



The Admiral

James R. Gilbert

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Set amid a reclusive community of aging yachts in mid-Atlantic, The Admiral is a swashbuckling tale of people riding out the holocaust on land caused by a risen sea, the effects of climate change and social collapse. The changes are still happening and Aqual, the scarred, tenacious granddaughter of The Admiral, founder of Akkadia, believes her people are becoming too complacent, too comfortable with their lives despite the ominous signs around them. When she breaks all Akkadian law and custom and rescues the crew of a small sloop under attack by pirates, she sets in motion a chain of events that change forever her view of the world, and perhaps the course of human history. Accused of treason, she escapes her captivity to lead her tiny, outnumbered Akkadian navy in a furious sea-battle against a pirate armada. Her vindication ultimately comes, not from her extraordinary victory, but from the revelations of the sloop's rescued crew about new perils from ongoing climate change. And she learns The Admiral had long ago foreseen the role she would play in his vision to rebuild a saner, wiser civilization atop the ruins of the old world.

The Admiral Details

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Wendy says

"The Admiral" by James R. Gilbert is an intoxicating adventure that begins when Aqual and her crew while on a routine voyage to Noronha rescue a sloop under attack by pirates. With the intelligence she gathers from Newton, its skipper and Nissa, a trussed up pirate Aqual makes a decision that sets events in motion that has her breaking the laws of Akkadia and defying the chairman of the Council, her estranged father Mikhail. With a broader outlook of the world than most Akkadians, a deep love of her home and people as well as a sense of purpose Aqual journey's hundreds of miles seeking the gyre, the tsunami's dumping ground rich in resources. What she doesn't expect on her return is to be accused of treason and to be faced with the destructive force of a pirate armada that's determined to ruin all she holds dear.

James R. Gilbert sets the stage in the aftermath of a world ravaged by the effects of climate change; rising seas, war, disease and dwindling resources. In Akkadia, the creation of her grandfather, Mikhail and the Council adhere stringently to laws and regulations long ago set up for the protection of the people but which have stifled innovation and creativity. As fear has grown in the populace so has a hunger for isolationism which guards their false sense of security. In this environment Aqual, a young woman who craves new experiences and adventure searches for her role in building the Admiral's vision of a safe and prosperous civilization for all mankind.

This fast-paced and action-packed plot that strikes an all too familiar chord in its outlook on the impact of environmental issues visible today, is filled with twists and turns that keep you riveted from the first page to the last. Imaginatively descriptive the reader is taken on a voyage of discovery and into battle in boats where wind and currents generate their power. Into a story which resonates with fear, violence, betrayal, secrets and lies are woven strong elements of friendship, love, forgiveness and foresight as Aqual, Newton and their two cultures struggle to survive in a hostile world. I liked the author's use of the Admiral's video which brings a sense of reality to his dream and his future vision for Akkadia especially at a time when free thought and forward thinking is being suppressed by the short-sighted Council and the impractical viewpoint of a new spiritual order. My only small criticism is the small script, larger would make the novel accessible to a wider audience.

The characters are well-developed and realistic with all their flaws, faults and strengths. Aqual, the Offshore Guard Captain and Unity's skipper is a battle-hardened and scarred warrior who's tenacious, fearless, and charismatic. Yet underneath her strong veneer she often harbours self-doubt and insecurity. In a society that limits procreation, but promotes sexual freedom Aqual finds her affection conflicted, between Karl a stalwart and loyal crewmate and the highly intelligent, dashing scientist and leader of Movimiento. Not only is Newton smart, brave and strong, but sensitive and caring. His daughter Rosa is a scrappy, feisty and tough fighter like Pantera who's ferocious, down-to-earth and intuitive.

Into this mix of personalities add Aqual's self-assured, confident and loving brother Mako; the charming, unimaginative and stern Council leader Mikhail; and Ganga, a vicious, greedy pirate leader whose only redeeming quality is his affection for his son Nissa. All add to the spice, passion and drama of a well-written plot.

I thoroughly enjoyed "The Admiral" by James R. Gilbert which I won through Goodreads Giveaways, highly recommend it to those who love a great dystopian adventure, and am looking forward to the sequel.

Alison O'Leary says

While I'm not a huge fan of sci fi, I'm a sailor and huge fan of the ocean--that's what made me pick up this book, and I wasn't disappointed. If this is Gilbert's first attempt at fiction, I'll join those (like Dr. Sylvia Earle, who's quoted on his website) demanding a sequel! Filled with both scientific fact and action, it's a real page-turner. I enjoyed the protagonist, Aqual, and her multi-faceted personality: warrior, lover, adventurer, leader, daughter. She's forced to think on her feet, reacting to pirate attacks on her ship and her community, and to those within her community who doubt her motives. Woven into the plot are many reflections of our current society, including those who don't believe what they can't see, and can't imagine a world outside their own belief system. Truly a masterful work of climate fiction --yet very sobering at times, realizing how many of the events in the book could actually come to pass in the near future--I hope this is a book many will discover, then join in the clamor for a sequel.
