



Champion of Mars

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In the far future, Mars dies a second time. The *Final War* between man and the spirits is beginning.

In a last bid for peace, disgraced champion Yoechakanon Val Mora and his spirit lover Cybele are set free to find the long-missing Librarian of Mars, the only hope to save the remnants of mankind. In the near-future Dr Holland, a scientist running from a painful past, joins the Mars colonisation effort, cataloguing the remnants of Mars' biosphere before it is swept away by the terraformation programme.

When an artefact is discovered deep in the caverns of the red planet, the actions of Holland and his team lead to tragedy, with profound consequences that ripple throughout time, affecting Holland's present, the distant days of Yoechakanon, and the eras that bridge the aeons between.

Champion of Mars Details

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From Reader Review Champion of Mars for online ebook

Cap Raq says

Excellent story; distracting progression

I thoroughly enjoyed this novel of a Mars that is, was, and will be again. The stories of current and "historic" conflicts and intrigues; romance across the ages; and the evolution of AI interweaving through it all made me stop reading many times to give them life in my own imagination.

However my imagination wasn't the only reason it took me several months to finish this book. The author chopped the several stories into multiple chapters and then mixed up the chapters so the stories are not progressive. I'm just a simple "one book a month" guy. I found it very distracting and discouraging that I couldn't follow the progression of each story across the chapters nor identify if or how the different chapters of each story are related to the other story's chapters. Then the Goldenman, who gets introduced at the very end of the novel, claims he's the main character and that these others we have been following are only pawns in his schemes. WTF? But at that point I wasn't going to go back and re-read the entire book for clues about this guy.

I loved the different stories but for me they would have been much more enjoyable as 2-5 separate novellas.

Robert Keith Collingwood says

Half way through .still not sure where it's going

Mordicai says

I like this guy-- no pun intended-- & work with him, so bias up front. BUT. Let me say this. There are a few concepts in here that I wedged together with some ideas from His Dark Materials for use in my RPG campaign...& I can think of no higher praise.

Angus Mcfarlane says

Apparently this is supposed to be reminiscent of the Mars trilogy and the Martian, but that wasn't the connection I made - Dan Simmons Mars series was far closer than these others (but not too close). In particular, the allusions to Greek mythology, and the use of quantum multiple reality in association with Mars seemed to coincide.

I liked half of this one but was lost in the other. The near present made sense and was interesting to read, but the future I found a bit confusing and less enjoyable. Of course the link between the two contributed to the intrigue of each - the cause and effect providing the plot pull.

There is more driving this story than story, however. In amidst it all, there's some philosophy and physics being explored. But it was a long way round in getting to the point. The grand enemy in the story, and the lead to these bigger themes, was left too obscure I thought, leaving the conclusions with less zing that they might have otherwise had.

Gavin Gates says

The real stand out point of this is the skill Haley has shown in the narrative. The ideas set out to build the setting are nothing new as such, artificial intelligence, life on mars, anti hero characters etc, but all put together pretty much to perfection. The novel written as a split between the tale of Dr Holland and the time his part is set in, Yoechakanon and the time that his tale is also set in and how one effects the other., at first it is a little confusing as to which one is meant to be the future and which is supposed to be the 'present time' but this does not last long.

The characters themselves are very memorable but the use of Kaibeli (a spirit who is connected to Yoechakenon) to explain the workings of the spirit world in connection to life on Mars is both an indispensable tool and a piece of genius.

All in all, I am not expert on sci-fi novels as a genre but of the ones that I have read this is very easily among the best.

Laura says

Surprisingly good

Picked up this book several times and put it down. Starts rather disjointed, but makes up for this about 1/3 of the way through. Glad I stuck with it.

Beverly says

Fairly interesting concept of human and souls (Artificial Intelligence) evolution after the terraforming of Mars.

The plot was sometimes hard to follow. You go back to the beginning of one man's attachment to a particular female-identified android to the current time where the Emperor has summoned the Champion to find the Librarian, and you see the man and AI again through several incarnations. He always is human (his personality is archived in the Great Library for relife). She is usually AI although sometimes opts to come back as human. How that is possible is never explained, but the Great Library is where everyone is kept between lives. The Librarian has been missing for thousands of years, and the Emperor sends the Champion to find him in order to stop the next war with the evolved AI and the extermination of the human species. Although I found the plot interesting, I didn't find myself caring all that much about the characters. I did find I cared a little more about the android than the man. Curious.

Austin says

Oh man. This book had sooooo much more potential to be amazing, but unfortunately it fell pretty flat.

Haley has crafted such an interesting world, with different rules and tropes than the usual sci-fi novel of this type. But this book is flawed in execution. Syntax and spelling errors are everywhere, some sentences flow like molasses uphill, and its quite frankly a very confusing book. As a frequent reader of this genre I knew by about the first half of the book what was going on, and I had a good idea of where the plot and characters were going. But I think a casual reader of sci-fi would have a really hard time putting the pieces together, and that might cause them to put the book down, for good. The mystery more or less comes together in the last two or three chapters, and the ending is great, but it still left me wanting a more effective, fleshed out story and universe. I think this would make a great movie or anime, a la Cloud Atlas. Too bad it will probably never reach a mainstream audience like the Martian.

Jessica says

I like science fiction, and I like stories in interesting settings where you are figuring out how things work as you go along, and I'm used to doing that, but... I still found myself reading this and wishing they would just come out and explain WTF was going on. Like, okay, great, everyone knows what the Stone Men are, buuuuuut I sure don't. When it was finally explained towards the end, it made some things from earlier in the book make more sense, but I wish it had been explained earlier. Trying to figure out cryptic stuff while *also* bouncing between a bunch of plot threads just makes it that much harder, and made the book just that much less enjoyable to me.

That said- once I finally started figuring out what on Mars was going on, it was a good story.

Mia says

CHAMPION OF MARS is an ambitious and imaginative tale.

This tale ultimately spans centuries although there are two points in time from which the narrative is steered. One timeline is a point many centuries in the future, the other a mere century from when we are reading this story. From these two vantage points and the characters who drive the respective narratives of their era, we become versed on the long, tumultuous and seemingly circular history of Mars.

In the near future, Dr. Holland arrives at his new post in Mars, joining the pioneering effort to colonise the red planet. Escaping from personal tragedy, he intends to immerse himself in his work. As part of his work and despite his distrust of artificial intelligence constructs, Holland is forced to work with the android Cybele. There is much to learn about the landscape of Mars and its indigenous inhabitants. The planet has unknown and inherent dangers.

In the far future, we meet the titular Champion of Mars, Yoechoakenon and his spirit companion and symbiote of sorts, Kaibeli, an enduring restored consciousness linked with Yoechoakenon. The link is intimate and persistent, communication instant. Yoechoakenon and Kaibeli embark on the Herculean task of saving Mars from ultimate and final destruction by finding the Great Librarian, the prime and ultimate arbiter of all

conflicts.

The two timelines ultimately tell one story, separate but related, distinct but a mirror of one another. The discovery of how these two branches share roots is engrossing and gratifying. There are parts when the reading slows to a crawl but nowhere near enough to divert interest altogether.

Stylistically, Guy Haley has the enviable talent for expressing profound and complex ideas thoroughly but succinctly. Peruse this sentence, for instance, so ripe with meaning and nuance that would take others at least three sentences to convey.

"Intent on their small extinctions, they are ignorant of the greater death going on all around them."

It struck me from the beginning how a cloud of foreboding blankets the tale. You realize more and more how appropriate the portentous tone and mood are the deeper you get into the narrative. This book is a space opera with unique and interesting forays into the nature of relationships and conflicts. There is a purity in the presentation of various ideas and philosophies. It even dabbles in romanticism without wading into saccharinity.

Champion of Mars is sweeping in its breadth and scope yet conceivably plausible and entertainingly so.

Carol says

I kept putting this one down because I was confused by it. Now that I have finished it, I am still confused. It has something to do with time and multiple dimensions and AI but I still am unsure which and how much and how they interrelate. I don't know exactly what the author was trying to depict and where it was supposed to take me or how it ended. Maybe I missed something but I had hoped at the end it would all make sense and it didn't. Good luck to other readers

George Harris says

An ambitious and not entirely successful narrative. It is structured in three threads, separated by time, which is a difficult polyphony to pull off. The first and most accessible is set in the early 22nd century at a research station on Mons Olympus, studying Mars' moribund ecology. The second is set tens of thousands of years in the future, and involves spirits, warfare, Stone Kin (whatever they are), Quinarchy (whatever that is) and technologically aided reincarnation. The third goes skipping across the centuries between. Unfortunately it takes so long for the connections among the threads to become apparent that interest is quickly lost, and even so after four hundred pages it's necessary to introduce a character whose sole purpose is to explain the plot.

There are a lot of interesting ideas in the book, but the narrative structure impedes rather than facilitates their expression.

Peter Blomquist says

I did not care for this book at all. It combined a good science fiction story with a complicated fantasy tale,

juxtaposed as if it were a bad tennis match, back-and-forth and back-and-forth, from sci-fi to fantasy, back to sci-fi, ad nauseam. I gave it 2-stars instead of 1-star because the sci-if saved it.

Santos says

Just could not bring myself to get through this book. The constant shifting between the two different times slowed the book down and then the chapters that really had nothing today with the plot at all but give you a quick look at what life became on Mars just grinder the book to a dead stop. The shifting between times to bring the store to one important event is a good idea but it didn't work here. At least not for me anyways. I always try to make a point to finish a book considering one that I paid for.....but it's not going to be any time soon for this one.

Brent Hayward says

Parts of this were great and parts, well, faltered. The writing was good overall, like the other Haley book I read, flickering into cheesy territory though when higher meanings were addressed and topics like love and the meaning of life popped up. (I'm generally a pretty cynical guy-- maybe those with more hippy-like leanings will appreciate these philosophical nuggets more than I?) In Clarion (a 6-week workshop), one writer (Delany? maybe Tim Powers?) said: Write a story, polish it, and then throw the last page in the trash. Facile advice, but I get it- authors can try too hard to wrap up story lines, underscore meanings we think the reader might not have gotten (though they probably have): a last chance, as it were, to get the point across. Maybe the final chapter of this book soured me? I'd had a lot of fun up till then. Anyhow. Nice to read a smart, adult scifi book, with characters that actually seem to have a life. We follow an AI in and out of time, from the near-future terraforming of Mars to some crazy ethereal future, with a few other floating time periods scattered throughout. We also learn about life and eternal love. Three point five?
