



Bio Rescue

S.L. Viehl

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In this first of a new series set in the Stardoc universe, Lieutenant Dair mu T'resa has just become an interstellar paramedic with a Bio Rescue team. However, the entire project faces opposition from a lupine species with a hatred for the Dair's aquatic-like race.

Bio Rescue Details

Date : Published August 2nd 2005 by Roc (first published August 2nd 2004)

ISBN : 9780451460080

Author : S.L. Viehl

Format : Paperback 416 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Fantasy, Romance

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From Reader Review Bio Rescue for online ebook

Mistybell says

I like books with strong female characters and S.L. Viehl writes some of the best. Jadaira mu T'resa is one of the strongest. Deformed at birth due to a plague that killed her mother, she was genetically altered by a human scientist who later became her father's mate. Jadaira is a native of the planet Kevarzangia II and her people are an aquatic cross between killer whale and humanoid, but because the scientist who altered her was human and the 'Zangians would not donate any tissue samples for cloning, she was made to look more like a human.

Dair is the commander of her planets space defence force, and becomes instrumental in forming a Bio Rescue operation that helps people immigrating from war torn galaxies by providing them with emergency medical care. There is a lot of space action, and undersea fights. There is a cult of wolf like people who are making life miserable for everyone on K2 by performing rituals that include bodily fluids.

If you like space operas and lots of strange alien characters, you will like Bio Rescue.

Carolyn F. says

3-1/2 stars. Pretty good book. The romance part of it I didn't understand. It seemed that through most of the book Dair didn't just dislike the guy but hated him and on his part there were no real changes to say he's become more of someone she could love. I guess there are only two books in this series, so I'll see if my library has the 2nd one so I can finish this series.

Vanessa says

Dair is not your average alien. She's commander of a squadron of SEAL (surgically enhanced/altered life-form) pilots, a group that patrols the region around their home planet at the command of the Quadrant, an inter-planetary military group formed to protect their coalition against hostile aliens.

Dair's home planet, K-2, is home to the water dwelling 'Zangians, but lately has become refuge for war refugees who reside on the dry land colonies. Like her fellow SEALs, Dair's body was surgically altered, but hers was not changed voluntarily. When she was born her mother has been infected with a virus, and when she gave birth Dair should have died, but for the intervention of a native of Earth (Terrans) who eventually becomes her step-mother.

It's her step-mother and the Terran surgeon who save her, but in the process must change her so drastically that she seems more a cross between a Terran and 'Zangian. It's from her having a foothold in both worlds that her point-of-view always seems to be at odds with her native people and the land dwellers, even though she understands them better than they realize.

She agrees to command her squadron on 'bio rescue' missions, to save space travelers who are often refugees. This turns into bigger trouble than anyone realizes when she saves a ship of Skartesh, a lupine species who

fled their dying world to settle on her own, and bring with them their baffling religion.

Viehl's alien characters are fascinating and engaging, as she weaves their separate cultures into their personalities. She contrasts the different cultures well, showing how environment and racial qualities can build tradition and behaviors. Dair provides an interesting contrast to her own race, the 'Zangians, who since they live underwater don't need shelters, clothing, and eat their food raw so their body makeup and culture is different.

Most of the third person point of view is spent on Dair, but we also follow around her step-mother, Dair's would-be mate, her cousin, the Skartesh savior, and a few others (whom I couldn't figure out why their side-story was necessary). Dair is a tough female lead, who despite her fearless aggressive nature, still has a strong feminine side. It's interesting to watch as she struggles against her instincts, trying to integrate all that's good in other alien races into her own philosophy of life.

The book's plot moves forward at a good pace, but unfortunately suffers from a lack of smooth transitioning. I'm sometimes confused about the passage of time and when things occur.

But worse than this is my confusion over the too-large cast. I could probably cope better with so many characters if they weren't all so vastly different from each other. This is where Viehl's strength with a diverse range of aliens becomes her downfall, because I had a difficult time keeping track of all the different races, body types, and racial behaviors.

I struggled a little with Dair's love triangle, and Viehl didn't explore her heroine's feelings very deeply, so it was difficult to swallow her choices at the end of the book. The climax of the book was exciting and suspenseful, but a strange event at the end threw me off and isn't ever fully explained (I can't say more than that, or else I'll spoil it).

Despite these flaws, it's still a fun book with interesting alien races trying so very hard to live in harmony with each other.

Cathy says

It was an enjoyable, quick read except for the idiotic romance. Viehl writes great aliens. She points out potential cultural differences from humans in a way that feels objective and interesting. And she's a good story teller. But she has serious issues when it comes to love and respect. The guy in this book manipulates, blackmails and controls the female, outside of the boundaries of their society and certainly ours. It is not fun. I can tolerate it in the context of a sci-fi novel with romance as a small part of the story. And because I was curious to see what she had to write about what happened on K2 after the character Cherijo from the Stardoc series left, as well as the backstory than Shon presented from that series. I did enjoy seeing the connection between Ana and Dr. Meyer, brief and underdeveloped as it was. But I certainly will never, ever read one of her romance novels.

Valerie says

The space-opera craze continues. My favorite part of this book was thinking about the differences between how an aquatic species would view flying. It seems like a natural extrapolation, but I've not seen it explored before in Science Fiction. They would, it seems to me, already think about space and movement in the necessary way. I skimmed a lot of the book, but I am still sort of captivated by the main idea.

Rebekah Owens says

I absolutely loved this book. Fascinating world, interesting and detailed characters, strong protagonist, wonderfully rich in story. So why am I giving it 2 stars? The primary character's romance is awkwardly tacked on, and utterly incomprehensible. She falls in love with a man who has only ever challenged, criticized and alienated her, after a sex scene that could charitably be called coercive; I'd personally characterize it as rape.

Viehl also tries to set up a love triangle between our heroine, the aforementioned rapist, and the religious leader that befriends her for reasons that are.....murky at best. This attempt fails miserably as there is no sexual tension between any of them at all. Cut out the romance, or even have Dair ditch the rapist at the end in favor of friendship, and you've got a really good sci-fi book. As is, this one's a wall-banger.

Faye says

Such a page-turner. But also, damn girl, get you some less shitty love interests.

Krista says

Oh, the species! Having read several of Viehl's early StarDoc novels, I knew that I would likely find a plethora of interesting beings populating the pages of this book. What I didn't pick up on just by reading the back jacket of the book was that this book was taking place inside the same universe as the Stardoc series. What a pleasant surprise!

Unlike Cherijo Grey, the Stardoc herself, Dair is a military pilot tasked with protecting and monitoring the vast space around her home planet, K-2. Altered as an infant to survive the ravages of a disease inflicted upon her in utero, Dair stands out from her fellow 'Zhangians in more than just appearance. She's different. She's noticeable. She also seems to be a magnet for trouble as she clashes with her second-in-command, Onkar, and makes executive decisions that defy military rule and broader social norms. Things escalate as things often will and Dair finds herself altered by more than just her decisions.

I'd recommend this for anyone who can handle the imagination necessary to envision more than just humanoids traipsing around space.

Marisa says

I don't write a lot of reviews, but in this instance I felt compelled to. I picked up Bio Rescue because I read

and enjoyed (as escapist reading with well-written aliens) the Stardoc series. Or most of it. In the first Stardoc novel I DID object to an unnecessary plot line that I thought must be an anomaly. Surely the author realized it was a poor choice as the rest of the series veered away from this theme, I thought.

In Bio Rescue, I learn that instead this is a favorite theme for this author. Specifically?

Her strong female leads are forced or coerced into sex in the first novel of the series by a male character that she later has them voluntarily choose as a life companion or mate.

Not in one series. In two. Perhaps in others? This author writes interesting alien characters and has created a world - that both series occur in - that I'd enjoy reading more stories set in. If it weren't for the fact that I cannot now ignore that I'm reading the work of an author who fetishizes rape.

It makes it difficult to enjoy these strong female characters who are written to be leaders and trailblazers and connectors of diverse alien cultures when you also are expected to reconcile the idea that instead of getting vengeance on their rapists? We're supposed to believe these otherwise unflinchingly brave and consistently self-actualized female leads make the freakishly out-of-character choice to have romantic relationships with their attackers. Her female leads are also all written to be unusually (and frequently reiterated as) tiny physically. It's absurdly consistent.

It's a shame she has to ruin otherwise entertaining fiction with this ugly predilection. I won't make this mistake again. I urge other readers to take this under advisement when considering her work.

El-jorro says

Bookworm Speaks!

Bio Rescue by S. L. Viehl

The Story: From Booklist: A military crew running planetary patrols rescues a ship of refugee lupine land-dwellers called the Skartesh. The refugees seem more than that, though, for there is evidence that their ship carried an explosive rigged to blow up if they landed. The rescue scotched that. The commander of the rescuers, Dair Mu T'resa, belongs to a basically aquatic race that disdains rescues, but she is basically altruistic. Dair tries to be friendly with the Skartesh, going so far as to teach one, Shan, to swim, which causes a number of problems, for Shan is supposedly a prophet whose destiny is to return the Skartesh to their desert world and restore its water through an ultimate sacrifice. Also, the Skartesh have a taboo against so much as talking to non-Skartesh. The book's strength lies in the aquatic nature of the main species in it (though they are slowly evolving toward amphibiousness) and the issues of interspecies interaction that it raises.

The Good: The Worldbuilding. That is probably the best thing to come from reading this book is the creativity that just oozes from every single page. The author does a superb job of making the various alien species truly alien. In a lot of science fiction, the common trope is to make the various non-human

inhabitants, basically humans that are wearing costumes and celebrate different holidays. This is merely a fact and does not make or break a story. It is quite common in Star Trek.

In this book, however, these are definitely not Star Trek aliens. Several alien species are mentioned in the text, but the Zangians and the Skartesh receive the most focus. The Zangians are superbly developed as an underwater civilization and how a culture could evolve in such an environment.

It is entirely possible that whatever alien species we encounter may have customs and mannerisms that are completely normal to them but to humans are completely revolting and/or whose biology is almost completely different from Earth standard. The Zangians dislike rescuing the wounded but considering their environment, it seems completely reasonable and not cold or callous.

The Skartesh are not given quite as much focus as the Zangians but where the text shines is how their religion comes into play in their interactions with the protagonists. In an increasingly secular world, it is easy to forget how important religion was to earlier societies and how much of an effect it would have on an individual's behavior. Religion at times can seem secondary to day-to-day life at times, but for many across history and the present day, religion is day to day life and the way it effects the Skartesh may be closer to reality than most would expect.

Dair is an excellent protagonist. She is strong and independent and despite being an outsider, she is respected by her family and friends. The author does a good job of balancing her strength as well as her vulnerabilities. Dair want's to live her life as she chooses, but is torn between her kinship with the Skartesh and her mixed attraction to a male of her species named Onkar.

The Flaws: Like several books, the narrative tends to stumble greatly by the third act. This happens frequently in science fiction. The intention is, obviously, to have a grand climax, where all sorts of truths come to light. But the truth is, that in this case, it turns the final arcs into a jumbled mess where frankly far too much comes at the reader at once that generates more confusion, rather than revelation. Sometimes, a big, dramatic consequence is really not necessary and neither is a diabolical villain which the text tries to introduce. It just throws too much at us at once. The fact is, Bookworm kind of skimmed the last few chapters because, not every story has to be epic, as writers are trying to understand these days.

It was also rather disappointing in how, we actually seem to be treated to a relatively small amount of medical rescues. We see about two or three but most of the intervening chapters deal with the consequences of such rescues. Most of the book takes place in a character's head. An extension of that is how perhaps the author has one or two more character arcs than is truly necessary. It never really works in the books detriment but it would clean up the narrative slightly.

This book is part of a larger universe of several other novels, so some details may be puzzling if the reader is starting with this book. Then again, its incentive to buy the other ones!

One of this book's strengths is how it largely avoids plot dumps but at the same time it would have been nice to have been treated to at least one or two just to give a clear idea of what the Zangians looked like. We're required to piece it together from bits and pieces scattered through the text which is a stronger writing technique but can make things a little confusing when trying to envision a race as different as the Zangians in the mind's eye, as Bookworm tends to do.

That or have some illustrations.

Final Verdict:

Four out of Five Stars.

Mara says

I loved this book until the end. That lost a full star and almost more.

This is a convoluted story with a wonderful heroine, great world and a dash of romance. It really didn't deserve such an ending. If you are writing sci fi, stick with it. Adding supernatural, unexplained events is a cheap shot, IMHO.

Kristopher1942788782 says

My best review ever))))

Caitlin O'Sullivan says

I was willing to give this book a chance. The quality of the writing wasn't great, the plotting was uneven, but I assumed (since this author wrote quite a few books before this one) that it would eventually get better.

Then I read the ending.

Maybe it works for some people, but it didn't for me.

(I don't want to trash *Bio Rescue*, because every book is somebody's baby, but I felt the one-star review deserved at least a few words of explanation.)

Wendy says

I think that I might have mentioned before that I love Viehl's Stardoc series. I was excited to read this one since it takes place on K-2 which is where Stardoc started out. I was not disappointed. This book was just as hard to put down as the Stardoc books. Totally enjoyed the characters. Love the wonderful descriptions that Viehl gives us of her non-human characters and loved the storyline. Looking forward to getting my hands on 'Afterburn' soon so that I can read more about these wonderful characters and this fabulous world that Viehl has created.

Ruby Hollyberry says

Not quite as good as the sequel, Afterburn, which I read first. Would have been four stars if there were fewer

improbable plot twists and if the romantic relationships made any sense at all. By the second book the plot had smoothed out to plausibility and the relationships were less rocky. Rocky's an understatement: both romances in this book depict the sort of males only romance novels can get away with portraying as attractive in any way - brutish, difficult, insensitive, and unpleasant, but occasionally they turn on a dime and suddenly agree with their girl about something or everything.
