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Lilyaka Hae Ransome answered to no man. Born to a powerful clan on the storm-wracked colony world of Unruli, she'd grown up willful, independent, strong. The only person who held her respect was the enigmatic man called Heredes, who tutored her in history and the martial arts.

So when alien bounty hunters kidnapped Heredes, she threw away her heritage and set out after him on an awesome odyssey through the unknown reaches of space.

A Passage of Stars Details

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From Reader Review A Passage of Stars for online ebook

Gerard says

Huh?

One moment she's a spoiled rich girl, and then she's involved in some convoluted save the galaxy plot with a bunch of revolutionaries, include one who falls madly in love with her (and she him) because ... because. Oh, and the ol' just laying around robot that she polishes turns out to be some mega supercomputer ... (is this like the genie's lamp).

Couldn't finish.

gwayle says

Kate Elliott and I clearly share a romantic fantasy in common: to be on the receiving end of a my-love-must-be-a-kind-of-blind-love. "I can't see anyone but you..." (And all the while me and Kate and Lily and Tess get to be attracted to multiple people and sometimes even act out on it without jeopardizing our desirability!) Because let's face it: the Hawk/Kyosti and Lily [Insert-Last-Name-du-Jour-Here] romance is what kept me reading through these three novels, not the silly space opera nonsense, which I won't even bother to summarize. I won't spoil the details of the romance, but I found it thought provoking, satisfying, and transfixing. (And no, this doesn't mean that I'd want events exactly replicated in my own life. This is what we call *fantasy*, folks. It's OK to like it.)

I do have some qualms with Lily, the Buffy-like main character. She is strong but stupidly willful, as compulsive as a moth to a flame when it comes to falling for traps, and her whims drive a flimsy, episodic plot. The only reason she gets out of these messes is because she has a lot of heart and makes a ton of friends along the way, and these friends always show up in the nick of time. A woman's true strength always turns out to be the extent to which she can inspire devotion and loyalty. (Though maybe this is ultimately true of both genders--think Harry Potter.) Lily refuses to process facts that stare her in face, which means she's always a thousand steps behind a perceptive reader. Wake up, buttercup!

Bottom line: Kate Elliott is masterful at a certain kind of romance. Her secondary characters are wonderful. But this isn't the finest example of her ability to plot and to world-build. I still want to read everything she's written, though.

Renay says

This was pretty fun! It's a deeply political book, from characterization to plot, with a robot pal! I would definitely slide this under the planetary romance subgenre, because 80% of the cool stuff happens planet-side (but that other 20% is super cool/important, and aptly, some of the most incisive political commentary happens there). It definitely earns the romance element, per the adventure definition, because it goes zero to 60 "young person leaves home and joins sprawling events beyond their ken".

(I mean, there's making out, too, and Lily's romance is important to her development, but it's only one part in a larger whole that seems like it will be important later.)

Full review: <http://ladybusiness.dreamwidth.org/20...>

Emma Deplores Goodreads Censorship says

Okay, so I am giving 3 stars, but the real story here is that this is a sci-fi novel--set in space and everything, not just historical fiction enabled by time travel--that I actually sort of liked. It's been years since I read such a book, and I would not have read this one had I not been familiar with the author's work (Alis Rasmussen is the real name of the fantasy writer better known as Kate Elliott) and known I could trust her storytelling ability. This is clearly an early work, but it's a mostly enjoyable story that keeps the focus on the characters rather than the tech.

Lily comes from a family of mine operators on the planet of Unruli, where people live in underground complexes to escape the storms and avalanches on the surface. She's a restless type and when her martial arts teacher is kidnapped, she sets out to rescue him. From that point it's a fairly standard adventure novel. Themes and elements I've come to expect from Elliott are present here as well: social justice issues and abuse of power; a revolution whose leader we're not sure we can trust; a world where women are visible and where most of the characters are people of color.

But while Elliott has been remarkably consistent in terms of themes and writing style, the plotting here was too chaotic to get me fully invested. We're forever meeting new characters who have a lot of potential but drop out of sight after a couple of chapters; everyone but Lily seems to know each other from their complicated, adventurous backstories that are alluded to only in passing; the story is full of competing factions with unclear goals, which remain unexplained even though Lily has plenty of time to ask. The characterization is passable, but too many important characters suffer from excess mysteriousness (the love interest is so weird I spent most of the book expecting him to be the losing prong of a love triangle, but I was wrong). The worldbuilding is handled in much the same way--we see what Lily sees, and have to piece it together as we go--but there it works much better, at least for those (like me) not looking for hard SF.

Overall, an entertaining story with some fun set pieces, probably worth your time if you like the idea of reading about a revolution in space. But there's just a little too much going on for a book of under 300 pages. I might read the sequel if I happen across a copy, but in the meanwhile I'd recommend Elliott's Spiritwalker trilogy, beginning with *Cold Magic*, for a similar story with a tighter focus and better-developed characters.

Rain says

Many years ago, I read the Jaran series and remember I loved it. I was looking forward to reading more of Kate Elliott's work, so started with the High road trilogy. unfortunately, I just could not get engaged with plot or characters. I realise it was one of her earliest works, so perhaps its not as well rounded as later works. Or maybe, its me - I was much younger when I read the Jaran series, and as I've aged I've become more demanding. I will try the Crown of Stars series next.

K. Lincoln says

Love, love, love Kate Elliot's (Alis Rasmussen) Spiritwalker series. So I'm coming at this series from the wrong direction as this was a precursor to the other series. Hoy, the parallels are quite obvious. Kick-ass young girl from a trading family that goes against the clan. Young, hot-headed but talented, clothes-obsessed, picked-on by society love interest. Other strong female characters both helpful and scary.

So in the sense that I loved Spiritwalker and wanted to read more, A Passage of Stars felt like coming back to an old friend. But in the sense that I think Kate Elliot's work got more sophisticated, less spare and bare in the action sequences, and richer in imagination and detail in the Spiritwalker series, this was like coming back to an old friend at a younger, rasher stage.

Sot still lots of fun, but not the excellent writing I've grown to admire.

Still, there's lots to have fun with. The story is set on a futuristic human otherworld colony and follows a young protege of a martial arts instructor who drops her rich, privileged-but-imprisoning life to follow after her mentor when he is kidnapped by mysterious aliens.

Along with her German-choral music spouting robot pal, she becomes involved in a revolution against the central government and a group of saboteurs who just might be from the original system humans came from.

There's a lot of cool revolutionary rhetoric, a "I can't control myself around you" insta-love from the love interest due to some weird genetics (if Twilight doesn't bother you, this won't, however the raging jealousy might push uncomfortable buttons for some) and lots and lots of secrets that Lily doesn't seem to hell-bent on discovering despite the fact that her mentor and her love interest are both lying to her.

Cool world and characters, but of course Spiritwalkers was even cooler. I'll still read the other two books in the trilogy, thought, just to find out how things pan out.

James says

I struggled to get into this. More than 100 pages and I hadn't connected with the character or the world.

Chiyo says

Honestly i Couldn't get into this book, maybe my mind couldn't focus but I had a real hard time trying to figure out what the heck was going on. I usually dont care for a lot of description about stuff especially if it several paragraphs of it but id have loved more in depth descriptions about the different races and maybe a little introduction to them would have been nice. I just couldn't picture them and if i cant then i basically lose interest in the world itself. Also i felt that the pace was just a little too fast for me one minute they are at on place the next another i couldn't keep track and i didnt understand the mode of travel i couldnt tell if she was on a ship or station half the time but that could be cause i just stopped focusing on it and was trying to figure

out what the hell everyone was talking about. It was just one bundle of messy confusion for me and no offense to anyone i just dont find metro sexuals attractive for myself im more alpha male kind of girl hehe. I did read in reviews that he gets possessive i wonder how he manages that. Unfortunately even though im intrigued about how their relationship unfolds i just cant find the will to struggle forth with this book. Im already reading a confusing series (elantra series) and thats one confusing series enough for me at least the world is amazingly expressed and races intriguing to get me by. Would i recommend this book? Guess it depends if you like fast paced books, with a series of weird language and speech and fly off your seat with no seatbelts or explanations kind of book.

Tony Hisgett says

I read some of this authors *Crown of Stars* books about twenty years ago and although I enjoyed the stories, I found reading the actual words was hard work and with so many other epic Fantasies available I just gave up and found something easier to read.

Having discovered that this author had also written a SciFi series I thought this might be an easier read. Unfortunately, I also found this a struggle; the author loves her adjectives and producing the most convoluted sentences possible. On top of this the story is full of 'slang' with a contorted syntax and clipped sentences.

As for the actual story, it starts quite well and I really liked the three main characters of Lily, Bach and Paisley, unfortunately it degenerates quite quickly. Lily is taken prisoner and has no idea what's going on, but then neither does the reader. I found this very tedious and in the end I just couldn't be bothered to make sense of the plot.

Zoophyte says

1.5 stars. I finished it, but was wondering why most of the time.

Ron says

Book Review: A Passage of Stars (Highroad Trilogy #1) by Kate Elliott

Two Stars

"Set patterns never work. You have to make it up as you go along."

This is another of those first-volume-is-merely-the-setup books. Sigh. It's a nice set up, but the reader is left hanging. Episodic.

"Waiting takes the most discipline."

Interesting characters, though several are so stereotypical as to seem like caricatures. Many decisions and branches of the plot seem forced, that is, the characters seem to be propelled by no logic other than

advancing the plot. The people in the story shouldn't act as if they know it's a story; they should think and act as if it's life.

"He ain't like the other 'bots. He be smart. Real smart, not fake smart."

Another story where the robot or android or alien is the most fascinating character. Assuming Bach turns out to be the key to the story, not just a MacGuffin, he is developed slowly and enigmatically. His "singing" bits of seventeenth century music adds to his peculiarity.

"I judge injustice, not humanity."

Lots of *de rigueur* Occupy Wall Street, baby Bolshevik philosophy and pompous rich entitlement bashing. Science fiction serves as a bully pulpit for many a preacher. Elliott is smart enough to keep the preaching at arm's length, but it's still tedious.

"Never be sorry for love. That is what sustains us."

"Regrets never lead forward."

Rhode says

One of my favorite trilogies of all time. Although it starts with plenty of activity it isn't until the second book that all the strands come together and you realize how great it really is. And then book 3 is a really fine wrap up. Every time I read these books, I so wish they would keep going and going.... Which is perhaps the highest praise you can give a story, that it feels complete and yet you can't bear for it to end.

Virginia says

Nonstop action and story. Things move apace so quickly. Of course, I still have no idea what is going on but I love it. Also, I did not expect the book to end where it did. I could have read on forever.

Sarahz says

The Good:

This is an interesting and unusual story so far, and I'm interested to see where it goes. I liked that the protagonist, Lily, is a martial arts expert, and that she's confident and comfortable in her sexuality.

SPOILERS FOR THE REST OF THE REVIEW

Also, this touches on one of my favorite bits from the Jaran series, albeit briefly so far - when Lily learns how old the Terrans really were, she wonders at the things they've been keeping from the people of the Reft. I really liked how the Jaran series explored the imbalances between the high tech and low tech civilizations, and whether withholding that technology in order to preserve cultures was right, given what lives it could save. It's very peripheral here, but I'm hoping they get into this more.

The Bad:

While Lily's sexuality is treated as a positive thing for the most part, when she starts her relationship with Hawk he makes demands he doesn't have a right to. Reasons for this are hinted at, but no one comes out and says anything, and for no real good reason, which is frustrating and undoes some of the positive aspects of that character trait. I think they'll focus more on this in the next book, so it might be addressed.

Also, we don't get a lot of time with Heredes, which means he's not terribly well developed as a character, so I don't totally buy his sacrifice at the end. We're not given enough reason to think he'd do something like that. Of course, there's no body, so maybe there're some surprise twists later.

Kelley Ceccato says

When I first read Jaran, I knew I wanted to read more books by Kate Elliott. Then later, when I read The Spiritwalker Trilogy, I became a full-fledged fan. This book has much of what I've come to expect from Elliott: intriguing situations, complex and vivid world-building with unusual and detailed cultures, and compelling ethical dilemmas. I did like it. Yet I couldn't help finding it just a bit wanting, compared with the other Elliott books I'd read.

First, one of the things I appreciated most about The Spiritwalker Trilogy was the strong bond of love and loyalty between heroine Cat Barahal and her cousin Bee, as well as the friendships Cat forges with other women during the course of her journey. A Passage of Stars features no such bond between its female characters, at least as far as I could tell. The story includes plenty of female background characters, both nice and nasty, but none of them really make any impact on the heroine, Lily. Her mother and sisters are summarily dismissed before the story even gets going. When we meet the Radani girl Paisley, we're led to believe she'll be important to both Lily and the plot, but alas, she disappears very quickly and doesn't turn up again. La Belle Dame is too much the enigmatic figure of power to be a friend. Wingtuck Honor Jones (love that name!), who might have been a female mentor for Lily, is pushed out of the picture after only one good scene. Finally, Jenny, whom I had reason to think might prove a solid friend and ally, turns out to be a first-class jerk. (In fact, most of the women Lily meets along the way are enemies/antagonists.) All of Lily's important relationships are with men, and there's a lengthy stretch, from the middle till towards the end, in which she interacts almost entirely with male characters -- Heredes, Kyosti, Robbie, Pinto, and the robot Bach, who, while he occasionally speaks in a female voice, is consistently identified as male. (Just why is that?) Regrettably, this turns out to be a Smurfette Principle book, in which, while we may be introduced to a number of women, only one is presented as worthy of our interest and sympathy.

This wouldn't be quite so bad a thing, if that one were just a little bit more impressive. But compared with the splendid Cat Barahal and the smart, capable Tess in Jaran, Lily comes across, for me, as a bit colorless and flat, a bit too much the hapless victim of fate, the ordinary woman surrounded by extraordinary men. Granted, she doesn't reach Bella Swan levels of crushing ordinariness; she does have a talent for martial arts, which she puts to good use more than once, and she also has a strong sense of loyalty which makes her

sympathetic. But for too much of the story, she struck me as reactive, content to do what the wiser, more experienced menfolk tell her to do rather than making plans of her own. I couldn't help wishing there were a little more to her.

Plus, the book includes one of those "human girl/Other guy" romance plots that I'm keen to avoid when I can. Color me disappointed.

Still, Elliott is a fine writer and I look forward to exploring more of her work.
