



## Rebels

*David Liss*

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It's difficult to return to Earth and live a simple, unadventurous life after having seen the wonders of the universe—especially when you find yourself with Smelly, a self-important artificial intelligence living in your head, reminding you how much of a primitive meat bag you are. But with Smelly's help, Zeke is on his way back to space on a new, super-secret mission. Zeke may earn Earth a second chance at intergalactic membership—and better yet, he'll be reunited with Tamret, the alien girl of his dreams.

However, things never go as planned for Zeke. Conspiracy abounds as he's once again blamed for destroying a spaceship, and sent deep into the dangerous Forbidden Zone to find the military tech tree that the enemy Phands are already using. Will his knowledge of pop culture and science fiction that saved him in *Randoms* help again?

## Rebels Details

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Author : David Liss

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## From Reader Review Rebels for online ebook

### Kristin says

Not as good as the first one and also not as well edited. Still definitely want to read the next one though!

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### Becky B says

Zeke Reynolds is slowly adjusting back to being a normal middle schooler on Earth, well, now that the government has finally stopped interrogating him. Of course, his life will never be quite normal ever again. He still constantly thinks of the Confederation and friends he promised he'd help, especially Tamret. He's not allowed to talk to any of the other kids who went with him into space. And he and his mom know their house and phones are bugged. Unmarked black cars drive by regularly. Oh, and he seems to have picked up some alien AI that now lives in his head. He's dubbed it Smelly. Life at school is not super fun, but Zeke eventually makes one friend, Alice, who actually has recognized him from some conspiracy theory UFO websites. Alice is cool and doesn't push Zeke for more than he can tell her. And then Zeke finally gets the text he's been dreading, his mom sends him code that someone is coming for him. With Alice and Smelly's help Zeke goes on the run looking for a spaceship somewhere on Earth. Before going too far, though, he discovers that the alien spaceship hovering over the Earth isn't the Phands, it's some friends from the Confederation with an offer to give the Earth a second chance at entry if Zeke and friends will help them find the secret skill tree tech his dad uncovered. However, the trip to the Confederation doesn't go anything like planned and Zeke and gang find themselves stuck between a major rock and a hard place. It'll be a miracle if they just survive to get back to Earth, let alone save the Confederation from Junup and cronies.

Sorry that's a bit vague but I can't describe too much of the 2nd half of the book without revealing spoilers. For those reasons, my comments here aren't going to be too specific. This was a little harder read than the first book. To start with, nothing is going Zeke's way. He's framed with another spaceship explosion, there's an anti-primitives movement Junup's cronies have started, Junup has a LOT of control now (and we all know how much he hates Zeke), then Tamret shows up and can't even talk to Zeke, and somehow secrets are getting leaked from Zeke's group. It is really just not his week. There's also a lot less scifi nodding nerdiness incorporated (some, but not nearly as much as the first book) which I missed. I missed it quite a bit, actually. The focus is more on the politics than the tech and what the Confederation is like, also not as fun. I started to wonder why the author even bothered to take Charles, Mi Sun, and the others with Zeke since they hardly got any page time (half the time you forgot they were around), and then I realized at the end that they are needed for book 3. Yes, this is all pretty much working to set us up for what looks like a much more exciting adventure in book 3. So, yes, that also means this suffers a bit from middle-book-syndrome. Some fun, a lot of headaches, but we're set up for a rip-roaring adventure in the next book. The best part of this is the mystery of who the mole is in Zeke's group, which has a twist I did figure out but was quite crafty. And nope, I'm not telling.

Notes on content: Maybe two minor swear words. No sexual content. A few battles which result in injuries (mostly bumps) and fatalities (most aren't described).

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## **Mark says**

I have actually caught up on a series before the final book is out!

This is a rollicking young adult sci-fi series by one of my favorite authors, David Liss. Background: the main character, Zeke, is a young boy who has been chosen to join three other Earth kids to test whether the planet is mature enough to join an intergalactic confederation. The other three Earth youngsters all have elite skills. Zeke is a "random," chosen as an average control. But it turns out the person manipulating the selection of the randoms has actually picked them because they come from risk-taking planets with a spirit of some recklessness, to help the confederation in its battle with another alien alliance, the aggressive Phands.

At the beginning of this book, Zeke thinks he has failed in his first mission and is back to living his life as a not very high status middle school boy. But then his mother lets him know that the bad guys -- possibly Phand agents -- are looking for him, and he goes on the run with the help of a new friend, Alice, and her godfather. They break into the infamous Area 51 to find the spaceship that has been kept there, and thus a new space adventure begins.

Oh, and one other thing -- Zeke now has an alien intelligence housed in his brain, whom he has nicknamed Smelly.

What will happen when Zeke is reunited with his friends, including lizard boy Steve and cat girl Tamret? You'll have to read this to find out, but suffice to say that there is double dealing, hoarded secrets, adventures and a search for a Hidden Fortress in the bargain. The book ends in what is obviously the midstream of a plot that is meant to be encompassed by books two and three of the series, so I have to wait for the third book to come out in about two weeks to find out how this story ends.

Don't be put off by the YA or sci-fi labels. This is just flat out fun to read.

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## **Sharon says**

3.5

I'm not even a sci-fi fan, and I really enjoyed this sequel. It's the sarcastic voice of Zeke, and his mate Steve that keep me reading.

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## **Kyky More says**

Rebels

By David Liss

If you enjoy sci-fi, crazy "hard to pronounce names", and a corrupt government leader; then this book is for you. Rebels, a sequel to Randoms, is a book about a 12 year old boy named Zeke who is on his 2nd trip to The Confederation Of Planets, when he realizes that all is not as it seems. A corrupt government leader named Junup has started a rebellion against carnivorous and "primitive species". Will Zeke be able to survive, or will he be jailed deep within the city?

I recommend this book to 7th – 10th graders because of the interesting but sometimes confusing politics, imaginative and hard to pronounce yet perfect names. It also provides rich vocabulary. This book is better than its sequels because it has a more exciting plot, but the first book includes more abstract and imaginative names.

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### **Dana says**

Having returned to earth and a sense of normalcy, Zeke suddenly finds out that there is an alien intelligence that has taken up residence in his brain, who he names Smelly since his entire name is too long and complex. Zeke is finding earth rather boring and he misses his friends. He does make a friend at school, Alice, who is a UFO buff who recognizes Zeke and wants to find out if aliens are real. Once again, Zeke is sent into space on a dangerous mission and he is reunited with his friends. There is action, danger, and all sorts of fun sci-fi references in this second book in the series.

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### **Amanda Blau says**

humor, action, a snarky sarcastic AI that has been implanted in our hero's consciousness. This series continues to be exactly the alien filled, action-packed, fun ride I want it to be.

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### **Jasmine says**

Mostly a set-up for book three.

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### **Scott Dieterle says**

A very enjoyable read. Zeke is muddling through life back on Earth, but longs to get back to space and to Tamret. Circumstances force him into finding a way back quicker than he expected with the help of new & old friends on Earth and Smelly an AI (sort of) that has been implanted in Zeke. He soon finds himself back in the Confederation with friends and foes alike, as well as in all sorts of trouble. Lots of fun and a good amount of geeky sci-fi references.

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### **Madeleine says**

So much potential, but... just didn't live up to the first one. Not bad, but hard to like after the first book did so much, and this one left me feeling like nothing really happened. For the record, the plot did progress, it just didn't feel as important. And if there were things I didn't love about the relationships in the first one, they were worse in this book. I'm hoping it's just another second-in-the-series thing, and the third one will be better, but I'm nervous after this.

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### **Phineas Johnson says**

Just like the first one, but with new characters and an interesting twist with Tamret.

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### **Mz. Diana Gagliardi says**

Love this trilogy (only 3 planned, yes?) for the smart references and clever thinking. Thinking abt the values of species and the issues of assumptions is really all that Star Trek is abt in the end, and this book actually reminded me just HOW MUCH I love the hope intrinsic in the best SF, including this. Why do this? To bring prosperity and peace to their planets. To become part of something more.

There's a part of High Nerdom (nerd bc it's looking at specific details) where they are demonstrating a concept using classic Star Trek episodes, indicating them by title and episode #. 3 of them go back and forth and I look at myself with my IDIC tattoo and say "I can't do that! How can a 13 yo..." and then I stopped. Cause I WAS that 13yo. I went and found my ST:TOS (Star Trek: The Original Series for the non-Trekkers) episode companion, the one I had had in MS, the one with extensive notes indicating which episodes I had watched, which I had read, how they related to others, little tidbits...for every episode. Each one listed by title and #.

So this is getting a tad more existential and personal then it might have, but I recognize something else with this remembrance- part of that obsession was that there was only so much information and input available. I was at the beginning of the "Information SuperHighway" (try that title on kids today) and used the Internet to my advantage: a copy of MP& the Holy Grail script (which I corrected in places), lyrics to Moxy Fruvous songs, connections with people. Fanclubs were still by mail- I was part of a "ship" and we sent out paper newsletters...The point is, we were limited.

No more. In this book (remember the book? this is a review abt a book) Charles has, in the last 3-5 months managed to binge on ALL of SF. All Star Wars, all Star Trek (I have very little of the new movies), both Battlestar Galacticas (neither is short!), video games, all comics...!! ALL COMICS! I'm not going to diss my geek cred- I have a tattooed IDIC and AC so I am confident in that. But I wouldn't know right away that they were all Green Lantern derivations, or every Kurosawa film, or 7 Original Justice charac...ok, I could probably do that. BUT IT WOULD TAKE A MOMENT! And he has gotten it ALL in that amount of time. And retained.

And that's what we now expect of kids.

They have access to EVERYTHING. They can skim or dive or watch people smack down with disparate theories in back and forth YouTube videos. They can talk abt their own theories and reach an audience of everyone. And they do. And they can. And it's terrifying.

When Stark's student does more with the tech than the man who invented it that's how it SHOULD be. He imagined it, she LIVED it. Trying to explain to kids how frustrating it was trying to track down that ONE demo, or how my dad taped over a show and I've never found it again..."why not just google it?" is the automatic question. Even worse, it usually pulls up an answer. (discussing how this can also create the

complete BLACKOUT of info is a different Q). Meaning that training as a loremaster, KNOWING all that I do, is not as useful or necessary. We all have magic boxes so why retain instead of pulling up info?

In that case, how do these kids...?!

Ok, I am confused and I am thinking. And that's what good science-fiction does :).

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### **Glkuhn914 says**

Fun, fun, fun! The writing is tight and funny. My only criticism is the poor proofreading. This is from a big name publisher and there were multiple glaring errors that even spell check would have marked. This book/author should be shown some love, care, and corrections before going to print.

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### **Miriam says**

Not nearly as good as the 1st one

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### **Miranda Noble says**

Another super fun space romp for nerds of all ages. It's a quick read and a real blast.

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