



The Radiant Seas

Catherine Asaro

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Living in exile on a deserted planet, Sauscony and Jaibriol, each the heir to an interstellar empire, become entangled in the machinations of the Skolian Empire. Interstellar war erupts and Jaibriol is snatched away to be the unwilling ruler of the Highton Aristos. Sauscony must lead an invading space fleet to rescue him from his own Empire-without revealing that they are married. With much of interstellar civilization poised on the brink of destruction, it is the devotion of these two lovers, their sacrifices, and their heroism, that might just forge a new order.

The Radiant Seas Details

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From Reader Review The Radiant Seas for online ebook

Mike says

The Radiant Seas is the 4th book in Asaro's Skolian Empire series. It follows on timewise from the 1st and 3rd books although the main characters are from the 1st.

I found the story interesting and fast moving with a number of plot threads that all came together in the end to a successful conclusion then split off again ready for another book. This could be annoying, but as I intend to read the next book in the series I didn't think so.

I think this is probably the best book I have read in the series so far, although it may not be for everyone.

Karin Granström says

This book reminds me of Game of Thrones. Much intrigue and epic fights and no guarantee of any happy ending for the characters I've come to care for.

Darth says

This is the 3rd book in the Skolian Empire series - despite the Goodreads typo listing it as #4. I may not have tried this after the first 2 were a bit space opera mixed up with a romance novel for my taste, but when I got the first 2, I actually got the first 6. So in for a penny in for a pound am I. What the heck - I have them already anyways?

I am glad I did give this a go in between NJO novels. It has a more old-school sci-fi feel with just a hint of what I might have once called the mushy stuff.

Asaro still feels compelled to over-explain every minute details of tech that doesn't exist, but it seems to distract less from the story in this edition - or I just got used to it enough to semi-tune it out.

I went into this wondering what it would be about - after the seeming desparity in characters from the 1st to the 2nd, but this tied it up well, and after getting through it, I may very well give the ACTUAL #4 a go. We'll see if I get distracted with more Niven, NJO or Gor books in the interim...

Dean says

The Radiant Seas has strong sentimental value for me, this book being my first introduction to the Skolian Saga. However, unlike a movie that one might have enjoyed as a teen that as an adult you feel no connection, this book is every bit as good a read now as it was then. The universe built in this series is one I would gladly revisit if not only for its ideas of the future, but also for its cast of people that must deal with living in it. Suffice it to say, I look forward to read the works from Catherine Asaro, strengthened by my own voracious

appetite for STEM topics and compelling storytelling.

Nicholas Whyte says

<http://nhw.livejournal.com/251088.html> [return][return] Oh dear. A real disappointment. Lots of infodumping, tedious handwaving technicalese - the nadir, close to the end, is this sentence: *With a rest mass of 1.9 eV and a charge of 5.95×10^{-25} C, a bitons only needed an accelerator with a 50 cm radius and 0.0001 Telsa [sic] magnet.* Which I wouldn't mind if it actually helped the book make sense; but it doesn't. Anyway thanks to the helpfully provided diagram I spent much time wondering how you could possibly keep **anything**, let alone tons of antimatter, in a Klein bottle (whose inside is the same as its outside). [return][return] I was quite unable to suspend my disbelief to take seriously the family and interplanetary politics as I could for the first book. The good guys always escape certain doom in the nick of time, unlike the bad guys. And worst of all, my particular *b*

Judy Goodwin says

SPOILER ALERT! This review discusses themes and arcs in the books that reveal key plot points.

I really enjoyed the first book in this series with the way Asaro mixed some hard science with softer romance and some very interesting bio-engineering and psychic abilities. It was new (to me at least) and different than a lot of other science fiction I'd read. I didn't enjoy this one as much, however. It was still a good book and a decent ending, but I found myself not liking the main characters, which was a problem.

In the first book, Sauscony was a fully dimensional character who struggled with her title and role as a leader and fighter and her needs and wants as a woman and empath. The struggle was dynamic, and I felt there was a pivotal moment when she realized that she was born to lead and had a commitment to her people. With an ongoing war that has killed millions of people, she was even given the opportunity to meld two enemy nations together. Instead, she went into hiding to have her perfect family life.

That was forgivable, given her needs as a woman. However, in this book, after living her dream life for sixteen years or so, once again she's thrust into power and the war, and once again she has the opportunity to take that mantle with her new husband the Emperor and her three children born of two races. What disappointed me was that once again, she runs and hides, faking her death and leaving two interstellar nations adrift, leaderless, and in chaos (where history tells us that typically the worst sort of dictators tend to seize control, taking advantage of people's fears). I thought that was unforgiveable, especially given her epiphany in the first book.

Asaro tries to save the day with the son's sacrifice, but to me, this was like second best, and he wasn't developed enough as a character for this to satisfy me. I never understood why his identity as half Rhon had to be hidden. In order to fool the Eubians into letting him rule? Okay, maybe. But it just seemed like he missed a perfect opportunity to throw all their preconceived notions on their heads.

So to me this was a good book, but not entirely satisfying, and I won't be reading the remaining books of the series.

Anatoly says

Now, THIS is how you do space opera right! Intrigues, plot twists, space empires, amazing psychic powers, enormous space battles, blurring lines between good and evil, you name it. I've read many a space opera, and this one will definitely stay with me for a long time.

Shara says

The premise: ganked from BN.com: *Living in exile on a deserted planet, Sauscony and Jaibriol, each the heir to an interstellar empire, become entangled in the machinations of the Skolian Empire. Interstellar war erupts and Jaibriol is snatched away to be the unwilling ruler of the Highton Aristos. Sauscony must lead an invading space fleet to rescue him from his own Empire-without revealing that they are married. With much of interstellar civilization poised on the brink of destruction, it is the devotion of these two lovers, their sacrifices, and their heroism, that might just forge a new order.*

My Rating: 5 - It's a Gamble

So, this is not the best book to start with if you haven't yet read any of Asaro's space opera/SFR. No, the best book to start with is *Primary Inversion*, and even that's been the best book of the series to date (and by date, I mean by how far I've read). Asaro's at her best when her characters have something to lose and she can focus on the action of bringing a story to a close. But in *The Radiant Seas*, there were a lot of world-building sections that had me utterly disengaged, and really, there were too many POV characters (I'm remembering at least eight) and that always dilutes a story for me. I was so tempted to put this book down and declare myself done with the series, but I pushed onward, because I want to see what else the series has to offer, and it didn't seem right to make this book a DNF and still read more of the series. And the ending does redeem my enjoyment of the book, though sadly, it takes a long, long time to get to that point. I still plan on continuing the series with the next book in the publication order, which is *Ascendant Sun*, but after that, I'll probably be taking a break.

Spoilers, yay or nay?: Yay. You'll get some spoilers for *Primary Inversion* too, so please, if this is a series you're interested in, don't read the full review. However, if you're caught up on at least *Primary Inversion* and *The Radiant Seas*, feel free to read the full review, which is in my blog and I've linked to it below. As always, comments and discussion are most welcome.

REVIEW: Catherine Asaro's THE RADIANT SEAS

Happy Reading!

John Loyd says

The Radiant Seas (1999) 487 pages by Catherine Asaro.

Another Excellent tale set in the Skolian universe. Sequel to Primary Inversion.

The Skolian universe: many thousands of years ago an alien race took some humans from Earth and settled them on Raylicon. The group on Raylicon discovered space travel and started colonizing planets. There were a couple rises and falls of civilizations. The Ruby empire thrived with their empathic ability. A scientist trying to improve the line and make it more stable instead created the Aristos. The empire split into the Skolia and Eube, a.k.a. traders. Earth, the allied powers, discovered space travel and their expansion finally overlapped with the Skolian space. There are now three major powers.

The story picks up from the end of Primary Inversion, where Soz, one of the three in line to be the next imperator (military leader) of Skolia and Jaibriol II heir to the Eubian throne have gone into seclusion on an unknown planet after faking their deaths.

While Soz and Jaibriol are building a life on Prism the plotting of the Traders to build their own psiberweb and the Skolian moves to counter continue. The first half of the book hits the high points of the next 15 years setting the stage for war between Skolia and the Traders.

Asaro does a great job with creating characters with depth and their own personality. The battles all seem to come down to seconds, e.g. Althor is ambushed but manages to fend off the first wave of attackers and is seconds away from escaping when he is captured. That theme continues with all of the other battles. The SF is clever. Locks and Keys creating the basis of the psiberweb. The Locks were created by the first empire that fell and the technology to recreate them doesn't exist so there are only the three. The keys have to be Rhon psions, descendants of the Ruby dynasty.

It was fun to read. It went quickly. You could probably read it without having read Primary Inversion, but I would suggest reading that one first to give you more of the back story.

Elar says

And finally good got better. In this book all the previous book characters make an appearance and adventurous fast pace thriller. There are quite shocking developments, but also new hope to end a long lasting feud.

Lois says

This remains my favorite book in this series. I just love the storyline and non stop action in this book

Josephine says

A new dawn begins, a well written and thought out book. But the saga continues in the series

Patricia Litz says

Continuation of the skolian ruling family.

Tsana Dolichva says

The Radiant Seas by Catherine Asaro is the second book I've read in the Skolian Empire saga (which actually has three empires in it with the two main ones having different names so it gets confusing but that's the term I'm going to stick with). The other book that I've read was Primary Inversion which, chronologically, immediately precedes The Radiant Seas. For this review to make sense, I'm going to have to include a spoiler for the end of Primary Inversion, but I'll put in a warning when I get to that.

Asaro's universe contains three interstellar empires:

- ~ The Skolians whose ruling family are powerful telepaths and who can communicate instantaneously through a telepathic web that three of the imperial family hold in place with their minds (and to do so they have to be the most powerful type of telepaths, a condition that involves recessive genes and can't be genetically engineered).
- ~ The Eubians who are ruled by the irredeemably evil (and genetically specific) class of Aristos. Evil because they literally gain transcendent pleasure from being in proximity to the suffering of telepaths. Their mission in life is generally to acquire as many telepathic slaves as they can, the more powerful the better (and, incidentally, they don't see anyone else as fully human, especially the telepaths but including ordinary humans).
- ~ And then there's the Earth and Allied Worlds who try to stay out of the never ending conflicts between the other two empires and don't entirely believe how horrible the Eubians are with their slavery and torture.

The main characters are mostly Skolian and the antagonists are all Eubian although they're not all as automatically evil as it might seem (but most are) and do have proper motivations for what they do, always an important trait in bad guys. The story in The Radiant Seas picks up exactly where Primary Inversion left off and spans many (17ish) years.

Before I get to the spoilers, a few words on the science because I can't review an SF book without commenting on that. Asaro's science, real and made up, is pretty good and (most importantly ;-p) didn't annoy me. It was a good mix between made up stuff (the telepathy) told from a scientific point of view and fairly hard semi-plausible science like the propulsion systems. Asaro actually has a PhD in ~~physical chemistry~~ theoretical atomic and molecular physics so much of the quantum and relativity stuff is plausible. She even published a paper about the theory behind her faster than light travel system. In short, nothing to complain about here.

And to be able to talk about the plot, I have to mention a spoiler for the end of Primary Inversion...

(view spoiler)

Overall, I would recommend this book to people who enjoy science fiction with epic world-spanning empires, lots of political intrigue and long range plots. I definitely suggest reading Primary Inversion before The Radiant Seas, however, since a lot of world building and, more importantly, plot set up, takes place in the earlier book.

4 / 5 stars

You can read more of my reviews on my blog.

Susie says

I very much enjoy this series. The author does a good job of merging space opera and hard science fiction. I'm not a big fan of hard science fiction, but I appreciate what she does to bring science into the equation. I read it for the characters. This is the book that follows Primary Inversion. Well written and engaging. The elements of torture between the Skolians and Aristos is disturbing, so be warned. This is a re-read for me and I was pleasantly surprised just how well put together this story is on the second, maybe even third pass.
