



Dwarves in Space

S.E. Zbasnik , Sabrina Zbasnik

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Thousands of years after the jewelry's destroyed, the sword reforged, the dragon ridden, and the indecipherable prophecy translated into a recipe for sugared biscuits, the dwarves turned to that final frontier: space. And along came the elves, orcs, gnomes, trolls, ogres, and those vermin-like upstarts, humans. Dwarves in Space is Tolkien merged with Hitchhiker's and Firefly in a horrific transporter accident.

The Elation-Cru is not the flashiest ship, nor the newest, or even has all of its bolts attached; but she can fly. Well, sort of wade through space, and that's when all the parts are working. She supports a sugar addicted dwarven pilot, an elven engineer, an orcish doctor, a silent djinn, and the lone human trying to hold the entire thing together with duct tape. Variel, the captain, has been hiding from a secret for the past five years and time's finally run out.

When she goes against her common sense and fights to save her on-board assassin/renter from a job gone sour, she finds herself before an ex-colleague that knew her in her previous life as the Knight of the realm. The entire ship is sent on a mad dash across the universe -- from a decaying space station, home to the wackiest species the galaxy has to offer, down to the Orc homeworld, which wouldn't be so bad if Variel hadn't spent most of her previous life fighting in the war against them. Chances of survival are nil and slipping fast.

Dwarves in Space Details

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From Reader Review Dwarves in Space for online ebook

Nick Nielsen says

Unfortunately I have lots of books to read that look better than this one. I gave it a chance, but couldn't bring myself to properly start it (stopped reading around chapter 4). The prose and dialog were confusing, especially to begin with - I couldn't tell who was talking, which character was which, who was an elf vs. dwarf, etc. It was more farcical than I was willing to put up with at the moment, with cat videos being the main source of currency in space; it was a farce, but unfortunately not funny to me.

Margaret says

First off I will say that I was gifted a copy of the book by the author to read and review.

The book was described to me as "Tolkien, Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy and Firefly merged in a transporter accident". I honestly couldn't come up with a better description myself.

This is about the third or fourth book by Sabrina Zbasnik I have read, and I have to say that her writing style improves with each book.

"Dwarves in Space" is brilliant. The characters are well rounded, interesting, and individualistic enough that it is easy to develop favourites. I am really hoping for more books using these characters as I really want to see more of the Elven assassin, Talesin.

The book follows the adventures of Captain Variel of the Elation-Cru and her merry band of misfits: elves, a dwarf, an orc, a djinn, and an accidental human passenger.

"Dwarves in Space" does have the feel of being the introductory novel for a series, but that does not detract from the enjoyment of it. The first sequence sets the tone for the back story, which is not fully explored... I expect that will be in later books. Then it's on to a rollercoaster ride of spills, thrills, chills and the occasional outbreak of lunacy.

Read. Enjoy.

Tomas Štefe says

I was provided with a complimentary copy of this book so I could give an honest review.

I love sci-fi and the fantasy genre. This book had both but the delivery was not successful , at least for me.

CHARACTERS

The characters were pretty bland, absolutely not character development.

The captain Vario is the main character of the story. She is a mysterious woman with a curious companion (the djinn Gene). She captains a ship named (*Const*)Elation-Cru(*ise*). In the past she was a Knight of the Crest, but she "*retired*" to become a smuggler (*not true*). Overall she is an overconfident person, but surprisingly the most boring character for me.

Then we've got the drarwen-elven pair. You would expect that the dwarf would be the mechanic and the elf the pilot, but this is not the case in the novel. Both characters are strong, speak what's on their minds and don't like be bossed around. But Orn cowards when his wife is in her furious mode. On an additional note I found out that the meaning of the name Ferra is: pleasant, lovely one, which Ferra, in this book, is not.

The last four characters are a human named Segundo, an elven pair consisting the assassin Taliesin and his sister Brena the bard and an orc medic named Monde. Segundo is a wimpy sack of dung, but at least we've got more backstory on him than from everyone else. I know almost nothing of Taliesin and even less from Brena. Regarding Monde he had an interesting life but still very weak character.

There is also an AI character named WEST, but it is very unrealistic machine. Why would someone put a AI so self-conscious that it renders it useless. Furthermore, what kind of software "grows old" and for that reason slows down?

STORY

The story was paced by a disabled snail. Till the 126 page nothing happened (*plot-wise* they did go to Samudra and blew it up, why didn't Taliesin question his superiors regarding the difficulty of the job?). But nevertheless and did not know the novels premise until almost halfway threw the story, which for me, is a big minus. Even after that, there was a brief "action sequence", followed with a slow paced chapter on an orcish colony, which felt a bit unnecessary, *at least from their escort forward*.

And when they got to the ship, they were already boarded, and Vario got shot, but she survived. No explanation given on how. The climax of the book seemed to be the before-last chapter, but again it was not delivered. Sovann for some reason just stood there not killing the captain, to observe her trying to self herself. I mean, how more could the villain look from one of the PG-13 films? Disappointing.

Also I should mention the absurd currency the books universe has. It is absurd. Very. Much.

OVERALL

I enjoyed the book and its story, but it wasn't anything game-breaking as I hoped. I do recommend it if you like a bit humorous sci-fi/fantasy genre. I did smile several times this reading and the story was well thought of, but unsuccessfully delivered.

On a side note: the author should've spent more time on the characters and their backstories. I really wanted to know more about Brena and Ferra-Orn.

Dixie Conley says

In another place and time, this would be a ripsnorter of a book. A farce, a play upon all space operas, and loaded with enough humor to make you have breathing difficulties before the end of chapter 1.

Alas, it wasn't. The author clearly intended there to be a great deal of humor. The fact that their currency is cat videos screams that this was meant to be a funny book. But as hard as it tries, it just isn't.

This is the story of all of your standard fantasy races in space. Elves, trolls, orcs, dwarves, etc., in space. Just the concept alone says 'crack'. But while there's bits that are clearly meant to be funny, the interaction between the races mostly just comes across as serious intercultural stuff.

One tramp ship with a multiracial crew trying to get their ship repaired and stay out of the hands of the authorities at the same time. The passengers? Two elven assassins, and a inspector they accidentally kidnapped on their way out of town.

So much of this sounds like a good story, but I was filled with overwhelming boredom throughout it. Many were the times while reading that I switched from the book to a game screen in an attempt to alleviate the boredom. It didn't help; it only prolonged the agony.

I received an electronic copy of this story in return for an honest review.

On Writing Lilaina says

Dwarves in Space by S.E. Zbasnik is the kind of book that can suit any mood you are in. It tells the tale of the spaceship Elation-Cru and its motley crew of misfits that cobble together friendship, and the ship itself. Captained by a human who loses the battle at keeping her past life a secret, they must put aside their differences and prejudices and work together to survive the hostile galaxy.

I have to say, Zbasnik created an amazing world. She used elements of science fiction, wild west and comedy to create something totally unique. This had the right balance of humor, action and romance that can suit any taste, and it certainly suited mine. The characters are well developed, revealing just enough of their backstories to make you understand them, without giving so much away that they lose their intrigue. The plot stays fresh, making just enough twists and turns to keep you guessing, but not so many that you lose your way. Very few books can keep me on the edge of my seat, but the ending of this one had me so close to the edge I fell out of my seat, rolled across the floor and straight out of the door.

The only problem I had with this book (sometimes a big one, sometimes small) was Zbasnik's habit of trying to pack too much detail into each sentence. Don't get me wrong, the world she created is amazing, as are the characters, and I can understand the desire to enrich the story with details, to paint the scene of each moment as vividly as possible so the reader clearly understands your vision, but sometimes less is more and I hope for her next book Zbasnik feels more comfortable in her writing.

Despite a bit of a confused and rocky start, I loved this book and can't recommend it more. In fact, the world and the characters are so amazing I would love to see this on the big screen, and if producers don't jump on this it's their loss.

Zee says

I expected more Dwarves, seeing how it was DWARVES in Space, but that one was really enough.

If Tolkien went in with Star Wars and Spaceballs, this would be the book. It took a while to set up, but in the end a lot of questions were answered, mostly silly. Dwarves, Orcs and Elves, oh my! Fun read.

ooooh. There's a sequel????

Elizabeth Ramsay says

Zbasnik has created a unique and intriguing cast of characters. Her novel is a brilliant satire of Sci-fi conventions and modern day cliches. She also uses foreshadowing to great advantage in her work. The reader is left begging for more. Though one might wish Zbasnik had revealed more insight into her characters in this first novel her choice to leave the reader hanging was not a bad one. Looking forward to seeing more from this author.

Robin says

If you're looking for something fun to read with plenty of diverse, flawed, interesting characters, then this might just be the book for you. While touching on many tried and true sci-fi tropes, there is enough fresh material in this book to keep you interested and entertained.

Lizzy Baldwin says

I'm not going to comment hugely on the blurb because I want to just go straight into pulling this apart and looking at all the great things this book manages to do. I don't normally like fantasy/science fiction books they're just not for me, but, I enjoyed reading this. The plot although a little heavy was interesting and dotted with exciting events, battles, relationship struggles and there are dwarves in space so – good. I thought the characters were built up well and given strong character straight – I personally found Ferra a really interesting and intriguing character and I liked watching them all develop and their relationships grow throughout the tale. They come across very human (if that makes any sense?) You can imagine them each distinctly.

I liked that this is a real mixture of genres; sci-fi, romance and humour and it's a brilliant mix as for a reader like me I found the balance made this easier to enjoy. Also in terms of the romance it's not your cupcake sweet romance but one that builds naturally and develops as the book continues – it feels like a grown-up romance rather than something manufactured for the science fiction genre which I have seen numerous times before (ie space junk) and that made me very happy. There is a lot of action too if you were wondering; it's punchy, written with guts and isn't too flouncy which worked. You can get too much emotion and back-thought but here it's just in your face attacks. It also works with the story line that's occurring it's not added for the sake of adding it so thumbs up.

There is a big wobble though and it's aggravating but the writing style is quite difficult to get used to and to a point understand. Some of the more complex passages I had to read through a number of times to understand what the author was trying to tell me and at times I just had to move on hoping I hadn't missed

something vitally important. It's just too boggy at times. I thought that the writing improved as I continued but there were a couple of times I thought of just giving in and calling it a DNF. I'm glad I didn't but if I was in a less determined mood I might have done which means others may.

Would I recommend this? For the humour the intriguing characters and the style of the story I would yes, but there are parts that are a little tricky to get through and if you make it through the first slightly painful chapters it does get a lot better as the author finds her feet. An interesting read and one that I enjoyed but I thought had more potential.

I received a copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review

Rick says

An interesting group of well wrought characters in a somewhat sketchy world oozing with potential

Could use one last edit to polish up a few rough spots but quite nice overall
(I hate word quotas)

Sage Knightly says

*I received the ebook version of this from a giveaway on Librarything in exchange for an honest review.
**This will also be posted on Booklikes and LibraryThing.

Rating: 3.5/5

'Dwarves in Space' is a scy-fi, fantasy type adventure that follows Captain Variel of the Elation-Cru and her group of oddballs: two assassin elves, a dwarf married to an engineer elf, an orc, a dijinn, and an accidental human passenger. Basically, Captain Variel is out in space running from authority and a bad past. This all comes back chasing after her as her and her crew make plenty of stops attempting to get a new, well-needed part for the Elation-Cru which they can't obtain as they always have to run off and escape the authority on their tail.

And while there is action and plenty of interesting situations, 'Dwarves in Space' does have the feel of being the introductory novel for a series, and for me, that made the beginning incredibly slow-paced and boring. To be honest, I would find myself getting easily distracted, and if there wasn't a distraction, I would make one. It took me quite a while to actually get into it, though when I did it was rather enjoyable.

I have to agree with others when they say the author clearly intended for there to be a great deal of humour, because their currency is cat videos, they trade chocolates for parts, and in a getaway Orn's pants catch on fire from the friction of his butt and the statue -I believe it was a statue. To me, that just screams that this was meant to be a funny book. And maybe it could have been, had the interactions between the races and most of the banter not come off as mostly just serious intercultural stuff. Having it be so serious, it was hard to see it in a light, humorous way.

But that aside, let's get to the characters. The characters are all interesting, and unique enough that it is easy to develop favourites (I may or may not have found my favourite to be the male Elven assassin, Talesin). They are all very different, with Gene being the dijinn made of smoke and the human being a major turn-on

for orcs, and Variel having been a Knight at one time. I really enjoyed the characters. Sometimes they were witty, or snarky, and sometimes Orn was just being a smartass all the time, but what they all had in common was their strength. Yeah, it was shown in many different ways, and some were obviously physically stronger than the rest, but all in all, their strength was something they all shared.

Now, onto the world building, it was different. The planets and buildings and the way each different planet or place works was all very intriguing. I enjoyed each place was so different from the next. I won't say much on it, but it was well created. From what we got to see, anyway.

So, that's all. I recommend this to anyone who enjoys action, scy-fy or fantasy novels, and who doesn't mind a slow beginning.

Adam Chmelka says

"Dwarves In Space" is an incredibly entertaining work of fiction. It's set in a sci-fi universe where the universe has been settled by the diverse races familiar to any fantasy reader. Elves, orcs, and of course dwarves all show up, as do dryads, genies, and a host of others as well. It gives the universe a diverse feel, without having to throw a bunch of brand-new alien races at the reader, and works surprisingly well. Zbasnik never overloads the reader with technobabble or info dumps, doling out background when it's necessary, without slowing down the plot.

The setup of the book is superficially similar to the late, lamented television show 'Firefly'. Like that show, "Dwarves In Space" follows a starship that's seen better days, crewed by a group of misfits trying to make their way through a frequently-uncooperative universe. Zbasnik's characters are all their own, however.

While some get more of the spotlight than others, they're all well-realized characters with distinct personalities. The interplay between them makes for some of the book's best moments.

"Dwarves In Space" isn't an out-and-out comedy, per se, but it doesn't take itself completely seriously, either. Zbasnik effortlessly shifts from intense action to tongue-in-cheek joking and back again, without detracting from either. I found plenty to laugh at, while still caring very much about what was going to happen to the characters. Ultimately, when I finished the book, my immediate reaction was to want more-- more of this delightful universe and its quirky inhabitants. Bottom line, I thoroughly enjoyed this book and highly recommend it.

Margaret says

I love how author Sabrina Zbasnik asked me to review her sci-fi cacophony Dwarves in Space. She was wit and jokes from the onset and Dwarves in Space follows her wonderful penchant for cracking a smile on my face. The settings were stock, yet creatively intertwined with bug farms and feminist Orc colonies, dilapidated space faring cruise ships and a dwarf who doesn't shut up. All in I enjoyed Dwarves in Space as a romping frolic into the fanfare of fantasy memes meets Firefly. It worked.

Aside from the misnomer title (there was only one dwarf in this space adventure, although his personality filled in for his missing brethren), I got caught in Zbasnik's sometimes poor grammar and word choices. Several times through my read I had to stop and go back to the beginning of a paragraph to catch a firm hold on Zbasnik's desired point. This issue isn't life threatening for the manuscript, but a clarion call need for a final edit before publication.

It's a minor problem in a story filled with well developed characters and a storyline introduction to Zbasnik's

version of fairy-tales in space. I want to read more from her and that's a serious checkmark in the right direction. I hope Zbasnik's prose evolves over her writing career, I hope the Captain and Sin get together and I hope Orn gets his constantly sought after last laughs. I thoroughly recommend reading Dwarves in Space. It's a fantastic mixture of serious plot and cracking jokes, the perfect sort of book to unwind with, without feeling the academic need to be 'challenged' by prose. There's no challenge in this story. Nothing but enjoyment awaits this pulp fiction showpiece and the readers who buy it.

Keep them coming, Sabrina!

Rick Hutchins says

"Dwarves In Space" is the first volume in a series and by the time you've finished with it, you'll be very glad that there's more to come. If there is any justice in the alternate universe of genre fandom, this will quickly rise to become one of the most beloved of franchises. The comparisons to Pratchett and Adams are obvious, but don't expect Pratchett or Adams. The satire and absurdist humor is there, as is the quirky prose, but this author has a style all her own. It may seem odd to say about a story involving elves, dwarves, djinn, et all, but the characters are all very human-- and a novel, or franchise, is made or broken on the characters. In chapter one, you will be amused; by the final chapter, you will want to sign on to the crew. Just be sure that your affairs are in order.

The story itself is equally strong, with all the effortless world building of Niven and shoulda-seen-that-coming plot twists of McDevitt. I'm tempted to say it's a roller coaster ride, but it's more like the Kooky Kastle (if your childhood was blessed with one of those). The climax is grueling-- by the time you get there, you'll be so invested that your fingernails will be digging into your palms, so you might want to pick up a pair of gloves.

In a couple of years, I expect the name "Dwarves In Space" to be rolling off the collective tongue of fandom as trippingly as does "Discworld" or "Hitchhiker's Guide" or "Star Trek" or "Brother Love's Traveling Salvation Show." Get in on the ground floor so you don't have to take the stairs.

Regina says

I wanted so much to like this book. The premise sounds right up my alley, though, to be fair, the promise "Tolkien merged with Hitchhiker's and Firefly [...]" is a bit of a tall order to begin with.

I am truly sorry to say that I DNFed (at least for now) somewhere in chapter 2. :(

While there were some funny moments, there wasn't enough of a storyline or character development (so far) to draw me in. (Since another reviewer points out that the story picks up later, I want to give this book another try - just not right now.)

From a technical standpoint, the story could have used a bit more editorial TLC: the POV was at times unclear and seemed to hop around between characters in the same paragraph, plus there were some typos and grammar mistakes most of which I'm sure another round of proofreading would have caught.

