



# Stardoc

*S.L. Viehl*

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## **Stardoc S.L. Viehl**

Dr. Cherijo Grey Veil leaves Earth and accepts a position as a physician at Kevarzanga-2's FreeClinic. Her surgical skills are desperately needed on a hostile frontier world with over 200 sentient species--and her understanding of alien physiology is nothing short of miraculous. But the truth behind her expertise is a secret which, if discovered, could have disastrous consequences between human and alien relations...

## **Stardoc Details**

Date : Published (first published January 1st 2000)

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Author : S.L. Viehl

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## From Reader Review Stardoc for online ebook

### Tez says

Dr Cherijo Grey Veil may be an expert surgeon on Terra, but has a steep learning curve on K-2. Most of her Trauma patients are of species she's never encountered before, and her fellow doctors aren't all playing nice. But these are nothing compared to the contagion destroying lives before Cherijo can even identify what it is, and how to treat it.

The contagion should be the final climax, but instead there's more to come. And are the earlier scenes with all her different patients really necessary? I get the feeling pantsing came before plotting, resulting in a little lack of focus. Family? Lovers? Patients? Politics? Altogether they make the story feel longer than perhaps it should be.

But StarDoc is a true page-turner. The trauma cases are by far the breadwinners, but there are likable characters in Ana Hansen, Alunthri, and of course Jenner. The family and politics issues often seem repeated, and the romances are just awkward. Normally I don't share spoilers, but in this case there's something that a lot of readers like to be forewarned about: a rape scene.

Overall, StarDoc is rather engrossing, and leaves me wanting the rest of the series, but this is problematic as most of the books are out-of-print.

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### Carolyn F. says

This cover is more embarrassing than any bodice ripper I've read. The picture does follow the story, but it's still pretty awful. Dr. Cherijo Grey Veil at 30 is running away from home to another part of the galaxy. There she meets some wonderful and not so wonderful people and falls in love with another alien (since she's from Terran/Earth that makes her an alien right?). The only problem I have is a fellow Terran named Reeve. He seems to have no common sense - she's with someone, stop following her around and trying to kiss her. And when tragedy strikes, he gives her just a short time before he's back again. Even saying all that, she's pretty cruel to him.

I love this book and plan on reading the rest of the series.

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### Jamie Collins says

This is shallow, hokey space opera, featuring enough alien species to populate several Mos Eisley Cantinas. The medical stuff is not badly done, once you shrug and accept that the doctor from earth can so easily handle alien physiology. This book contains possibly the weakest (although mercifully brief) attempt to explain faster-than-light travel that I've ever seen.

But the writing is not bad and I was rather enjoying the book until about halfway through, when it began to go rapidly downhill. There was a setup for a love triangle, but the romances were very poorly realized. Then I was annoyed by the rape scene that the heroine seemed to enjoy: *"I'd never been more disgusted with myself, but there was nothing I could do. We were both young, healthy specimens. I had to try something else, quickly, before he used my physical response against me."* Ick. Other than that scene, which is

disturbing for the attitude rather than for explicit violence, the book is mild enough for older kids.

The ending is lackluster, and it segues into the opening scenes of the next book, a device I find almost as irritating as a cliffhanger.

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### **Dan says**

A very enjoyable read. I recommend it.

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### **Amber Dawn says**

[ WHY THE HELL DOE

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### **Anna says**

Quite a bit of this book reads like James Herriot in space. (I guess more modern readers might instead say this is a medical drama in space.) And I have to admit that --- plus the sheer number of characters --- got a bit tedious at times.

Otherwise, though, the story was fascinating with a strong hook and a likable protagonist. S.L. Viehl did an excellent job of teasing us with the backstory, and the front story is also a good one. The price was right too, making this one of the few books I bought this month rather than snagging via the library.

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### **Amanda says**

I hated this book. It starts out with such promise, and the writing is good, but then it goes so bad.

Rape is not sexy, does not express love and is never acceptable. I loathe the fact that Cherijo finds her rapist such a sympathetic character. It's just grotesque that in later books she goes on to happily marry her rapist. Ugh.

S. J. Viehl is an excellent writer but has some real issues mixing sex, love and violence. I think it reflects something that seems to be popular now with all these vampire books being published. I don't get it, but it's obviously ringing some bells somewhere, because damn, they obviously sell.

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### **Cathy says**

I liked the style. It felt a lot like an old Star Trek novel in a lot of ways. The various aliens and supporting characters were quite good (especially her cat, Jenner, I'm not just a dog person). But I had a lot of issues with the emotional decisions. Somehow, although Terrans are fanatical bigots, and she was raised by one of the worst, Cherijo is completely open-minded to the point that she never even questions whether or not

getting involved with a member of another species is ok. She's a weird mix of immature and inexperienced and confident and in control. Some of that makes sense considering her background, but when and where is just too convenient and inconsistent with how a real person would behave. The main romance is very rushed and hard to get behind. And then there's the violence. I can deal with what happened in light of what we find out later in the book. But I can't accept that she enjoyed it. There's really no excuse for that. And despite the outside influences, the same man continues to press his attention on her with undo influence, it isn't sexy or fun. She gets mad at him, but for the wrong reasons and in the wrong ways. I just don't understand. I'm hoping to see a reason for it in the next book, similar to the reason why the big violent scene wasn't his fault, but I'm leery. Sorry that that's a bit confusing, I'm trying not to spoil anything.

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### **Janice (Janicu) says**

Cherijo Grey Veil is a brilliant Terran surgeon who discovers something about her father that causes her to run away and take an assignment at a free clinic light years away from his influence in Kevarzangia Two. Because of the racism of the Terrans and her sheltered life in Terra, Cherijo has never met many aliens before. Let alone treat them. This is the first book in a series, but the story felt self contained - no giant cliffhanger, thank goodness. And while this is a science fiction novel, it wasn't hard science fiction, which made it a fun, satisfying read for me. There were no difficult lessons, just a straight story about a young woman's fight for her independence. I think I've found an author who I can expect page-turning and fun science fiction from.

More detailed review here - <http://janicu.livejournal.com/10491.html>

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### **Rebecca says**

The first person perspective was lacking something in this book. Some plot points did not make sense. For the sake of anyone who still wants to read this book I won't go into details. Except for this next bit, because anyone reading the book should at least know what they're getting into.

RAPE is RAPE. There is no such thing as a "near rape". It doesn't matter a damn if the character was under some kind of alien influence. It's still rape, no matter who was responsible for it. No one who went through what the main character went through would say "he forced me to have sex with him" and then also say "I wasn't raped" not two pages later. She says, "I consented later," but physical reactions (not to mention simply giving up because he was stronger) do not constitute consent. Even before that happened, the writing of the interactions between Cherijo and Reeve were problematic at best, with Reeve holding Cherijo paralyzed once or twice with his psychic powers, and delving into her mind uninvited and unwanted. And he, the colony's official translator! I'm sure they would have laws about such things for species with mental powers. Growing up around aliens and not knowing human interaction is one thing, but he's just a creeper, and acts more "alien" than most of the real aliens.

No. I'm sorry, but while I can ignore a certain amount of bad or inexperienced writing if the story is compelling enough, I WILL NOT tolerate such cavalier writing when it comes to rape and women's agency.

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### **Joey Cruz says**

75% of Stardoc is a fantastic science fiction novel about a strong, engaging female protagonist taking on a global crisis with wit and resourcefulness.

The other 25% is a bad romance novel in which the only irritating character of the book is shoved down the readers' throats as a potential love interest after *raping the main character* (under the control of an alien intelligence), who realizes after the fact that she kind of liked it.

Doesn't matter how good the rest of it is when a major plot point turns the previously relatable protagonist into a bad stereotype acting out the writer's subversive sex fantasy.

I don't hate sex or romance in books. I just hate it when it's done wrong.

I was still willing to give the rest of the series a chance. This book ends with the protagonist leaving the planet (and that one irritating character) behind... right up until the last page, when the character -- screw it, his name is Reaver -- when Reaver surprises her by being on the ship when it leaves.

Read that: The worst character of the first book is the **ONLY** one that follows the protagonist into the next book.

I don't get three chapters into book two before I'm throwing it across the room and complaining to my wife about what this wonderful book she recommended to me turned into.

"They get married in one of the later books," she tells me.

I never pick up book two again.

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## **Martina the Book Fairy says**

Stardoc falls most clearly into the genre of sci-fi, but it does have elements of both romance and psychic power, as well as all the aliens you could possibly imagine!

Stardoc is set in the indeterminate future - a future where Earth (called Terra in this series) has joined an alliance of space-faring civilizations. Doctor Cherijo Grey Veil is a brilliant surgeon of approx 30 years of age. Driven by a (unknown to the reader) secret she discovers about her over-domineering father, she leaves Terra to accept a physician position at Kevarzangia Two's FreeClinic.

Kevarzangia Two is home to over 200 different species with Terrans making up less than 1%, so Cherijo must prove herself as each medical emergency gives her the challenge of treating new species and diseases. However, Cherijo's biggest two challenges are yet to come. A mysterious illness breaks out that seems to affect all species except Cherijo herself and her father is trying unrelentlessly to drag her back home no matter what the circumstances.

I LOVED this book! I've always been a fan of space operas such as those written by Anne McCaffrey and Elizabeth Moon. Throw in some space romance like Linnea Sinclair and you've got a winner, IMO. I'll definitely be picking up further books in this series.

Similar series:

- \* Vatta's War series by Elizabeth Moon
- \* Serrano/Suiza series by Elizabeth Moon

\* Dinosaur Planet series by Anne McCaffrey (with E. Moon & J. L. Nye)

\* Freedom series by Anne McCaffrey

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## **Felicia says**

I mean....not really that well written, it was just silly sometimes but I kinda enjoyed the mind-candy ride :D

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## **Jensownzoo says**

I really enjoy this series. I like all the medical details about treating alien species (perhaps because I am a veterinarian?). Love how matter-of-fact each alien species is treated--no look-at-me-I'm-an-alien! type of exposition. The first book is my favorite because the main character is still trying to find her place in the world.

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## **Lilia Ford says**

Sci-fi is my favorite genre, and thanks to a combination of action-heavy plots and my own tendency to speed-read, it's also the one I'm least likely to DNF. And no question I rushed right through this despite the length, and immediately picked up the second two books. I was initially intrigued because it was included on a list of sci-fi with 'strong female leads,' and in that the book delivers. The heroine and narrator, Cherijo Grey Veil, is an expert surgeon of Native American heritage, and the plot is full of exciting medical heroics set on a distant planet inhabited by dozens of different alien species. The book is at its strongest when it dramatizes how Cherijo's uncompromising ethics as a doctor guide her treatment, especially given that Earth is portrayed as dominated by a bigoted xenophobic culture that outlaws any alien 'contamination.'

Once the rush of the plot was over, however, there were aspects that fell short, and the problems got more serious as the series continued. The romance aspect was especially unsatisfying: Considering the fact that the heroine is in love with a blue-skinned alien, I had hopes that it would do something new and insightful with that kind of cross-species encounter. Instead, we get a nascent (and mostly generic) love triangle with a blond human male (whom the heroine is clearly destined to end up with) and a boatload of relationship melodrama, including tiresome Alpha male harassment and invasive behavior that would not be out of place in a 1980s gothic romance.

That problem hints at what was ultimately the biggest disappointment for me: both the romance and Cherijo's job appear to set up what I'd hoped would be a genuine and thoughtful encounter with beings who are deeply, justifiably alien. But despite Cherijo's commitment to providing medical care for all, her attitude remains resolutely 'human-centric' in a way that never seems to be challenged by the author. To pick a minor but characteristic example, a particularly disagreeable alien co-worker is described as foul-smelling and unattractive, characterizations consistently supported by the text, without any sense that scent or looks might be species specific. Creatures seem bizarre or accessible, likable or not, attractive or not, entirely on human terms, without ever suggesting that humans may be too biased or inexperienced to cope with that level of difference. In that context, the heroine's consistent condemnation of Earth's bigoted policies start to feel like (the usual) cover for a failure to acknowledge one's own biases.

I emphasize this because I have read other sci-fi books--Tanya Huff's *Valor's Choice* for example--that effectively use the alien theme to explore human bias, both the conditions under which we embrace the alien and those times when we fail. The result here ends up feeling far too close to the saloon scene in *Star Wars*, with aliens providing a colorfully bizarre, sometimes amusing backdrop to a story (justifiably) dominated by those who look and act human. All of these problems persist into the second and third volumes, enough that I do not plan to continue with the series.

Bottom line: I love sci-fi because more than any other genre it combines action-heavy plots with allegory--thoughtful, insightful explorations of complex ideas. This book succeeded on the first count, featuring plenty of exciting actions scenes by a heroic surgeon, but for me at least failed to do justice to the larger themes it raised.

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