



Scales of Empire

Kylie Chan

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An exciting new adventure filled with diverse characters, strong heroes and heroines and wild creatures from the bestselling author of *White Tiger*.

Corporal Jian Choumaliis on the mission of a lifetime - security officer on one of Earth's huge generation ships, fleeing Earth's failing ecosystem to colonise a distant planet.

The ship encounters a technologically and culturally advanced alien empire, led by a royal family of dragons. The empire's dragon emissary offers her aid to the people of Earth, bringing greater health, longer life, and faster-than-light travel to nearby stars.

But what price will the people of Earth have to pay for the generous alien assistance?

In this first book in a brand new series, Kylie Chan brings together pacey, compelling storytelling and an all-too-possible imagined future in a tale packed with action, adventure, drama and suspense.

Scales of Empire Details

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Author : Kylie Chan

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From Reader Review Scales of Empire for online ebook

Roy says

This is my 1st Kylie Chan novel, probably won't be my last as the positives outweigh the negatives. However, I just didn't find it connecting on all levels for me. I loved the concept of space dragons, the fluid sexuality ideas/themes, the characters were well fleshed out. However I felt the plot moved at a snail's pace more often than it should have. Definitely more a character study than action heavy sci-fi. I think The Expanse series is one that comes to mind that combines the 2 well. Has a good ending, and has plenty of directions to explore.

Jeremy says

Completely out of this world but strangely grounded. Pansexual, pangendered alien dragons with a penchant for tea and potatoes, and hostile alien cats that are ... well they're assholes. Nothing like anything I've read before, but I thoroughly enjoyed it. Thank you to Kylie Chan and Harper Collins Australia for the advance reading copy.

Alan Baxter says

I was lucky enough to get a pre-release copy of Kylie's new book, Scales of Empire. So different to her other books, but unmistakably Kylie Chan. Despite strange dragons and self-obsessed cats, this is an entirely human story. Imaginative, epic, and heaps of fun, while still exploring thought-provoking and important themes. Keep an eye out for it!

Rachelle (RavenclawRachelle) says

4.5 Stars

I received this book for free from the publisher through Netgalley in exchange for a fair and honest review

I'll admit I was surprised by how much I loved Scales of Empire! I have been meaning to read Kylie Chan's three fantasy series for years and if she writes sci-fi this good, I don't even want to think about how obsessed I'm going to be with her other works...

I'm not sure how to put all my thoughts and feelings about this novel into words coherently but I'm going to try my best. First off, that plot guys! It's been such a long time since I have read such a thrilling beginning to a series. I felt the immediacy and inevitability of every development; like of course that's exactly what has to happen next, DUH! I was absolutely sucked into this book head first; it was so compulsively readable I found myself putting off other tasks to keep going.

Secondly, the characters were off the charts amazing! I've never been one to be easily manipulated with the 'are they good, bad or morally grey' character developments but I honestly have no idea what to think at this

point. There are so many nuances in each character and I love that they all believe they are doing the right thing and you can absolutely see why they are so strong in that conviction. This story would be incredibly different if even one character was added or removed.

Also if you are looking for a diverse sci-fi, this is the book for you! I can't talk about the accuracy for a lot of the representation; but just in the main character you have a bi-racial (asian/african I can't find the exact specifics at the moment) woman of colour who is openly bisexual and in a poly relationship with a M/F couple and separate relationship with another woman. There is such a range in this, I can't even begin to list it...

The world-building in 'Scales of Empire' is phenomenal, futuristic Earth its scary how quickly your brain accepts this future as the result of our current situation and the decisions that humanity is making. I also loved the nod to the humble potato as a galactic food stuff!

My only criticism is that I found certain elements jarring when they were initially introduced but I think that is due largely to my own fault in not reading the blurb and promotional material as thoroughly or as accurately as I should.

If you want a book to smile, laugh, cry and scream with, PICK THIS UP!

Brian Lawrence says

Seriously disappointed in this book. It read like a teen girl novel. The characters were flat and undeveloped and one dimensional. The theme and ideas behind it were great but the story itself was told in a childish, unimaginative way. I couldn't identify or feel sorry for any of them really. Richard is a self absorbed nitwit, Jian is rude and dismissive. Maxwell is the archetypal British soldier. Granted the humans fears are borne out in the end by the Dragons' duplicity, the way in which the plot unfolded was just so uninspiring. Won't be wasting my money on the next few books in this series.

Gemma says

Over promised and under delivered.

I saw this book at my local library, and the fantastic cover immediately caught my eye. On reading the blurb at the back I was further intrigued...until the last sentence "...- from the bestselling author of White Tiger".

Poop.

I did *not* enjoy White Tiger, so almost put this book back on the shelf. However...cool cover. Intriguing blurb. So I thought I would wipe the slate clean, and give Ms Chan another go, with no prejudice.

And I tried.

I was expecting a sci-fi novel mixed with fantasy. The tale of struggling to terraform a new planet, encountering an alien species, and then attempting to reconcile two (hopefully) vastly dissimilar cultures.

Instead, we get something that reads like a teen fangirl wish fulfil fantasy.

To start, this book read like it was aimed at a much younger audience (I.e. Young adult), despite not being categorised as such in any place that I could see. The characters all came across as very juvenile (including, and especially, the centuries old dragon).

The characters all felt flat, there was no depth or character development. The plot read like "this happened, and then this happened, and then this happened": it fell into the "tell us" rather than "show us" style of writing. Hardly designed to draw the reader in.

We are told the "bad guys" are the "bad guys", but there was not enough evidence as to why they are any worse than the good guys. The good guys have some "bad parts", but these bad parts are either overreacted to (again with little to no explanation, or even internal dialogue) as to what the ramifications of these "bad parts" are, or just "solved" with little more than "oops, ok we won't do it again".

Concepts, characters and locations are just thrown in seemingly for the sole purpose of an individual plot point, and then are seemingly forgotten, never to be touched on again.

There were a few glimmers of promise, but not enough to make up for what I felt to be an overall painful read.

Robyn says

Spoiler Free Section

I received this book for review from Netgalley and unfortunately I really did not enjoy it. I ended up giving it one out of five stars. For me the writing style was really simplistic and really just told you what was happening instead of showing you, throughout the whole book we really aren't given much description of anything that is going on or of the world in general which made it really lackluster for me.

We really aren't given enough background information about the time and place that this book is set in, we can see the differences as we go on, such as the water levels rising drastically, but we are not told how or why any it happened. It also becomes a bit hard to understand the different countries, and their respective governments and monarchs because we really are given no information. Having more context as to how this time period is different from our own or how certain events occurred would have really made the story more interesting and enjoyable for me as I feel the author just kind of glosses over aspects of the book as if they are common place and doesn't describe how things have come to be like this.

I really didn't enjoy how we are introduced to new characters, such as Edwin who we meet in the beginning, and who we learn about only through their dialogue which really doesn't tell you very much about them at all. This happens quite often throughout the book as characters are just thrown in with little to no explanation as to who they are and they are not given any backstory. I think that overall there were way too many characters added to this novel and most of them had absolutely no impact upon the story and all blur together. All of the characters also have very little amount of differences between them, they really all have the same personality and interact in the same way with others to the point where I forget who is speaking or who they are. The lack of individuality is really unrealistic and kind of makes the story boring as we see the same dialogues and actions over and over again.

Spoiler Section

I really didn't enjoy our main character Jian, to me she seems quite unlikable and I never felt any sort of interest in her or what was going on in her life. When the captain of the Nippon Maru spoke about potential seppuku she said 'charming', which I thought was quite insensitive to the situation that they were involved in. Also how she said that the women who left the Spirit of Britannia project were failures? She really doesn't seem to have much empathy for others which could be due to her military history but I really don't think that it should be a reason to not have any common human decency. She also seems quite blunt which kind of rubs me the wrong way, she at one point tells someone who is struggling with leaving their lives and families that they can 'always quit and go home' instead of giving any support to them and making them feel better through their shared experience. It also doesn't really make sense to me how she can make these remarks but also be kind to her friends in other ways and actually have people liking her.

I also particularly didn't enjoy how we were introduced to Commander Richard Alto who becomes one of our main characters, this is the character that we actually get the most background information about when we meet them but honestly it isn't done any better than the others that were just thrown in. We are told that he was a war hero who jumped on a bomb and saved the five-year-old king... and that's it?? we don't learn anything about who the king is and why he was king so young, why the bomb was put there or by who and all of this information I feel would be quite important and would actually give us some context about the world that we are in.

The characters also seem pretty flimsy in the way that they make decisions without much of a reason for it. The one that really stuck out to me was when Jain meets Commander Vince who hates her immediately because she did her reading for training remotely, he then tries to get her to fail her Wolf planet simulation by making it really hard to live there, but when they make it through he immediately trusts her and they become friends?? It is just really annoying to me how that is the extent of them forming any sort of relationship, people don't usually do that in real life you actually have to build up some form of friendship.

I also don't understand how when the aliens suddenly show up on Earth everyone is just fine with it and they actually say 'she sounds so cute'?! it's kind of crazy, like honestly shouldn't they be cautious and maybe even scared about this situation?! I think that would be a normal reaction. I feel like this happens a lot in this book, people always have unrealistic reactions to what is going on and that really bothers me.

This book had way too many plot points in my opinion and they were all kind of gone over in a very small amount of detail and very quickly. We see many things happen in this book between Shiumo coming to Earth, them starting a new colony on another planet, being attacked by the 'cats', breeding with the dragons, discovering that they are trying to basically assimilate the whole human race into dragon-human hybrids, Jian taking in two alien children to look after, discovering that the humans are then the only race who can fight against the 'cats' and then getting into the Galactic Empire??? I really feel like to make this book better they should have split up all of these points over multiple books and then actually expand on each of them instead of quickly running through everything. A lot of the things that go on in this book are very repetitive and honestly the 'relationship' between Richard and Shiumo is one of those, they constantly go back and forth between hate and love and it gets a little annoying about half way through and it is kind of the epitome of a toxic relationship that Richard keeps being sent back to against his will. There was also absolutely no suspense or build-up to anything in this whole book we were just spoon fed everything which just makes the book a little boring.

I really cannot see how this book is going to continue into a series as it has already done everything that I can think of. With all of the plot that has already happened and over how many years it has happened I really

don't know what they next books will be like but I also will never be finding out since I do not at all plan on reading the rest of the series.

Lindsay says

Humanity is making its tentative push to the stars with generation ships and the difficult first few interstellar colonies when first contact with an overwhelmingly advanced alien empire occurs.

Corporal Jian Choumalii is part of the Euroterre generation ship project when her and her commanding officer Richard Alto are the first to encounter Shiumo, a space dragon and first contact representative from her mother's Empire. Shiumo is extremely friendly and helpful with her stated goal being to find love, no matter with what species or gender, and to welcome humanity into the Dragon Empire. But is that necessarily a good thing and are the dragons as benevolent as they appear? More to the point, how can humanity deal with the problems facing them without their help?

This starts very promising and then takes a sudden turn into apparent wish-fulfillment Mary Sue territory, but to it's credit, doesn't stay there and explicitly questions the benefits of that wish-fulfillment. The central question around Shiumo and what she offers is a constant back and forth throughout the book, and particularly as the humans get exposure to other members of the Dragon Empire and alien races that set themselves apart from it.

From my point of view this is a uniquely Australian perspective on Empire. What's going on with the Dragons have a specific real world parallel in the context of our relationship with the USA, particularly in (view spoiler). And the far less benevolent alien cats have parallels in the Australian experience as well.

It's not without flaws, as a lot of the scenarios are a little too pat and the ending seems a bit too good to be true (more on this in the next volume to be sure), but the issues around societies standing on their own and allying on their own terms seem very relevant.

Annie says

WOW!!! I'm rating this 4.5 stars. This book is completely different to the series I have read before by this author. An epic intergalactic adventure set at a time when Earth is facing their downfall and soldiers are sent out to space to colonise other planets in order to save humanity. The first installment of a new series, I find this to be very promising, a series worth investing in. A story full of diverse characters, dragons and special talents that can either make or break humanity, this was a lot of fun to read and mildly paced so I was able to enjoy the world building and character profiling but was kept on the edge of my seat with action and plot twists. This really took me out of this world!!! Special thanks to author Kylie Chan and Harper Voyager Publishers for sending me an Advanced Review Copy in exchange for my honest review. I am really looking forward to reading the final copy now!!!

Cat Sheely says

This is a new series and is quite a departure from her previous books. Corporal Jian Choumali lives on an

Earth that has suffered greatly from climate change and is slowly dying. She volunteers for a mission to a new planet but just as it's nearly ready to leave, an alien turns up. This is a real game changer for Jian and the human race. Can humans survive?

This was not what I expected but I thoroughly enjoyed it. The world-building is clear although, sometimes the alien descriptions are a bit fuzzy - I suspect this is on purpose.

I am really looking forward to the next instalment!

Emily Taylor says

More of a 2.5 as this is practically a DNF.

I loved Kylie Chan's White Tiger series and still rank it as one of my most enjoyed series despite calling quits a few trilogies in. I also quite admire Kylie for what she has achieved and continue to follow everything she does on social media.

But this novel wasn't for me - and I'm not quite sure who it is for.

This novel reads like a teenage protagonist stole her friend's ID and snuck through marketing into the adult section. The writing holds little nuance creating a grating voice and a very thin, superficial world that Kylie attempts to show diversity of nationalities and sexual orientation within, but does so through very heavy-handed blows. Unlike the beautiful subtlety of Every Heart a Doorway & Red Sisters that SHOWS these diversities and colourful characters, Kylie forces it down your throat with a self-applauding sentiment.

Don't get me wrong, there are some interesting ideas explored in this novel about the fluid future of humanity and the alternative first contact situations. BUT it is lost amongst all the other political commentary and what I found a rather unlikeable protagonist, for the same reasons Tommy put me off in Who's Afraid.

Mary Sues just get to me - I'm sorry. I'm over the superficial flaws, the unauthentic sassiness, and unearned respect that these characters demand. If I'm going to spend hours inside someone else's head, I damn well need to be invested in them and all these characters need a good dose of humility.

So, I tried to give this novel my full attention, but I just couldn't justify it in the end.

Richard Harrison says

This was definitely a Kylie Chan novel, the characters sounded a lot like those in her long-running Chinese fantasy sequence and a lot of the situations seemed familiar. At the start, when humanity makes first contact with telepathic space dragons who promise to fix everything that's wrong with humanity and Earth, I was rolling my eyes a bit, especially when it all started to get a bit sexy. Things definitely went in unpredictable directions a few times. Without getting spoilery, I'm reminded of the axiom that no primitive culture generally survives contact with a more advanced one. Definitely interested in seeing where this series is going!

Rosemary Potter says

Quite an interesting read. Looking forward to book #2.

jagle says

What a fun, rollicking read! Absolutely unputdownable, absolutely implausible but such fun! Happy to read the next book in the series, but she really needs to write the character Richard out - he is such a wrong fit for the story, such a pouty, sulky, annoying character who - unbelievably! - lowers the tone of the book. Otherwise such a fun read.

Stephanie says

It just dragged on, and on. I have no idea when to pinpoint the exact place the train went off the track. Was it that the main character bounced between knowing that she's giving up classified information, and thinking that her feelings are real? Or was it when the potato-worshipping space cats showed up like a psychedelic Matt Damon in "The Martian"?

Humans need to breed with aliens to gain interstellar travel. Keep walking. The scale locator thing was pretty cool though.
