



## Wanderlust

*Ann Aguirre*

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**Wanderlust** Ann Aguirre

**Sirantha Jax doesn't take chances... she jumps at them...**

Sirantha Jax is a “Jumper,” a woman who possesses the unique genetic makeup needed to navigate faster than light ships through grimspace. Jax has worked for the Farwan Corporation her entire career. But now the word's out that the Corp deliberately crashed a passenger ship, and their stranglehold on intergalactic commerce has crumbled—which means that Jax is out of a job.

She's also broke, due to being declared dead a little prematurely. So when the government asks her to head up a vital diplomatic mission, Jax takes it. Her mandate: journey to the planet Ithiss-Tor and convince them to join the Conglomerate.

But Jax's payday is light years away. First, she'll have to contend with Syndicate criminals, a stormy relationship with her pilot, man-eating aliens, and her own grimspace-weakened body. She'll be lucky just to make it to Ithiss-Tor alive...

## Wanderlust Details

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Author : Ann Aguirre

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## From Reader Review Wanderlust for online ebook

**Liz\* Fashionably Late** says

**Actual Rating: 4.5**

BR with the MacHalo Ladies NO ONE because it's every man for himself now!

*Disclaimer: if you haven't read the first book, I won't spoil you a thing but I WILL hit you with a stick because this series is fantastic.*

***I am the fucking butterfly, causing ripples everywhere I go.***

If Wanderlust had a real challenge this week was to prove itself as good as Grimspace. While its predecessor introduced us in a new world with amazing characters, Wanderlust was about the beginning of a dangerous journey for Jax and the crew, and the challenge of a new relationship with March. Despite the fact that some details didn't work for me one hundred percent, I should admit **this book kicked the Sequel Syndrome's butt and prevailed victorious.**

**Jax is one of the most dark, vulnerable, crazy and hilarious MC I've read in the genre.** She's not Kate or Mac, she's another thing completely (view spoiler). I love the way she tries to be tough and confident but she's honest enough with herself to admit her own flaws. I love the way she protects and admires her friends. I love the way she inspires loyalty in her crew when she was always selfish and self-centered. I love how she wants to be a better person now and blames March for it because he's a better man.

I'm excited we finally get to know more about what makes her so special and I can't wait to see her jumping again feeling the rush of grimspace.

**March and his relationship with Jax is the reason I'm not giving it five whole stars.** We already knew he had a very dark past but(view spoiler)

**HOWEVER,** and this is a big however, **I LOVED THIS BOOK.**

The second characters are as intriguing and entertaining as Jax. Dina and Vel are amazing with Jax and the introduction of Jael \*swoon\* and Hit \*hands down\* was so smart. I like it when the author gives us new characters we can enjoy or hate freely and they are complex enough not to be outshone by the MC.

**AND CONSTANCE IS THE IKO OF URBAN FANTASY!**

I'm reading book #3 right away and I must say I'm a little worried because my spidey senses are tingling and(view spoiler)Hope to be wrong, Mary helps us all.

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## **XX Sarah XX (former Nefarious Breeder of Murderous Crustaceans) says**

[sorry dear Freaks, we just can't wait for you. Have. To. Read. This. (hide spoiler)]

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### **Angela says**

This probably ends up just slightly under 3 stars for me. I feel kind of 'meh' about this book. It's definitely a bridge book, so I'll try to forgive it a lot, but I feel like this book could have been less than half the length and still accomplished everything it wanted. There was no real climax, and based on the first glance at *Doubleblind* the story picks up right where it left off.

I loved the new additions to the crew, Jael and Hit are fantastic. Vel is also pretty awesome, a great friend, and interesting character.

My heart broke a couple of times while reading this book, and then broke even more occasionally. There was a lot of internal angst from Jax, that repeated itself frequently. It was a little annoying, and I skimmed quite a bit of it.

I'm anxiously looking forward to getting into the next book!!

And (view spoiler)

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### **Robyn says**

3.5 that I'm rounding up. These aren't particularly great books, but they are entertaining. The action is always on the move and I do like Sirantha (though occasionally want to shout at her). Very curious about some dangling threads left in this one.

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### **Jen Davis says**

#### **4.5 Stars**

This series is just... So... Good. Ann Aguirre continues to rock my socks off with this sci-fi story, with her multi-dimensional characters, amazing worldbuilding, and emotional whammies I never saw coming. These book are just flat out fantastic. And if you haven't read them already, you should stop reading this review right now and go "one-click" these bad boys straight to your e-reader. Then get comfortable, because you are not going to want to stop reading.

All that being said, I didn't love this book quite as much as Grimspace, though it was pretty close. There are some frustrating moments, as our characters try to find their respective places in their new lives. But Aguirre does so many things right that I would quickly get over the things that would bother me. Too much is happening to linger too long on any one thing. The pace moves at breakneck speed and never lets up from beginning to end.

The story picks up right on the heels of the last book and it's a whole new world in the aftermath of the Corp's downfall. Now Jax has to find a new life and when the Conglomerate offers her an ambassador job on Velith's homeworld, it really kind of is a job she can't refuse. Let me just say how excited I was to see Vel again. He was one of my favorite characters from Grimspace and I love that Aguirre is developing his character and his unique homeworld. Anyway, it's a very difficult journey to Ithiss-Tor and it puts Jax and her crew through the wringer even more than anyone could have imagined.

I don't want to spoil all of the bombs that blow up in their faces. I will say, though, that it's gory and physically grueling. And Jax is fighting an illness she doesn't understand –which is driving a major wedge between her and March. This is one of those frustrating things I was talking about. These two are so good together, but they are both so very damaged. I really thought things were great with them as the book began, but they make bad choices out of fear and hurt, and it made me angry and sad and I may have cried a little before raging at the injustice of it all. You could also say that is a testament to how much I have come to care about these characters that I got to this point. You could also say that their choices completely reflect their general state of emotional disrepair. But that didn't stop me from cursing out loud when things went south.

All of our main characters are evolving. Some just take steps back along with their steps forward. I am so impressed by how distinct and vital all of these characters are: Jax and March, of course, but also Vel and Dina, as well as an intriguing new guy named Jael. Each is so unique and engaging. I want more of them all. And each helps Jax grow in their own way. I've got to say that it's hard to see Jax so weakened after we've seen the strength within her, but I have to believe some of that strength will be back –either physically or emotionally, as her story continues.

This book isn't all sunshine and roses. But it's full of action, romance, and so many surprises. And it's really kind of epic. I can't wait to jump into book 3.

Rating: B+

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## Catie says

You know what, Flannery? I DO want ugly people in my masturbatory space operas. So there. I think that may be the main thing about these books that's still holding my attention: the ugly people sex. Er, I mean, the *stimulating* characters. Let's review who's in this crew so far: a damaged grimspace jumper, a psychic former mercenary, a genetically engineered former mercenary, a kick ass mechanic (and former princess), a kick ass pilot, an insectoid bounty hunter, and a needy AI. I actually didn't realize how much repetition there was until I typed those out. Whatever! I don't care if Hit showed up randomly and in the nick of time; I want Dina to have her HEA. The thing with these series is, you really can't look at them too closely. Just go along for the ride and try not to let the little things bother you.

So, without further ado, here's the little thing that bothered me: the relationship turmoil. Grimspace ends with such a perfect, sappy, romancey ending; I really wondered where she was going to go from there. I've read my fair share of these series, and if the main love interest is established and "locked in" during the first book, there are only so many directions that the author can go. I think that this is why (also much to my annoyance) most authors tend to draw out the finalizing of their characters' relationships, so that the romantic tension remains at the forefront of the story. When the love interest is fully established in the first book, authors (of a long series) will typically:

A) Introduce another love interest (or several) in the next books and engineer the MC into the most indecisive person on the planet.

B) Manufacture tension/reasons why the lovebirds can't be together (sometimes highly improbable).

C) Realize that even healthy adult relationships have plenty of built in tension, and there's no need to fake anything.

Obviously, C is what I'm rooting for, but authors rarely choose that one. To be fair, this *is* an adrenaline fueled, "fight to the death" scene packed, space jumping adventure story, so maybe I am expecting way too much when I long for a little maturity in the romance department. However, I must say that this author tends to go right for option B with this book. At least there's no love triangle!

I also kept noticing discrepancies with the main character. She thinks almost constantly about her own death ((view spoiler)) but then there's a whole page in this book where she states unequivocally that suicide will never be her choice. She spends a very peaceful interlude caring for toddlers on Gehenna in Grimspace, but then is completely intimidated by the presence of an infant on board her ship. She spends a week living in a small cave in Grimspace, but then suddenly develops a fear of the dark/claustrophobia in this book. These things did bother me, but I guess this character is nothing if not totally cracked, so it makes sense that she would contradict herself. And her whole reaction to the childbirth scene is simply hilarious, so I don't care if she's a little schizophrenic.

I still really love Sirantha Jax, and I will be reading book three. I predict that (view spoiler)

### Perfect Musical Pairing

Meatloaf – I Would Do Anything for Love (But I Won't Do That)

Okay, so I have a weakness for this song (and uggos, apparently). This one goes out to March, Mr. "Ooooh, boo hoo! You don't *need* me!! WAAAA. I'll always come for you! I would do anything for you! What? You want me to come with you? Well...here's the thing...I won't do that."

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### **Cathryn says**

I loved it!!! The addition of Jael and Hit were perfect. I had all kinds of feels while reading it. My only gripe is that it didn't have a solid ending. It felt like the end of a chapter instead of a book. I need to go buy book 3 now.

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### **JAIME says**

Prediction: An all out binge read of this series. All weekend.

Because it's sooooooo good!

The tone of this book is noticeably different from that of the first. I get that this is a filler book (so, bring on book III!) but TBH, I did quite a lot of skimming. That's not to say that it was bad at all, just different.

Most of this is going to be spoilery, because I totally need a character rant.

Jax is quieter in this book. She is worried, and that worry certainly tones down her badassery. She made some fucking poor choices here.(view spoiler) I'm giving her a pass on this one because much of her behaviour is somewhat justified.

March was pretty much a dick the from about 20% on. I feel like my ability to forgive his dickheadedness will rate somewhere up with my ability to forgive the Saints for trading Jimmy Graham. Come on! (view spoiler)(view spoiler). Okay, I'm pretty sure that is rant over.

What saved this book were the support characters. Vel is awesome. Like, Sazed type awesome, unassumingly so. Jael is my new love and Jax should ditch March for him ASAP. Although, (view spoiler). Dina is the type of best friend none of us know that we need and was at her snarky best again. Seriously, nothing gets that girl down. (view spoiler)

Okay. Book III. Go.

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### **new\_user says**

First of all, there are too many spoilers in the reviews. So I'll keep this to my impressions- mostly, fawning. **I love these books.**

The characters and goings-on are so real because, aside from drawing from actual circumstances and issues, Ann Aguirre also includes the morally ambiguous, ambivalent musings that we really entertain in our heads and in dialogue too, the events they experience also grey. For example, a few times I wondered about the placement of Lachion in the story and the characters' decisions to help or go there. If it were me, I'd have nothing to do with a place where might is brutally right in the struggle for resources and one's allegiance is so arbitrary, i.e. determined by clan. Personally, I would have recommended all the residents of Lachion to GTFO a long time ago. One can't lead a life in a place where one's at risk of death 24/7 -the age-old trade-off for government- and problems with authority aren't worth it, to my mind.

Associating her characters' loyalties with such an ambiguous place is a brave decision on Aguirre's part. Actually, just making a place in the story for such a society -and with respect- is open-minded. Aguirre never leads the reader to believe that any character is "safe" from death either, except for the first person narrator, naturally, but Aguirre is not unaware of this. Sirantha Jax herself often contemplates her curse of living long after her friends.

This in mind, with regular observations on people or society or emotions captured with raw honesty, it's easy to see why I wanted to quote every other page. Anyway, it's continuous food for thought, and for that reason, I never looked to the back of the book to see the number of pages left. *Wanderlust* could have gone on forever, and I don't think I would have minded so long as she kept supplying those little nuggets that suit this gritty story so well and which she seeded as carefully as the summaries -"reminiscences"- for book one. No infodumps.

Also, there are monsters and more stuff blown up. Enjoy!

**Update: It's funny looking back, after reading *Doubleblind* (#3), at my so-positive reviews of *Grimspice* and *Wanderlust*. I liked them, but I must have seen more hope for the characters there than I did in *Doubleblind*, or else Aguirre really upped the depression to unbearable levels, or I lost patience with Jax-- because *Doubleblind* was just tedious and made me fall out of love.**

## The Flooze says

Grimspace introduced us to jumper Sirantha Jax. With a wry, nasty twist of humor, we were unceremoniously dumped inside the head of a woman warped by sensory addiction and despair. It was a fascinating place to be.

Over the course of Grimspace, she transformed from a selfish braggart into a reluctant hero. When we left her, the universe was in upheaval, with Jax right at the center.

Wanderlust starts just a week or two later. Jax is frustrated, exhausted and penniless. To make matters worse, her health is declining and she has no idea why. She doesn't have many options at the start of Wanderlust, but it's a sure thing whatever she does will be explosive. Chaos always follows in her wake.

In an ironic turn of events, she's made an Ambassador. Her unlikely friendship with a particular bounty hunter puts her in a prime position to intercede on the Conglomerate's behalf in their dealings with the xenophobic inhabitants of Ithiss-Torr.

But though this is about Jax the Ambassador, she does very little in the traditional diplomatic vein. That should be expected, I suppose. Where Jax is concerned things never go according to plan.

Wanderlust is more about the journey, about how Jax continues to morph into someone very different from the ego-centric nav-star who preferred to drink, fight and fuck. On her "goodwill tour," she faces death time and again. Her perseverance and bravado are a facade--a thin crust that suffers cracks with every narrow escape. That woman with the feral smile and the quick temper has been usurped by someone fragile whose fears often overwhelm her.

Aguirre's stark writing style is most poetic in the bleakest moments of Jax's life. We can feel her panic closing tight, making it hard to breathe. We feel the pangs of frustration at Jax's helplessness and her dreaded need to rely on others. At one point, March and she part ways and it's so damned heartbreaking. My throat constricted and I ached right along with Sirantha, wanted to rail against her certainty that they'd never meet again.

Aguirre is efficient at conveying these emotions, never harping too long on one train of thought. Like with any person in a stressful situation, Jax's thoughts focus and fade. The ebb and flow gives her a realism I've rarely experienced.

Through Jax's eyes, we meet some new characters, and get to know old ones a little better. My favourite by far is Vel. His quiet, capable ways make him a stabilising force for Jax. His presence is comforting. No matter how topsy-turvy things get, he has the ability to make everything all right. He's also fascinating to watch. The more time he spends with Jax and crew, the better he becomes at mimicking humanity (and in most ways, he surpasses it).

Jax travels a hard road in Wanderlust. She remakes herself all over again. She contends with guilt and regret--results of a conscience she unwillingly developed over the course of Grimspace. She deals with taking a back-seat in more ways than one and resigns herself to no longer being dazzling and fearsome. Amidst all this, she also acknowledges her burgeoning authority and her growing concern for the people she's brought together...not to mention her responsibility to humanity in general.

It's a hell of a lot for an ailing civilian to take on. I couldn't help but feel a little broken, a little drained myself when I finished Wanderlust. The heaviness that sits in Jax's gut is translated so well that I can only furrow my brow and sigh with her, hoping the next book will find her in a better place. On to Doubleblind...

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## Felicia says

So...I really like this series. Basically if you like Mass Effect games, this will be up your alley, lol. Definitely reading #3, I just like the characters heaps!

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## Robin (Bridge Four) says

**Buddy read with some of the more impatient and OCD MacHalo Girls , Sh3lly and Liz.** Some of the other MacHalo girls will follow next week.

*Sometimes the truth doesn't set you free; it just presents a different set of problems*

I completely fell in love with Sirantha Jax in Grimspace and totally dived headfirst into Wanderlust expecting that love to grow and bloom for Jax into something of epic proportions. The only problem is that most of the things that I found so fantastic about her before tended to grate on my nerves a bit as she went to a few extremes. I get it everything wrapped up very nicely in Grimspace and so the author needed to shake some stuff up but I was not a fan of the direction of the Jax and subsequently March arcs...**I'll get back to that because first I want to talk about the things that were still awesome.**

### ❁Supporting Characters❁

The thing that made this book for me was really the supporting cast. They really shined and made me forget sometimes that I was really mad at Jax and her stupid 'I don't need anyone I must work everything out on my own' attitude.

❁ **Vel** - the shapeshifting mimicking bug like creature stole almost every scene he was in. He is the most honorable of all the crew and performs the role of cultural tutor to Jax on her upcoming role as ambassador to the bug people of Ithiss-Tor. Vel is badass and comes in handy in a fight as always not to mention he has computer skills that are out of this world.

❁ **Dina** – is again a great female character. She is tough and strong and even though she lost so much in her past life she makes every moment of this one count. She also has more mac-daddy skills than Joey from friends.

Seriously she makes even straight girls come running. I love how loyal Dina is to the people she considers friends and at the same time she isn't all mushy and gushy...nope nothing so lame Dina is who she is and if that means she flips you off from time to time well that is just her way of showing affection.

❁ **Jael** – is a new addition to the crew and it seems that he has quite an interesting past that make him a perfect fit for our rag-tag crew of misfits. He is pretty but don't let that handsome face fool you he has some brains and deadly skills under that good looking façade. It seems though that Jael might have a few secrets that could creep out in one of the next books and I'm totally ready to learn what really makes him tick.

☞ **Hit** – is another great female character. She is some sort of deadly assassin that will probably come into play a little more in the future. It seems the syndicate is a little afraid of her so I'm glad she is on our team at least for now it seems.

☞ **AI-245 – I have a secret love of AIs that seem to develop personalities greater than their programming**, *I blame R2D2 and Weebo from Flubber for this*. She is completely interesting and I love the direction the author is taking with her character. It will be interesting to see now that she is a bit more mobile how much her character can do in upcoming installments.

### ✧The Story✧

Overall this seemed like a transition book to me. Everything was tied up so well in Grimspace that I wasn't really ready for it all to become so broken again so fast. Basically the premise is that Jax is being sent with Vel and crew on a diplomatic mission to forge an alliance with the Bug People of Ithiss-Tor. It doesn't take long for everything Jax touches to really just blow up in her face. Nothing goes right from the beginning as it appears that for as many people that want her to succeed there are just as many that want her to fail, and those people are not above killing her.

The thing I really like about these books is that there is a lot of action constantly happening as all these things are going wrong. Jax is always in some sort of danger or crisis and it makes it a lot of fun to read. I get drawn in and I'm not ashamed to admit that even though I hated the Jax/March trope, *yes, I'll still get to that*, I finished the entire book in a day as I couldn't put it down. **Everything moves along so fast and some situations are funny and others are just dire but all are entertaining.**

....And Finally we come to the part I hated **?Rocky Relationship Road?:**

Who are these people???what happened to the March and Jax from Grimspace???

♥**March**♥ - became two very different people in this book. The extremes were so extraordinary in the beginning he is really needy and later in the book he was almost completely detached. Talk about flopping around. At first I wondered if it would be too mushy with dialogue like

*A shudder runs through him. "Sometimes I'm afraid I'll wake up and you won't be here."  
Part of me—the part that's still raw over losing Kai— wants to back away from such unabashed need. I'm afraid I can't handle it, that I'll hurt him again like I did on Gehenna.  
Part of me needs him every bit as much, though. I'm afraid of that, too. I wasn't always such a contrary bundle of fears*

But there is no fear of that since it doesn't take long before Jax needs to have space and time to deal with her issues.

I wasn't a huge fan of the health issues given to Jax in this either. I liked how strong and reckless she was in Grimspace but here she is a shadow of that and almost fragile. The way she pushes March away, hurting him, so she wouldn't hurt him more...bleh *I think I just threw up a little in my mouth*. I get the direction of the story and it is building how will she save herself and be the Jax of old, but I seriously hope that it doesn't last that long.

So then there is the uncaring March who (view spoiler)

● And last but not least is that the more March uses the Psi power of his mind the less in tune he seems to be with his emotions. I actually liked this development, I think it sets things up very nicely for the future and how to bring him back from that and make sure he doesn't lose what humanity he has. (hide spoiler)] (hide spoiler)]

So pretty much I just blame Jax for stupid relationship drama.

Normally all the angsty relationship stuff would have ruined this for me to the point I'd give it 2 stars. But the supporting cast and all the crazy situations plus the twist toward the end, (view spoiler), made everything else so great that I'm going to let it go ahead and give it a solid 4 star rating.

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## **Anzu The Great Destroyer says**

### **Sci-fi up! We're going to the future!**

Even though the beginning wasn't as flashy as *Grimspace*, *Wanderlust* was another thrilling adventure for me. I may be totally biased about this series though. One can never know...

One of the best things about this series is the almost perfect way I can relate to Jax. Yes, of course she's way cooler than me (duh) and she lives in the future and goes into space and is badass but at least I get consoled personality wise.

I don't have to say that March was a major dickhead for what he did to Jax. Vel ended up being her right hand when March should have been the one. Call me a hopeless romantic but I see relationships working like that.

We had also a newcomer. Nah, scratch that. Two newcomers who were relevant. Jael and Hit. Both of them were amazing but the one who impressed me the most was Jael. I couldn't get enough of him and I can't wait to learn more of his secrets!

I can't help of thinking of *Mass Effect* when reading this series. Hell it's the only time I was in charge of a team and had my own off-world expeditions. Some situations were similar in the game. Since I'm a passionate gamer I got attached to my team and my ship, the Normandy (I have to show you a picture to show off with it).

That's another reason why I'm going to give this book such a good score.

There is also a reason why I consider Vel my favorite character. What's the reason you ask? Well in my *Mass Effect* team Garrus was my "second in command". He had my back in many missions and bit by bit he became dear to me. As you can guess I see Vel as my Garrus. Well Garrus is an ugly sonovabitch but you get my point.

And no, I won't stop with my *Mass Effect* stories.

Ah well, something relevant about the story and no more rambling? Awesome story read the damn book!

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## ? Sh3lly - Grumpy Book Grrrl ? says

Ok, I wasn't going to write this until tomorrow, but then I was just laying in bed thinking about it, so might as well...

### **GAH. MY FEELS.**

A lot happened in *Wanderlust*. I don't like to summarize books and usually just talk about my feelings and what I liked/didn't like. The basic plot of this is Jax and her rag-tag crew go off on a couple of diplomatic missions - and all hell breaks loose (as it typically does when Jax is around). So, first: what I liked.

- ❶ Vel - He is my favorite character. I love him! He's a bad-ass, always prepared, super-intelligent, and an alien praying mantis shape shifter! Anytime he is in a scene, it's a good one.
- ❷ Dina - She continues to be one of the best supporting characters who steals every scene she is in.
- ❸ Jael - A new character who is a hot and sexy mercenary and more than what he appears. He helps Jax out, is funny, and great to have on your team.
- ❹ Hit - Another new character. She's also bad-ass, funny, and has an interesting history.
- ❺ AI-245 - Jax's inherited artificial intelligence unit that goes through an awesome transformation. This was one of the best, fast-paced, and funniest scenes.

➡ So basically, the supporting characters made this book. The scene at Emry Station was fantastically intense. The part with the "gangster" Syndicate members was good too. There's still a lot of humor present and good world-building.

*What I didn't like was, unfortunately, the two main characters.*

- ❶ Jax - She was a bit whiny and impotent. This didn't overly bother me because I just viewed it as she was going through her Dark Night of the Soul. She questioned her life, her career, her relationships, the core of who she was. So it was angsty reading at times.
- ❷ March - He wasn't my favorite in this. I was disappointed. (view spoiler)
- ❸ I didn't care for the time spent on Lachion and dealing with their tribal war. I don't like Keri or any of the people there. It was cool when they were trying to get off the planet because of the action, but that felt like overall a filler section to me. (Well, it was needed as part of the main plot device (view spoiler).)

But basically, I still loved this book. I totally wasn't expecting THAT twist. (view spoiler) It still gave me lots of feels and I thought it was a solid entry in this series. 5 stars might be too generous, but it's definitely no less than a 4 star rating, in my view.

Buddy read with a few of my MacHalo girls.

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**Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says**

I lost interest in this sci fi action/adventure about halfway through, when the relationship angst got added to all the other stress and problems that were going on. A peek at the end (*I know*, I'm sorry, mea culpa) let me know that pretty much all of Jax's problems continue past the end of this volume in the series. The first book was a fun romp, but this one just didn't do it for me.

2 1/2 stars.

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