fun and simple book.

At first I was convinced that this was not the beginning of the story. The main character mentions previous events that are not described in the book and he makes efforts to hide his real identity from the others, to the point where they have to choose between trusting him or arresting him as an enemy spy. But no, that part of the story is not written yet. A second book in the Admiral series has been released, called simply Free Space, but I will probably not read it. And this is not because I did not enjoy Admiral, but because I have other stories I would rather read.

Bottom line: when you need a quick disconnecting read, try this book. It's dubious sci-fi and it is rather more similar to detective noir than space opera or military stories, but it is fun.

Riley says

Talk about a disastrous first date.

Salmagard is on a date with the Admiral when this all begins. But lets backtrack just a bit. In the first book in this series (**Admiral**), Salmagard and the Admiral shared a kiss. Because of what they went through that hellish planet, there is already an intensity to their relationship, even if they don't know each other well yet. So in **Free Space**, the possibility of a deeper relationship is explored – just a little – before all hell breaks loose.

Before the date even begins, there is an assassination attempt against the admiral. Poison. So, he is already trying to avoid pursuers and is in a weakened state. Meaning he is going to have to use his brains instead of his muscles. This is not a surprise for this character. He is a thinker.

Then, the date begins with a kidnapping. Salmagard, the Admiral and another couple. Dianna and Sei, are all kidnapped to be turned into slaves. Throughout the ordeal, not only are they trying to escape from multiple captors, there is always the possibility that the Admiral will be found. Why is there someone after the Admiral? The reasons are murky, but that just seems to add interest.

Things go from on a date, to in trouble and then from bad to worse. This constant state of decaying status

adds the same type of intensity to the story that I appreciated in **Admiral**. Each character handles the struggles in their own way, bringing their unique talents to bear when needed.

The Admiral. That is his only identity. Personal details about The Admiral are few and far between. After two books in the series, he is still an enigma. He may seem to be they kind of spy that will do whatever it takes to get the job done. Thankfully, to add interest to the story, Salmagard is a bit of a chink the Admiral's armor.

Salmagard – lets just say she is more than everyone (except Admiral) thinks she is. She comes from the aristocracy of the Empire, so she is a bit unexpected. Dianna is another interesting character whose existence tells you a bit more about the empire and it's technology, philosophy and ethics.

Free Space features multiple locations, each with it's own special atmosphere to appreciate or cringe at. There are multiple human adversaries. Or are some of them on the same side?

The series title changed from **Evargardian** to **Admiral**. Now, this makes sense to me. The Admiral is most definitely the central character. And based on your opinion of him, you form opinions of the other characters. Is he a good guy or a bad guy? A lack of detail about the Admiral makes the nature of the other characters a bit ambiguous. I'm not sure how I feel about that. Normally I like a little bit of questionable character in my heroes and villains, but I am a reader that prefers to have those questions resolved eventually. It doesn't really happen in this book/series.

The ending is quite abrupt. I don't know if I would call it a cliffhanger, due to several plot lines being resolved, but it is abrupt and doesn't so much as leave room for speculation as it does demand to know what will happen next. So, yes, I will call it a cliffhanger.

I did like that you have to work to get answers, but even then you may not get them. All the characters have very little history provided in the telling of the story. This is totally contrary to the types of characters I usually like reading about, but in **Free Space**, it really works.

Free Space is gritty, compelling science fiction, filled with plots, villains, politics, heroics and, oh, so many questions. If you are in the mood for a book that is not all wrapped up in a nice box, **Free Space** may be the book you are looking for.

The publisher provided an ARC through Netgalley.

Originally posted at Whiskey With My Book.

Martha says

The Admiral, an assassin and disguise expert, and Salmagard, a highly trained, genetically engineered soldier, saved each other in their first adventure, Admiral. Now they are hoping to enjoy some 'down' time. Unfortunately, the Admiral is poisoned even before they meet for their date. And that's just the beginning of their troubles.

They pick up a carrier to do some sightseeing and meet two Imperials, Sei and Diana, who share the ride. The car is diverted and the four end up kidnapped. Admiral and Sei are separated to be traded while the

women are retained for other uses. But their captors do not know what they've gotten themselves into as Salmagard and Diana will find a way to escape and go after their 'dates'.

The Admiral and Sei are sold at auction and shipped off site. They awaken on a planet where the people are living in an old earth style community. It appears to be a religious cult led by a man who clearly, to the Admiral's view, has nefarious plans. The Admiral doesn't know how he is going to get himself out of this predicament.

This sequel kicks off with a good hook and keeps on moving at a fast pace. The cult world is a bit strange and confusing but it provides a backdrop of thought as Salmagard begins to see that her strict training may not have provided all she needs to know of reality and politics. Neither side is full of all the "right" as clearly there are those who abuse power no matter what side they supposedly serve. And in the end, most will serve their own purposes rather than honor the loyalty that may have been expected.

The intrigue and mystery in this was not as intense as in book one. This fills out more of the backstory for the Admiral and Salmagard and I liked the new characters, Sei and Diana. Although this story is almost completely focused on the kidnapping and escape, I did enjoy the fast-paced action and the continued irreverent and pragmatic attitude the Admiral displays even when facing death...again. This made for a fast, fun read. The rather abrupt ending leaves an opening for new intrigue which I hope would be more apparent in the next book.

I received the title through NetGalley for an honest review.

Anne - Books of My Heart says

Read this review in its entirety at [The Book Nympho](#)

I loved **The Admiral**, the first book in the *Evgardian series*. It was a good introduction to the world with four people stranded who didn't know each other. It was smart. The plot was clear - survival - but very fascinating as the world developed and also learning about the characters. The Admiral, capable and with a subtle humor, was a mystery and fun. For the most part, politics is viewed in the background as they are isolated.

Free Space is the same but very different. We again have four main characters, two of them we know, sort of. I enjoy strong characters who figure things out and try to improve things overall. And overall doing what is right with compassion is appealing. Here I can't tell the good guys or the bad guys really. People are more or less in it for themselves? I do enjoy seeing women as strong, kick ass fighters here but not seeing the Admiral as somewhat helpless.

There are many more characters, mostly in the background. More planets, more "governments," more militaries and more politics play a role. This was also more confusing and the ending was ? I will have to read the next book both because I so loved the first and I don't understand exactly what happened here. I did find this *interview* about the future of the series which helped me feel better.

Jo (Mixed Book Bag) says

I wish I knew where the author is going with this series. *Free Space* does not seem to go anywhere and just ends. The entire book features four characters two male and two female who are kidnapped. The females are sold to one party and the males to another. The females escape and go to rescue the males. The entire plot of the book is the chase. The chase does end but then after one of the party is taken away the book just ends. I don't mind a cliff-hanger if there is some resolution in the plot. I just did not see it here. I liked *Admiral*, the first book, and will look for the next one in the series but if it has as little meat to the plot as this one I will give up on the series.

Eric says

TL;DR

Free Space by Sean Dancer grabs a hold of the reader and never lets go. This fast moving abduction tale keeps you turning the pages. Recommended.

This review is copied from my website. Visit for more reviews!

Review

In exchange for Berkley Publishing's generosity, I'm reviewing Sean Dancer's *Admiral* series. As part of a contest, I won a hardcover *Admiral* and paperbacks of *Free Space* and *The Glory of the Empress*. I reviewed *Admiral* already, and have now finished *Free Space*. This second book finds the Admiral taking Salmagard on vacation, but as with their first voyage together, this one takes a horrible detour. This is deep space *Taken* from the viewpoint of the abductees.

Story

As with *Admiral*, *Free Space* is a survival story but in a completely different way. The Admiral and Salmagard are kidnapped with two other Imperials for the purposes of human trafficking. Because they are Imperials, their absence will be noted, and so for them it's a waiting game. Survive long enough for the good guys to come rescue them. But that wouldn't make for a very exciting story; so, complications require that the characters take an active role in their own survival.

For the beginning two thirds, this novel is tilted more towards the thriller genre. Whereas *Admiral* had the horror baked in from the start, the horror doesn't get to *Free Space* until two-thirds of the way into the novel. The terror of being kidnapped is there, but due to the fantastic amounts of action, I wouldn't classify this as a horror novel. That being said, the shift in gears at the two-thirds mark was interesting and worked for me. It

opened up some new mysteries about the Evagardian universe that I'd love to see explored.

Characters

Free Space features the two best characters from the first novel. The Admiral still develops as a character here but not as much as I had expected. He's pretty much what you get from the first novel. Salmagard's character gets more depth and complexity here, and her complicated feelings towards the Admiral clash with her complicated ties to her family. She continues to be Mr. Danker's best character in my opinion.

The other two additions to this novel Diana and Sei are okay. They have enough character building to fit into the novel without slowing it down too much. Diana, like Salmagard, is a complex, interesting character, and her backstory could be interesting. Sei, however, didn't really stand out. He got some character work, but I couldn't pick him out of a line up. The rest of the characters in the novel aren't developed too deeply. At the speed this story goes, there isn't enough time for deep character study. Of the others, I found Willis and Freeber very entertaining. They were sad and scary and human.

Worldbuilding

In *Admiral*, worldbuilding is kept to a minimum in order to maintain its high pace. *Free Space* had more worldbuilding but not much exploration of the new locales. Free space sounds like a libertarian dream while being a humanitarian nightmare. The final third presents some interesting questions that will hopefully get a longer novel.

Diana's backstory hints at interesting military and scientific research. For two books now, we don't get much about the Evagardian military, but we do know they have a widespread intelligence service. Also, they protect their citizens no matter where in the universe they are through the Galatic Rescue service. These badasses go out to save Imperials in trouble. We know that Evagard cares and supports its citizens. In *Free Space*, we learn that life on Empire's assistance is better than roughing it elsewhere. It's possible that the Empire is a socialist success, but we don't get enough to know for sure. It seems like there's decent political systems underpinning the whole series.

Thoughts

Like *Admiral*, *Free Space* is a standalone novel. The story ends, but it sort of doesn't. All the plot threads from the book are tied up by the final page. However, the ending leaves a big cliffhanger. Maybe. Mr. Danker could want us to infer an ending. All the plot lines are wrapped up, and that is satisfying. But the abrupt ending is a bit jarring. I'll need to think and process the ending more. On the one hand, it's frustrating because we're left in uncertainty. On the other, it's a bold artistic choice, and I like it when authors take chances. Only in fiction do we know everything and get a nice tidy denouement to exit us gently from the story.

Once again, the last third of the novel is different than what came before. It's an odd style, but it works. Again, it's jarring, more so this time, but it's not enough to throw me out of the story. The shift introduces its own mysteries with its own urgency. I'd love to see an exploration of the various ingredients of this last portion.

Conclusion

Free Space is a fast-paced, thriller SF novel. It's an excellent continuation of the Evagardian series. Sean

Danker wrote another intense, action packed novel that tells a new adventure of the Admiral and the negotiator that he wants to date. Recommended.

7 out of 10!

Shelley says

Source Publisher

Genre Science Fiction

Rating 3.0

My Thoughts

Free Space is the second installment in author Sean Danker's Evagardian series. The story once again dives into the life of a character who is being called Admiral by the author. The label was given to him while he and (3) others were abandoned on a dead ship on a planet filled with disasters just waiting to spring on them. Admiral had a helluva a time escaping with his life, but life isn't any easier this time out. What does change, a bit, is that we get more background information on how Admiral came to be. I do hope we get more in the next installment.

*FULL REVIEW POSTED @ GIZMOS REVIEWS

<http://gizmosreviews.blogspot.com/201...>

Chelsea says

****Review posted on The Warlock's Gray Book****

Despite the humour and the obviously well-developed Universe, *Free Space* didn't live up to my expectations.

I really liked *Admiral*, the first book of the *Evagardian* series. Notwithstanding its flaws, it managed to get my heart pumping and my head spinning from all the suspense and excitement! The ending left me with a lot of questions, so I was totally in for the sequel because I just *had* to know more, you know? Hence, when I was offered *Free Space*, I couldn't wait to dive in! And guess what? **SAME QUESTIONS, NO ANSWERS.** Ok maybe I exaggerate a little, but the questions I was the most looking forward to discovering the answers of, weren't answered at all! Who is the Admiral? What did he do? What's the mystery behind the Empress? Can I get more elaborate explanations on these ships you're talking about? How do the intergalactic journeys work? So many words I still couldn't understand, or just outright forgot, because who really expects me to remember a fictional word one year after reading *Admiral*?? **Even at the BEGINNING, I was confused.** And a confusing start is an issue Danker should fix, because it was the same as with his first novel.

As you can imagine, I was more than annoyed when I still couldn't make sense of it. Sometimes the author would say too much information, sometimes not enough. **Occasionally it worked, especially in**

conversations. Those had the flow of normal conversations between two people, where you don't understand everything because you're the third wheel and they have their own little insides.

But readers can't really appreciate those little moments because **the plot was rolling too quickly.** And I guess a fast pace should have been perfect for an action-packed, sci-fi story, right? But personally, I just feel as if essence was sacrificed for speed. I have absolutely no idea what Danker was trying to convey with this novel. I don't know how to explain it; **it just felt so superficial.** Consequently, it was downright forgettable. **Nowhere near as intriguing and compelling as the first,** nowhere near the suspense, and the newness, and the alien-ness of the first. It was just a clumsy and disorganized story of half-competent kidnappers and confused "heroes".

The Admiral is definitely smart and resourceful, and those are traits I greatly admire. I couldn't really remember Salmagard, at first, but then it hit me and her working with Diana was a fantastic idea. It's always great and interesting to read about **badass heroines** fighting their way to save their friends. Although some sudden bursts of philosophical thinking came out of the blue and were awkward, there is a lot of **respect to circumstances and bodies' limitations** that many other books disregard completely. Actually, the world and people seem very realistic, thanks to the way they are detailed. **I'm sad to say it's just the storytelling that leaves something to be desired.**

I definitely feel bad for not liking the book. It's not my fault, I know, and yet, the feeling's still there. As a parting note, let me say that ***Free Space* was entertaining, nonetheless.**

****Thank you to Berkley Publishing Group for proving me with this book!**

Linda says

Admiral, the first book by Sean Danker left you wanting to read the sequel immediately but of course we've had to wait. I'd love to say this book is as good as the first but I cannot. However it does draw you further into the Admiral's world and it's a fun read that sets you up for a third book in this series. As far as Evagard is concerned he is dead (since they had him poisoned). Yet not long after the first book ends we find him having a date with the Private (Tessa Salmagard) at Red Yonder, a pricey, luxurious entertainment place in Free Space. Salmagard was killed in the first book but due to the wonderful Evagardian science she has been brought back to life. You're not surprised that they meet - you could tell that the Admiral was quite taken with her in the first book. Before you can find out how this date will go, they are both kidnapped as well as two other Evagardian citizens that they happen to share transportation with.

If there is one thing that the Admiral is good at, it's getting out of tight situations however for much of this book he and Sei, the other male character are effectively put out of action. This is when we find out how good Salmagard is at defending herself and Sei's female companion, Diana turns out to be in a class by herself. Perhaps my main criticism is that it seems as if there should be more to the story than the kidnapping and their escape. Once again this book seems to be the connection to the next book in this series and I look forward to reading it.

Marlene says

Originally published at Reading Reality

What kind of story do you get when a completely unreliable narrator attempts to be at least semi-reliable? And when the rest of the story is from the perspective of someone who always plays it straight but in this case just doesn't know what part or game she is playing?

It makes for one hell of a wild and crazy ride, in some ways even crazier than the ride in the first book in this series, Admiral.

We still don't know the man's real name. We know that he spent quite a few years pretending to be Prince Dalton of the Ganraen Empire. We know that he used to be an Evagardian Imperial Agent, and that now he is on the run from everyone on all sides. The Ganraens would execute him as a traitor. The Empire just wants to clean up their very loose end.

Whoever he is, he wants to live. But first, he wants one last chance with Jessica Salmagard, one of the three cadets he both bamboozled and helped rescue in Admiral.

But like so many of his plans, this one goes very, VERY "gang aft alee". Because the Admiral and Jessica get themselves kidnapped. By accident.

And that's where all the fun and adventure really begins.

The story is one of those "out of the frying pan into the fire" and then into the oven and then into the blast furnace kinds of things. Events are always on the brink of disaster, it's just that the disaster they are on the brink of gets bigger and bigger as they go along.

Until the disaster is so big that the only thing bigger is a black hole. And look, there one is, right on the event horizon!

And we're left wondering who exactly ended up saving whom in this insane adventure. Not to mention, we still don't know who the Admiral really is. And neither does Jessica. Possibly at this point neither does the Admiral himself.

We're all left hoping that someday we'll find out. If the Admiral can manage to escape, yet again, from whomever has captured him. This time.

Escape Rating A-: At the start of this book, there's a brief portion where events seemed to take a bit to get going. And it takes the reader a bit to catch themselves back up on previous events. So much of Admiral was kind of a locked room (or locked ship) mystery, and it happened so much in isolation that we don't get much of a handle on events in this universe.

And just like in Admiral, we pretty much get dropped into the middle of the story yet again.

But once this thing takes flight, meaning once they get kidnapped, the ever escalating sequence of perils keeps the reader hanging on tight until the very end.

Unlike in Admiral, the narrative here is split between the Admiral and Jessica Salmagard. The Admiral is a completely unreliable narrator. He never reveals what he's thinking, what he's doing, or who he is. He embodies the idea of wheels within wheels within wheels. He's always playing a part. But in this book we

start to get the sense that even he is no longer certain exactly what part he is playing.

But very early on in the story the Admiral and Salmagard are separated. This leaves part of the story tied to her separate actions and events. Unlike the Admiral himself, we don't see Jessica's story from inside her head, but rather in an omniscient third-person. We really don't need to see inside her head, because she is much more of "what you see is what you get" kind of person. She's mostly straightforward in her actions, even if she is starting to wonder about a whole lot of the things she's been taught to believe.

The universe, and the people in it, do not conform to the simple stereotypes that she was trained to expect. The experience for her is both unsettling and eye-opening, often at the same time.

One of the great things about the way that Free Space progresses is that the separation works to throw some of the usual expectations on their heads.

Once they are separated, it's Salmagard and another female soldier who break themselves out of captivity, shoot up a couple of space stations, steal a ship, and generally commit all the mayhem and badassery that is usually reserved for the male protagonists in this kind of story. The two women become the rescuers, and the Admiral and a male soldier kidnapped with them become the rescuees.

Also, it's the men who suffer from the comedy of errors, falling from one bad situation to an even worse one, tied up, gagged and often drugged through the entire mess as they descend through what feels like, instead of a descent through the seven circles of hell, a descent through the seven circles of illegal intergalactic human trafficking as perpetrated by a pair of unprepared idiots.

This is an adventure where not only does the right hand not know what the left hand is doing, but all the participants are either incapacitated, incompetent, or just plain lying every step of the way. Including the hero and heroine.

At the end, we're left gasping, wondering if this was a real rescue, or just a setup for even more (and probably worse) yet to come.

In the next book. May it be soon.

Carole (Carole's Random Life in Books) says

This review can also be found at Carole's Random Life in Books.

I really had a lot of fun reading this book. The story was fast paced and imaginative and I found myself really wondering what could possibly happen next. This is the second book in Sean Danker's Evagardian series and I do think that this book will work the best for readers of the series since the history of the characters is such an important part of the overall story. It could possibly work as a stand alone but I don't think it would be quite as enjoyable.

The Admiral and Salmagard are going away together for the weekend. That should be a simple thing but it ends up being anything but simple. Before they can even get to their destination, they are kidnapped along with another pair, Diana and Sei. The kidnappers are quickly able to deal with the two women, Salmagard

and Diana, but the men quickly prove to be a problem.

The Admiral and Sei are in a really bad situation. The kidnappers want to get rid of them but they keep running into obstacles. The men have no idea what is going to happen to them and they really don't have any kind of chance to fight back and free themselves. Meanwhile, the women are working to try to find them but always seem to be one step behind.

I really liked how this story was told. The alternating points of view worked incredibly well in this book. It was really exciting to learn what was going on with the Admiral and then to learn how Salmagard was doing in the next chapter. I kept wonder if they would ever be able to meet up with each other. I loved all of the imaginative settings in this story as they moved through space.

I really liked the characters in this book. The Admiral is still such a mystery but an interesting one. He is smart and resourceful but you never know what he might be hiding. Salmagard is loyal, tough, and refuses to give up. I really liked Diana in this story, maybe more than Salmagard. She is unusual but incredibly smart and works well under pressure. I didn't really get as much of a feel for Sei but since he couldn't speak for most of the book, I guess that is to be expected.

I would recommend this book to others. I had a whole lot of fun reading this book and ended up enjoying it just as much as Admiral if not a bit more. It was one of those books that really felt like it would make a great movie script. I can't wait to see what Sean Danker comes up with next!

I received an advance reader edition of this book from Berkley Publishing Group - Ace via NetGalley.

Initial Thoughts

I thought this book was a lot of fun. It was a bit different than Admiral but just as entertaining.

Tbfrank says

The second installment in the Admiral series follows two characters from the first volume, the "Admiral" and Private Salmagard. Setting out on what promised to be a romantic adventure, they are kidnapped with two other imperial subjects and sold on the blackmarket. The Empire continues to hunt the Admiral who managed to fake his death to ellude pursuit using a poison for which he must take a series of antidote injections. Of course his kidnappers are unaware of this complication though Salmagard is. The women are separated from their companions and being service trained are able to escape and pursue the other two intent on rescuing them. The story is a head-long rush with lots of villians, explosions, death-defying acts.

The universe containing the Empire, Commonwealth, and Free Space is pretty well imagined though populated with cardboard characters. The writing shifts between a first-person account by the Admiral to third person for Salmagard which works better than expected. The ending is abrupt and less than satisfying and telegraphs the message the book is one installment of more to come. Not nearly as good as volume one, it is a quick and generally fun read.

Kayla says

You may be thinking: Kayla, might it be an exaggeration to claim this is the best sci-fi novel you've ever read?

Nope. It isn't. This is the sci-fi for people who don't think they'd like sci-fi, and the one to get for those already obsessed with the genre.

For the record, I really enjoy sci-fi. I think it's interesting to see what authors can come up with in terms of technology, space, and most importantly, characters. If your characters are flat, or boring, or just unenjoyable, it doesn't matter what kind of tech they're parading around the galaxy.

There is absolutely none of that when it comes to the cast filling Free Space. They tend to alternate between hilarious or terrifying. Some of them are capable of humor while also potentially able to kill someone five ways with the tip of a finger. This is the kind of stuff I live for.

First, let's talk about how awesome it is that two of the four main characters this book centers around are female. Each completely capable of destroying or saving the known universe, possibly with one hand. But they're also allowed their vulnerable, fragile moments. They're allowed to make mistakes. They're realistic—well, as realistic as it gets in science fiction, which is incredible. It's so rare for me to find amazing representation in this in a sci-fi book—let alone one where the main narrator is male, let alone when written by a man. I could go on and on about this, just this, as a reason to read it, but like an infomercial, that's not all!

As for the main narrator himself, the Admiral himself is as witty and always on the edge of death as ever. I love how Salmagard only ever refers to him with the title both of them know he never earned. I love how he somehow always seems to be two seconds away from death and yet acts like that was always part of the plan. Kind of like if Jack Sparrow had ever been intelligent enough to be an intergalactic spy.

I mean, yes, terrible, heart-pounding plot twists and insane things happen in the book that have you on the edge of your seat. Things that will encourage you not to put down this novel until the very end. Things that are as awesome as they are terrible for the characters to actually have to experience.

Let's talk about the plot. I don't think I've ever read anything quite like it. Kind of part bumbling quest, part escape novel, part let's-just-try-not-to-die. I love how this novel, as well as The Admiral, presents its own self-contained story within the series. I feel like that does so much more for these books, makes the writing more powerful and concise, and allows for more fun with the characters. I don't want to spoil it by mentioning any specifics of what happen, because Free Space, unlike real space, is best experienced when you dive right in without knowing too much about it.

I can't recommend this book enough. Honestly, I feel like I've been endlessly talking about it ever since I knew that it existed. Can there be more? I want more. I'd read more of this series in a heartbeat.
