



Pilots Choice

Sharon Lee , Steve Miller

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Lee and Miller mix a compelling fictional society governed by a strict code of honor with romantic, funny, touchingly real characters and great storytelling in *Pilots Choice*. Its two tales are prequels to *Partners in Necessity*, the long-awaited reprinting of their first three novels, *Conflict of Honors*, *Agent of Change*, and *Carpe Diem*. You need not have read their other books before diving into this one. But be warned: you may read straight through until you've finished the sequel to *Partners*, *Plan B*. In *Local Custom*, Er Thom yos'Galen is at odds with his duty: to match with a proper Liaden bride, and provide clan Korval with an heir. His mother observes, You have consistently refused every contract-alliance the head of your line has brought to your attention for the past three years. Permit me to wonder why. Er Thom can't forget Terran scholar Anne Davis, though they agreed to part. Revisiting her one last time he finds Shan yos'Galen, his son. Shan needs Liaden training and Korval needs his skills. Anne loves Er Thom, and knows he risks his melant'i (honor, reputation) if he takes a Terran wife. But she won't be parted from her son. Er Thom and Anne are aided by

Pilots Choice Details

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D. says

This is the compendium of LOCAL CUSTOM and SCOUT'S PROGRESS, two prequel novels that take place in the Liaden universe.

Heather says

Fun SF adventure with some romance thrown in. If you like Lois McMaster Bujold you'll like these. I read most of the series in one month.

Rebekah says

Love the series

Barb in Maryland says

This one could also go on the comfort shelf. 3 vol omnibus containing Agent of Change, Conflict of Honors, Carpe Diem. Marvelous SF. Fans of Bujold's Miles book need to read these.

Monica says

More romance than science fiction and the romance was generic. I have not found the Liaden books worthwhile. Most of the female characters are either weak and in need of rescue or evil leaving the weak female protagonist in need of rescue. After reading 3 books in the series, I'm not spending another moment in this universe. There are too many other good books out there.

Julie Davis says

Probably the only Liaden book I didn't like. So much weeping from the man ... I know it is space opera and alien and all that jazz. But too much weeping. Otherwise, it's not a bad story.

Lyneidas says

Despite the typo in the name, it's one of my favorites by Lee and Miller. I like coming-of-age stories and stories about overcoming one's personal worst-case scenario, and this has both.

Crystal Carroll says

This omnibus edition includes two books: *Local Custom* and *Scout's Progress*. *Local Custom* follows the marriage of Er Thom yos'Galen and linguist Anne Davis. *Scout's Progress* introduces Aelliana and Daav yos'Phelium.

Prequels are always fun. In this case, *Pilot's Choice* takes a look at the parent's of the main characters from *Agent of Change* and *Carpe Diem*.

Local Custom is a good place to start as Anne Davis acts as our stand in explorer the alien world of the almost human Liad. They may speak a language based on the same root, but the tree has split off in interesting differences.

Scout's Progress plays with some of the darker aspects of Liaden society. The romanticism of clans aside, a society based on the negation of individual rights has its own issues.

While not quite as gripping as the main series, *Pilot's Choice* is a good place to dive deeper into the Liaden universe.

David says

All the Liaden books are wonderful. They explore the ways differing cultures divide and unite us while gently and thoughtfully (and often humorously) prodding us to consider what it means to be human.

The main characters in this novel serve as minor characters in later novels.

Terry says

Two more entertaining novels in the Liaden Universe.

Erfan says

Meet Daav Yos Phelium, pilot and high lord in high society of a high tech, formal world, where manners are everything - yet warm hearts and humour abound in this novel, *Scout's Progress*, the second of two novels in this book. And the unconventional, space-travelling cadre of pilots form the background of this story in juxtaposition with society's formality. Daav far prefers their company and once was among their number in happier days.

The key points about this book are: Romance. Warmth. Social tensions. Personal journeys and adventures.

I love this book and cannot do it or its characters justice. For those who like science fiction it has a nice

background of a world belonging in a galactic set of cultures. And mathematics that cover the navigation. And a few glimpses of the airborne and space-travelling world of the space shuttles and space ships. Do not be put off! The story is far, far more about the people who fly them and who venture much further afield than the planet - but this story is planet bound.

Primarily about pilots, families and social mores this book is high romance, with tension and charm. Daav is accomplished, emotional, a good actor in a society that demands it, warm-hearted toward his kin and his friends, ruthless toward political or social enemies, and not enamoured of his own society. He aches for a child of his own and contracts an appropriate marriage for that purpose.

Aelliana is a navigational mathematician, genius and revered among pilots. Her brother feels threatened by her suitability as next leader of their House, which is the position he himself holds, but against their grandmother's opinion. Her grandmother took up with a pilot, an arranged match, that engendered Aelliana herself, but still society considers House Yos Phelium an oddity to be humoured, feared and respected but not quite respectable being all pilots, and pilots in general as too unconventional.

From the first Aelliana becomes more involved with the piloting world against her brother's will and along the way meets wonderful characters, all of whom I warmed to. She also meets Daav, his marriage already arranged, taking an informal holiday from his political responsibilities by working some hours at a pilot's shipyard.

And so the story goes, with Aelliana dealing with her brother, meeting new people, crossing a social divide, and falling in love with an impoverished pilot - alongside the growing friendship of the two protagonists, unfold a sequence of tense situations and their uncertain resolutions.

I cannot praise this book enough if you like fine turns of phrase and do not dislike romance or science fiction that does not pretend to be literary, but instead achieves lovely writing, great appeal, a well realized world, societies, and universe, good plot construction, excellent tension and plot content, and huge, huge charm.

The quietest gems I ever came across to delight on the romance front, they are far superior as a series to any romances I ever read. Plus which, wonderful adventures. And they can be bought from the publishers direct, a small publisher, as well as from bookstores, but the earlier books are wonderful, the last Crystal Soldier duology would give a wrong impression and put you off.
