



Everfree

Nick Sagan

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In the conclusion of the trilogy which begins in Idlewind and continues in Edenborn, the Black Ep virus has been eradicated by the post-humans. Now the human survivors who had slept in cryo-stasis during the epidemic awaken--and they are just as power-hungry as ever.

Everfree Details

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Bruyere says

I was all set to give this book four stars until the last chapter. I had rather low expectations given people's overall response. The first book was absolutely brilliant. Book two wasn't that great. I think this book was mostly good.

The good about this book is that it discusses what most dystopias do not - the attempt at recovering civilization. It did get into quite a lot of detail, but I enjoyed seeing how they decided to set up the governing and what worked and didn't work. It's especially interesting to see how people react who have been unfrozen after a wipe out of the human race. How do they stay the same or adapt? I also enjoyed the overly quick but compelling resolution to the problem.

But then the author does this weird thing and undoes his happy ending. While, I agree that this would likely happen, it left the reader feeling like there was no resolution. Also, what the heck was the point of the maybe alien race? It was an absolutely pointless insertion and just made me dislike the book at the end. So, I take off a star for the stupid ending that could have been easily avoided.

Christopher Litsinger says

This book again stands somewhat separated from the close of it's prequel. It's one of the things this series has going for it.

Two small complaints: (1) the chapters are told in different characters voices, but there's not much of a stylistic difference. (2) I'm not grooving on the whole "free" bit of this story.

Overall, a thought provoking trilogy and worth the time to read.

Laurie says

Wonderful end to this trilogy. I wish Sagan would write more novels. He's got a really smart, witty and unique voice.

Ashley says

Wow. This series picked right up and finished with a block of C4. I felt that most of the loose ends were tied up and it brought a good sense of closure. I would recommend this series to anyone who is looking for a great cyber-punk story, though it is so much more than that. It is a story that makes you question your own reality.

(Spoilers)

I was disappointed that so many of the characters were killed off, but with the way the story changed, it at least made some semblance of sense. The characters were incredibly well developed and took the time to let you get to know the means and motives behind their behavior.

I saw this as an all-to-real ending to our own society's tale. Power struggles, manipulation, lies, easily broken treaties...oh yeah, all to real. All that Sagan had to do was look around him and he saw exactly what would happen to this planet if such a disaster ever took place.

Halloween has always been my favorite character. He doesn't hide behind a mask of self righteousness the way Vashti does. I didn't much care for the second generation. Too much interference from their "parents". Deuce was okay, but even he was naive- I think that maybe Halloween kept him away from the others for too long.

Sagan found a way to use current society's mistakes and work them into a new timeline- complete with our worst fears being made real.

When I finished the first book I thought "Oh great, ANOTHER series that I will have to finish". I am very glad now that I did.

Emily O says

Don't read this. Trust me. Once you have read the first two books this one is just a terrible disappointment. It completely destroys the former plot line and characters, adds a new plot in and then refuses to resolve it, and has a terrible cliché ending that is a disgrace to the previous two. I repeat, do not read this book.

J says

Everfree is the conclusion to Mr. Sagan's Idlewild trilogy. The earth has been ravaged by a plague from which there are no living survivors. Genetically engineered caretakers, bred for the purpose of curing the plague do accomplish their goal and now set about reviving the cryogenically frozen humans that remain. But what kind of world will they rebuild?

The book asks a lot of the right questions and shows the right problems. Tribalism, Social-stratification, and Democracy vs Tyranny are all examined. This is presented well by the main character, Halloween, a man who after previously losing a child is also going through a re-birth with a new family.

Where I felt the book failed was its resolution. It magic solution to all life's problems, that itself begins to fall apart as the book closes. This felt a very lazy conclusion to an otherwise thought-provoking series. The author provides no great practical solutions, no allegories, no moral. He simply imagines a world where the problems are solved via a magical incentive to do the right thing.

An ending, worthwhile if you were interested in the characters previously at least.

Cheryl Minekime says

I must admit I am torn between giving this book 3 or 4 stars so I'll say 3.5. And that solely based on the epilogue which might not be entirely fair, to be totally honest.

"Everfree" takes place 42 or 43 years after Black Ep has essentially wiped out almost all of humanity except for those rich enough or fortunate enough to have been cryonically frozen, and the 6 remaining "post human" children who were genetically engineered to survive the virus and hopefully find a cure. Stylistically this novel is told in 3 parts, a mixture of varying points of view between Halloween, Isaac and Fantasia, and Sloane, one of Vashti's and Champagne's daughters, now come of age.

Part One is told solely thru Halloween's POV, who personally I think is the best narrator throughout all 3 novels. Hal and company have relocated to Cambridge, MA after Vashti has engineered a cure to Black Ep at long last. Now the work of rebuilding humanity has begun and they slowly begin thawing out some of the frozen. But they also hope to build a better society by encouraging everyone into a spirit of cooperation and vision of mutual benefit.

The problem however is that human nature doesn't always work that way. And the frozen come from the top of society before Black Ep surfaced. These are the power players, men and women who got to where they were either by privilege or business cunning and they haven't been humbled or changed by the fact that Black Ep almost wiped them out.

By Part Two, the post human's vision for a better humanity is unraveling and they leave America's newest factions behind to survive or not on their own while they return to Europe to try again. What they don't realize is that Fantasia has a plan and vision of her own. I don't want to spoil this for anyone by saying any more other than there are some surprising reveals here.

I guess it's not possible for any post apocalyptic novel to have a truly happy ending. "Everfree" was well on its way to a very satisfactory and fitting conclusion until the very end. While Hal and Pandora and their naturally born daughter, Hope, do have their own happy ending of sorts, I wasn't sure what to make of Hal's recurring dreams of the "Free". And I was very disappointed in the end of the story as a whole, revealed in the last page of the epilogue. Maybe I am being unrealistic and a hopeless optimist but I really wished for a more satisfying conclusion overall.

Dj says

The author sets up this situation that's extremely interesting. Anything can happen! Hal, a cynical, loveable asshole and main character, keeps the tone edgy and fun. Then 3/4 of the way through it's like Sagan didn't know what to do and realized he had to wrap up not just this book, but the trilogy in which this is the third installment. He handled this hastily and horribly in my opinion, and it leaves a sour taste in my mouth.

Stephen says

So, my general review is basically that the first half is better than the second, mostly because the switch in narrative styles bugged me and I think the first style worked better. The ending always was less than satisfying--though admittedly it would be hard to really wrap up.

Most of what follows is some scientific annoyance at the patch (which is at the end of the book, hence there be spoilers here).

So the patch is a genetic modification to incentivize cooperation. There are probably better ways to do it that

getting people high--and Sagan treats with that. I think he may have chosen that method to leave some ambiguity with the ending. I'm curious though, how that compares to the bodies other natural highs, endorphins, why we don't acclimatize to them (or do we?)

My real qualm is with the evolution of cooperation. Sagan, or his characters at the very least, assume that evolution does not breed cooperation. This is not so. It is variable across species, and we undoubtedly have it more than, say, non-pack hunters. Because we live in great big packs. But we also cooperate fairly well. There's even been some game theory explanation of how repeating games in game theory tend to show cooperating (or trying to cooperate and punishing those who don't) is really the best option. I don't know how much of this would have been available when Sagan was writing, but I'm pretty sure some.

Two caveats, two places where evolution hasn't pushed us to cooperate. 1. there are cheaters out there, people who use the greater numbers tendency to cooperate as a way to do better for themselves, people who just don't care. And 2. somewhat more interesting and, I think, more to the point in the scenario Sagan has created, our tendency to cooperate is bounded--there are essentially maximum numbers we can cooperate with. We do really well with small villages, but not with whole countries. The issue, really, is that beyond a certain point we can't know everyone personally, it's a lot easier to treat people you don't know as disposable or usable or whatnot, because you don't know enough about them to naturally invoke sympathy. Related to that, the human brain likes to classify people so that it can deal with the fact that we don't know absolutely everyone, and that feeds racism, classism and a whole bunch of other adversarial relationships that we can train our minds to work around, but don't do naturally.

I think taking that kind of thing into account could have made the problem and solution more interesting (albeit, by virtue of being more complicated).

Elisha says

Everfree, though not awful, was nowhere near as good as *Idlewild*; after the first book, each subsequent volume got progressively worse.

I'm definitely not a fan of adult Hal in all of his negative anti-hero splendor. At least as a kid his attitude was been acceptable.

Sure, the text emphasizes that humans are pretty much genetically predisposed to mucking existence up for themselves every time; even at the end, DNA and evolution prove stronger than the "patch." It goes in a different direction than most post-apocalyptic books I've read -- more of a survival sans hopefulness rather than "Yay, we survived; the future is so shiny" -- which is, I feel, the book's one redeeming quality.

Regardless, the book didn't gel with me. I had a hard time having any reaction toward it.

Joanne says

It was rough there for awhile, found myself skimming for a good part, it did redeem itself, loved the ending--makes you think !!!

John says

A disappointing end to the trilogy, this book is a bit of a mess. I felt "rushed" through the conclusion, and in a way the entire book reads like a summarized version of a longer story.

Would be interesting to know if the author got bored with this project and just tried to wrap it up as quickly as possible. From about 2/3 of the way through the second book, Edenborn, that was the impression I got about it.

Michael Nalbhone says

And, it starts all over again.

Katrin says

This book, as so many I have ever read, start with a really good idea. Here it is a post apocalyptic world where all humans died and only some post humans, genetically altered, survived, now defreezing humans that were saved before all humans died. A new world order had to be put in place to avoid mass panic and anarchy. This book though loses itself in too much talk and too little action. Yes, it is good to build up characters but then to not use this is sad. Also the end was so cheesy after all, I wanted to weep.

Deozaan says

Everfree's tone and point of view is much more like a "normal" book. That is, less stream-of-consciousness and more first person narrative. As such, it sets quite a different mood right from the beginning.

I felt a lot more relaxed while reading this book than I did while reading Edenborn. Nothing really seemed to put me on the edge of my seat (so to speak), which actually gave me a strange sensation during a particularly action-intense scene.

I felt so mellow when Hal was finally at peace with things, and that feeling continued to stay with me even when in the next paragraph he recognizes an ambush and fully engages in defending himself. It was a bit surreal to me, like a lucid dream where potentially dangerous things are happening but I know it's not real so I just calmly observe just to see what happens next.

I'm not sure if it was a failure on Nick Sagan's part to transition from serenity to action or if it was a glitch in my brain not registering that I should be bothered that soldiers were trying to kill Hal and his friends/family.

Perhaps the most amazing thing of all is that Sagan finally gave me a happy ending--mostly. Some of the plot cliffhangers from Edenborn aren't really addressed in this book, and Everfree even hints at a whole new major plot line that never quite takes off the ground. But by the end of the book I just felt so peaceful, serene, and pacified that it didn't really matter to me. My own mood reflected Hal's, and it was essentially that there may be some flaws, but they didn't really matter because of the internal peace I felt.

Usually with books and movies I am so analytical and logical, but with this series my reaction and reflection has been largely emotional.
