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Derelict: Halcyone Space, Book 1



Synopsis

When Rosalen Maldonado tinkers with the derelict freighter, she's just hoping to prove she deserves a scholarship to University. She certainly doesn't count on waking the ship's damaged AI or having three stowaways, Micah Rotherwood and brothers Jem and Barre Durbin, along for the ride. They all have their private reasons for hiding aboard and lives they are seeking to escape, but if the accidental crew can't work together and learn to trust each other, they'll die together, victims of a computer that doesn't realize the war ended decades before any of them were even born. DERELICT is book 1 of the Halcyone Space series of science fiction space opera adventures. ITHAKA RISING, book 2, is available now. DREADNOUGHT AND SHUTTLE, book 3 will be out June 2016. A kindle bestseller upon its release in 2014, DERELICT has been described as: ". . .not the usual YA. Nor is it the usual space opera. While some of the characters are military, they're not the heroes. In the second book, in fact, it becomes pretty clear that the Commonwealth, the interplanetary government, is no benign Federation, that there are serious cracks within society, and history has been... sanitised. A diverse cast, real consequences to physical injury, no easy fixes, realistic character arcs. . . ."--Mike Reeves-McMillan, reviewer, author, blogger

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Customer Reviews

Despite some lag at the beginning setting the pieces into place, when the action kicks in it stays solid. I really enjoy books where the title plays an important role in the story, and this one was clear that the title held more than a "placeholder" role. The main characters were very enjoyable--flawed, imperfect, struggling, but heroic in their own ways (which is infinitely satisfying to me as a reader). I would have liked to see some of the set-up trimmed a bit, one of the antagonists rounded out a bit more (it felt like a slight hole was left without understanding some of his motivation), and some vaguely explained links clarified, but even with those minor issues this book kept my brain humming happily along. I don't normally read sci fi because several of the books I've picked up have made the science feel either impossible or unbelievable, but this one balanced nicely for me. Each character was vital (including the non "living" ones), and when the story ended I found myself satisfied with the outcome and immediately wanting more. It's not often that I feel writers manage to balance multiple characters in a clear way, but this book does and also uses the secondary characters beautifully to keep the tension going in the story and round out the plot. (One of the things I love most about this book is how the characters were handled. I want protagonists, and supporting characters, to believe in and root for, and this book definitely delivered on that.) This easily could be a series, and if the strength of storytelling held for further books I would want to grab each one. (Note, this book has female-to-female romance in it, but the author used a delicate hand and nothing felt gratuitous or out of place.) This is the first book that I've read by this author and based on it alone I can say: I am now officially an LJ Cohen fan. More please!

A well-written and thoughtfully crafted piece of young adult fiction. The main characters are teenage boys and girls faced with challenges both unique to the environment - a colony on a bare bit of rock in the middle of nowhere Spaceville - and common to young people everywhere struggling to deal with less than perfect parents and finding out about themselves and where they fit in their world. Although the setting is science fiction, the focus is the characters and the story is driven by their exploration, experimentation, and emotions. They are easy to get to know and relate to, and the challenges they face are very real and compelling. As an adult reader, I thoroughly enjoyed the immersiveness of the world and found the storyline compelling, looking forward to finding out how

they were going to solve the potentially life-threatening situation they find themselves in and enjoying the subtle, intelligent interplay between the various personalities. It's not terribly flattering to parents, but then sometimes parents are the first hurdle a child has to learn to overcome.

Ro Maldonado wants freedom from her sadistic dad; Micah Rotherwood wants freedom from his self-centered father; Barre Durbin wants freedom from his condescending parents. They are all stuck on an asteroid, Daedalus, an outpost way out in space. Their lives intersect when Ro decides to wake up the eponymous, derelict spaceship, a dead military freighter. She wants the credit for resurrecting the damaged AI so she could apply for scholarship on her own and claim her freedom. But things go wrong when the AI wakes up and blasts off into space with the teens on board. The unwilling crew must put aside their prejudices and work together to get back to the hated rock they called home. The plot is simple enough - a team working to find the missing ship and Ro and company trying to find their way back. It's a race against time as the old ship does not have much in the way of life support save the bare minimum. But the multiple POVs, showing each character with their own reasons for getting the ship back, tells a more fulfilling story. I loved the complex characters, Micah especially, for I felt he had the most to lose. Ro's ability made her almost machine like, I admired that. As for Barre, his ability to sing to a machine reminded me of Linesman by S. K. Dunstall (a duo of sisters) but Barre's ability is better explained. At times, the story seemed to loop with Ro and crew going from one life threatening problem to another and the story moved forward a little slower. But the fast action towards the climax redeems those slow bits. The world they inhabit seemed a bit incomplete but given the immediacy of the story, there is little time to paint a better picture. The story is about derelict lives, children neglected or abused by parents and those children struggling to not turn into their parents themselves. A difficult task given they live on sparsely populated outpost. It is this that drew me into the story, the future setting was just that, a backdrop. Although there are times the setting gives interesting conflicts. Bottomline - A little tedious/technical but worth the adventure.

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