



Freehold

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Colonel Stell and his band of mercenaries yearn for a place to call home. To them Freehold is like a bright diamond in the vast universe. But its desert conditions, economic instability, social disarray, and political turmoil render the planet perfect for takeover. Willing to fight anything that stands in their way, Colonel Stell and his small crew contend with all who seek to dominate their planet, even vast interstellar empires. Their success will not be determined by their size but by their resolution to create creating a home for themselves.

Freehold Details

Date : Published December 16th 2002 by eReads.com (first published 1987)

ISBN : 9780759202061

Author : William C. Dietz

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Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction

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From Reader Review Freehold for online ebook

_ says

I read everything electronically now-a-days, and the one thing I miss about paper books is the ability to throw them across the room as frequently as needed in order to finish reading them. This book was a frustrating read for several reasons, and it would have helped me read it faster if I could have pitched it a few times. Instead I had to sigh, hit the off button and walk away only to have to screw up my willpower to turn it on again later. If the book were on the floor, it would have been easier because I would find it impossible not to pick it up and do something with it.

Although the book is pretty fast paced and has some interesting action going on, it still has too many drawbacks for me to call it good. The plot of this novel is fine, but predictable. The stakes get raised constantly, but by the time they are easily overcome by the flawless leadership of General 'Mary Sue' Stell the first four or five times, it becomes obvious to the reader that they need not worry about an important character death. The bad guys are really dumb. It is inconceivable that the ultra-powerful unbeatable evil organization even uses them for their nefariousness. The writing style is stilted, and there were part of some action scenes that just got resolved suddenly. It was like the author decided he didn't really care about writing that part, so he capped it off and moved on to something else. ADHD Mil-SF is not a genre that appeals to me.

Even so, this was not the big problem I had with the book. The main problem I had was the sudden perspective shifts. In the middle of the battle scenes you are seeing things from the perspective of the good guy, then suddenly the next paragraph is describing something the bad guy is doing. There are no transitions. There aren't even space gaps in the text. I thought I had a bad electronic copy of the book at first. I spent an hour double checking my download and various versions (MOBI, EPUB & PDF) just to make sure I wasn't being too harsh. I'm not. It's the same in all the versions that I have. (I purchased this one from a Humble Bundle Sci-Fi Bundle. Maybe Amazon's version is better?).

So, although the premise and plot could have been great, the writing style, random perspective shifting and formatting threw me out so often I felt like I was on one of those old-school merry-go-rounds with all the big kids doing the spinning! Unless you can hang on tight, I cannot recommend this ride to you. I give it 2 stars (barely... for the plot) and call it a Dizzying Read.

[Edit]: After reading Hammer's Slammers by David Drake, I now know the overarching concept of this book (a home planet for retired mercs) is basically a ripoff of an idea. Downgrading to 1 star.

Janos Honkonen says

I'm not sure if it's the age showing on this one or what, but I just ended up putting the book aside. Very formulaic military sci-fi with clumsy "telling what the characters understood" exposition that just doesn't sit well with my taste. ("Bob saw a dog. Bob understood that since he saw the dog, the front door was open.") etc.

galicae says

It was ok but not up to par with other science fiction I've read. Most characters felt flat, dialogue was forced and unimaginative and it was very easy to predict what would happen next. I enjoyed his Heaven's Devils way more. Nothing really impressed me about this book, it felt run-of-the-mill and not special at all.

Charles van Buren says

Another solid effort from Dietz

By Charles van Buren on July 29, 2018

Format: Kindle Edition

William Dietz is one of the more reliably entertaining sci-fi authors writing today. This one has his usual trademarks - adventure, intrigue, combat and interesting characters.

On just a slight downside, the commanding general of Freehold engages in a number of activities in which generals generally shouldn't. That's one of the dangers of making your main character the commander-in-chief in a novel that is as much adventure as military sci-fi.

Apropos of nothing: the cover of the Kindle edition is, in my opinion, the worst I have ever seen on a Dietz book.

Jeremy Stoffel says

I acquired this book as part of a Sci-Fi eBook bundle and so since I was bored I went ahead and read it.

The characters were likable and they really carry the book. Their search for a home and their fight to protect their home once they have found it makes them more human and makes them easier to like.

The villains have understandable motives and rarely delve into evil for evil's sake. I personally think they could be fleshed out a bit but their motives are clear which help prevent them from being too one-dimensional.

Overall I found it to be an enjoyable, quick read and I am certainly enticed to give some of William Dietz's other books a read.

Dorian D-W says

Enjoyable military space opera.

Nothing about the book particularly stood out for me, I didnt feel a connection to any of the characters, nor

caught up in the action. It's not got imaginative world building (they're very planet-of-hats/plot driven), intriguing philosophies or anything else that could put it up there with other good sci-fi. I did like the few pages description of the Il Ronnian government and their cultural misunderstandings of Earth's empire, but that's about all that stood out.

Still, it was a pleasant read, and ultimately that's what books are about, right?

Enoch Root says

A fast-paced military adventure novel that reminded me at times about Starship Troopers. Dietz manages to avoid "gung-ho" feelings or too much pathos most of the time. The result is a very enjoyable gripping story about a brigade-turned-mercenary-band. Despite the age of the book, the described technology does not feel dated. Nice & quick read.

Seth says

Meh. Pretty formulaic sci-fi military novel.

Andrew B says

Bought it in a bundle. Entertaining enough, but found the character's motivations/emotions and inner dialogues to be too juvenile.

elizabeth tobey says

So, this book had a really solid plot and universe. I was really interested in the world. Unfortunately, the writer seems incapable of getting us to make an emotional connect. Scenes that were supposed to establish emotional bonds felt forced and rushed and intellectually, I knew WHY the scene was there but I couldn't care at all. Likewise, tense action scenes where people were in danger or died did not feel at all impactful - people would be ripped apart and I would think "oh, I bet the author wants me to feel nervous and/or upset right now."

The book itself was also predictable and each climax kind of felt ... lacking.

But I really liked the world and if someone rewrote this with a bit more emotional punch, it would be really good!

Droewyn says

Gave it forty pages but just couldn't get into it at all.

B L says

I know, I'm giving a very much-loved book 2 stars. It pains me to do it, too, because while the world and characters are interesting and compelling, they almost fail to pull me through passages I felt were just poorly written. Sometimes, the plots presented solutions which were practically transparent to a prepared reader but required the characters to go into some deliberation before coming to the same conclusions. At other times, what seems to be a distracting contrivance (a throwaway character with the appropriate skill set to do something shows up at just the right time and never makes themselves known again) could have been corrected by a simple edit. Were the writing more focused on the emotional state of a broader set of characters, it may have earned a better rating from me.

Matthew Harmon says

Didn't finish, probably not going to. Just didn't connect with it at all.

bkwurm says

Not one of the author's better works. Too many plot holes and the sudden attraction and romance involving the protagonist is way too contrived and unbelievable. The motivation of the 2 main antagonists makes no sense at all and for a mercenary band, they seem far too prepared to sacrifice well trained troops in suicidal actions.

And given that they apparently had robotic soldiers in the ranks at the start of the story, the sudden disappearance of these autonomous weapons as if they never existed is just puzzling.

As mindless entertainment, it was just acceptable.

Andrew Ziegler says

If this were a bit longer and the brigade more fleshed out this could have been one of Dan Abnett's Gaunts Ghost novels. My only complaint is its length. I would have been ok with twice the size and more characterization. Great early Dietz, paving the way for his wonderful Legion books.
