



Halfway Human

Carolyn Ives Gilman

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Tedla is young, beautiful and blond but is neither he nor she. On a far-off world, an asexual class of blands exists to serve their fellow humans, protected and isolated from contact with the rest of the universe. But no bland has ever left its sheltered homeworld--until now. Tedla has been found in an alley light-years away from its planet. And it has just tried to commit suicide. Val, an expert in alien cultures, helps Tedla recuperate and in doing so, uncovers the secret tortured world of the blands.

Halfway Human Details

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From Reader Review *Halfway Human* for online ebook

Christy says

This book is so good. It's an engrossing book with a plot that just races along. It has political intrigue, personal drama, and a really fascinating alien culture that is explored in depth from a sort of behind-the-scenes perspective. It manages to be intellectually intriguing and emotionally engaging all the while raising tough ethical and sociopolitical questions about gender, freedom, and what it means to be human.

Bark says

I am so glad I took time to sit down and start reading this book before giving it away unread as I've been doing with much of my tbr pile. It's been a very long time since I've read a book that was so engrossing.

The story revolves around a "bland" named Tedla and confronts issues of gender, slavery, love and despair. On Tedla's isolated planet there are males, females and blands -- the asexual class who live behind gray doors and spend their lives in servitude to the humans.

As a child, like all children on its planet, Tedla was raised to believe that it would one day be either male or female. After all, blands are dumb and Tedla is bright and beautiful but things don't work out well for Tedla and its beauty makes it more of a target as it matures and learns exactly how best to "serve" its cruel humans. Defenseless, heartbroken and torn between two worlds after being taken in by a kind human, Tedla's story is one I won't soon forget.

Alexa says

This is excellent entertainment, thought provoking and fascinating!!! On one level this is a fascinating tale of alien contact, well-told and exciting, with well-developed characters. Yet on another level it's an intriguing look at how people can be socialized into their roles, those of gender and those of class, and raises intriguing questions about our own socialization.

Lois says

Halfway Human deals with a distant and very different future. In the novel tells the story of Tedla and its home planet of Gammadis-a human descended planet featuring three genders-male, female and neuter-called bland.

*****spoilers*****

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human as blands are considered little better than trained animals and not really considered more intelligent. Tedla never questions its place in Gammadian society nor feels itself mistreated until it comes into contact with a representative from the newly united old earth. Old Earth finds and contacts Gammada and sends a team of researchers to study Gammadian society and its drift from old earth society. Tedla is assigned as "personal" to a researcher who is part of the first contact team from old earth allowed onto Gammada. He is appalled at the treatment and classification of blands and attempts to teach Tedla some pride and at the same time study the role of a bland in Gammadian society. What follows is Tedla's character's growth from a bland into a human. With all of the guilt that goes along with stepping so completely out of the place society has made for you, whatever society that may be and whatever role you may play in it, to a place where you alone are the first to live this change. No one else like Tedla exists and to even exist as it is Tedla must leave home, Gammadis. Yet once away from Gammadis, Tedla gains a university education and has many interesting insights into human culture both Gammadian and old-earth. How much sexuality affects our everyday life, aspects of human culture that is rarely even examined. Its horror at constantly being related to as either male or female. People do not know how to treat or handle a neutered gender, even the word "it" carries derogatory connotations in reference to a person. Choosing, upon leaving Gammadis, not to have a sexual gender but to continue to be neuter. Its startling observation that blands exist in every society, that "blands" are in fact the fodder that allows the wheels of society to turn. Tedla comes to not be angry at what was done to it. To, in fact, see that it began with the best of intentions, as a way to control population.

The real weak point of the novel is the fact that the 'blands' don't have more resistance. The idea for blands as well as the treatment (not human) is similar to US style chattel slavery. However enslaved persons were constantly resisting in big ways and small. They could only be held down with unspeakable acts of violence perpetrated regularly. Even with the brutality running and revolting consistently happened. With children not labeled as 'blands' until puberty this would be even harder to maintain realistically in a society.

My other concern is the perhaps transphobia implied in the handling of gender. I'm not transgender so that's not for me to label but this feels like a 90's view of gender.

The Gammadian solution to eco-friendly living fascinates me. I can see how it could have begun as a few simple steps to change so humans can live in harmony with their environment. I can even see how neuters were created, as a way to selectively control who procreates. At first I am sure blands were simply members of the population that were learning disabled and/or truly not fit for much more than manual labor and even that heavily supervised. Yet, as with many things that start out with the best of intentions, it went wrong from there. As the society grew and became more complex, there became a need for more and more blands. After all who was going to do the laundry and cook the meals and clean the rooms while the others were involved in the important business of running the world. Then, it became a reward for achievement or a status symbol to have a "personal" bland to see to all of your needs. Well, who wants an unattractive learning disabled neuter as their personal maid, butler and assistant? So, of course, more children were needed to become blands, whether they fit the original "bland" ideal or not. How can this problem be addressed, ever, when it is a societal standard to ignore the existence of blands all together? How often do societies ignore and not speak about or even develop taboos problems or solutions to problems that are not affecting the important or normal members of society? Yet, if Gammadians admit that this practice has gotten out of control, that blands are being mistreated, are in fact becoming slaves-what does that say about their advanced society? Gammadis is a near Utopia allowed to exist by the sacrifice of blands, eerily relevant to how we live as a "civilized" society today. How many on this planet go to bed every single night hungry and malnourished-how much food do I throw away a week? How many people on this planet are dehydrated or unable to grow crops or even maintain basic hygiene and how much water do I waste everyday while I brush my teeth and take 2 showers/baths a day? I have never read a book like this before. One of the main reasons I enjoy sci fi so much, good sci fi, is that it allows the reader to safely look at the failings of our present and past society-morals, values and equality. Sci fi allows us the opportunity to see from a view not clouded by gender, sexual preference, racial ethnicity, religious trappings or often even humanity, not triggering the reader's own identification and therefore biased view of a group or class of people. With a fresh eye we are

able to see and compare horrors from this fictional world and race of beings to our very real world and human beings. What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to have an equal or equitable society? Is it possible to be truly advanced, civilized, enlightened and treat everyone fairly-will we ever have such a society? The world of the Gammadians almost reminds me of the idealistic world of Star Trek where people are honest and work to better themselves-not for personal gain. It also brings to mind where were the unseen "blands" of Gene Roddenberry's Star Trek world? For the one thing Halfway Human taught me without a doubt is that the station that blands fill exist in all societies, even or should I say most especially ours.

Ralph McEwen says

You really got to know and care about the characters and places. Some of the insights revealed in the book can be mirrors looking back at us.

Rich says

Halfway Human is pretty darn good. It's set in a rather well worked out variation of a common idea: sometime long in the past (story past, our future), Earth humans have colonized and terraformed many alien planets. After a period in which the planets fell out of contact, a subset of them have rediscovered each other, and have apparently formed a very loose confederation, including Capella Two, the planet (or actually a moon) on which the nominal viewpoint character, Valerie Endrada, lives. Travel is by matter transmitters, and is (logically) light speed. (The fairly rigorous insistence on light speed travel and the corresponding simultaneity problems is a good decision, and is used well in the story.) The tech behind all this is very much backgrounded (quite appropriately). At the time of the action, none of the unmanned probes which are trying to rediscover the colony planets have reported back in some time, except for the one at Gammadis (Gamma Disciplins), which is 51 ly away from Capella Two, and which harbors an odd variety of humans. The original mission to Gammadis ended 63 years previously in disgrace, with the ambassadors thrown off the planet (and arriving back on Cappella 12 years prior to the main action).

That's the setup, but what about the good part, the reason to read this novel? Well, the strange thing about Gammadis humans is that they are born neuter. At puberty, about 1/3 (very roughly, and the ambiguity about the actual numbers is a point of the novel) stay neuter, and the others turn half into males and half into females. There is no way to tell whether a given child will be male, female, or neuter. The kicker is that the neuters, also called blands, are condemned to life in "grayspace", literally underneath and "behind" the "human" world, and they live lives of slavery, performing the menial tasks of their society, leaving the "humans" free for the more intellectual and artistic pursuits. This is regarded on Gammadis as natural: neuters are supposed to be stupider, and less energetic, and literally to have no souls. The whole setup is monstrous, and at the same time quite clearly analogous in many ways to slavery in the US, and in many other cultures. In fact, though the novel seems to be promoted as a novel about gender roles, it really isn't. Certainly Gilman makes some such points, and it's not without value for its exploration of gender, but the central issue is definitely slavery and not gender. And it seems to me that many opportunities for a more probing (no pun intended, God help me) exploration of gender issues are missed: but I should emphasize that that's not a weakness, just a different focus than one might have expected.

The book works because of the believable but horrifying society revealed on Gammadis, with its uncomfortable parallels with our history and even to an extent our present. There are many disturbing scenes,

and many moving scenes. The portrayal of the bland society, and the secret behind the Gammadian characteristics, is very well done, and at times has a "Ones who Walk Away From Omelas" sort of message to it: they have created a near-Utopia, at one level, and they try so hard to ignore the "screaming child in the back room": except it's not one child but 1/3 of their population. Much of the characteristics of the Gammadian society are very nicely shown, instead of told, and some important details are very subtly planted in the background. Details which seem trivial take on powerful new meaning later in the novel, after we understand the society better.

I had a few reservations with this book plotwise, but all in all it's a first-rate read, and very provocative. In many ways, this is a pure SF novel, in that its value derives mostly from the ideas it explores, rather than a particularly exciting plot (though the story moves nicely), or any outstanding "literary" values (though it's certainly well-written, and decently characterized.)

Marie Segares says

I got this book as a free Kindle download. I was intrigued by the reviews and description of the book as a kind of feminist sci fi. The writing is a bit uneven, but the story is compelling. The plot centers around Tedla, a non-gendered "bland" from an alien world who meets Val, a Capellan xenologist. The Capellan society thrives on information, its major currency, and Val is eager to learn more about Tedla and its society (and eventually capitalize on that information).

The book alternates between Tedla's first person narratives of its life on its home world and a third person narrative of Val and her reactions to Tedla. Tedla's society has a radically different approach to gender from Val's Capellan (which is quite similar to a modern Western view of gender). All of the major characters are either trained in the study of alien societies or are social reformers, so there is a lot of discussion between characters about gender and class issues.

The author does a good job of creating internally consistent worlds and you can easily be drawn into the story. As I mentioned, at times the writing is uneven and occasionally clumsy, but not enough to disrupt your reading pleasure. The social and philosophical issues around gender roles, class and caste systems, sexuality, freedom and responsibility, and the ethics of intercultural contact are dealt with intelligently.

I would recommend this book for sci fi fans interested in a thought provoking and relatively quick read.

Lede says

Fairly simple world building; two planets that are offshoots from Earth, they reconnect and a culture shock ensues due to the way each has adapted and developed biologically and socially to their new worlds(more social, so much easier to write about).

The novel deals with slavery. Gilman looks at it through the lens of a planet that has adapted into 3 different sexes m,f and asexual. The asexuals are called blands and are used as slaves for the humans, they are also sexually abused. She contrasts this with a more Earth like planet with the two(mf) sexes. Gilman is an emotional writer and relies on emotional hooks to pull you in as a reader, I don't mind indulging my emotions...to an extent.

I found myself engaged in this book from the first page, unfortunately, the story ran out of steam half way thru. Gilman threw very horrific scenes at me and then pulled everything back. It then became very "mum(Val) saves the day and Telda from evil aliens".

Changed my appreciation of what I initially thought was an amazing book.

Holly says

I think this one is somewhere between a 3 and a 4.

It is basically a book of two stories - one story is of Tedla, an asexual being from another planet, and how it became the person it is, with its history, maltreatment and societal misconceptions. The second story is that of Val, a capellan who lives in a similar society to us except that information is the currency of life, people tell others nothing for free.

I found the capellan parts fairly boring, the writing in those parts seemed quite clumsy and the story wasn't really deep enough to keep my interest. The Gammadian (tedla's world) story I found very compelling, it was very interesting to see a world created with such a difference from our own, not only was there a 3rd sex but they all lived underground with complex social structure. Parts of Tedla's story were horrific, in particular there is a very disturbing and detailed rape scene, which will probably stay with me for life unfortunately. Despite that it is a very interesting look at how different society could be and the rights and moral treatments of an underclass of people.

I would have rated this at 4 stars if the ending hadn't just petered out. There wasn't really much reward for wading through the entire novel, but having said that I did enjoy it for the most part.

Parallel Worlds says

Intended Audience: Adult

Sexual content: Explicit

Ace/Genderqueer characters: yes

Rating: R for heavy sexual violence, suicidal characters and disturbing imagery

Writing style: 5/5

Likable characters: 4/5

Plot/Concepts: 4/5

Valerie has never met a Gammadian bland before, but when Tedla is found half-dead in an alley, Val is called in to make sense of this sexless being. Tedla's life has not been easy, not least of all because blands are treated as a nonhuman slave class by the males and females of Gammadis.

I had misgivings about this book when I first heard the synopsis. Would this be another story in which a sexless asexual "non-human" would become human through discovering sexuality and gender? Given that so many becoming-human stories have such a discovery or relationship as an important milestone, I was worried this would be the same, and thus invalidate Tedla's identity. I also balked at the name "bland", since this seemed like just another instance of thinking that nonsexual means boring. And yes, this is another story in which the sexless characters are referred to as "it". This serves the double purpose of not sexing the blands but also illustrating their nonhuman status in the eyes of the other Gammadians.

But this book is not just about sexuality or gender. There are so many social themes, from exploring information-based economies to eugenics to suicide and environmental responsibility. The Gammadian culture seems in some ways very backward, living as they are in a post-environmental-collapse sort of state, trying to balance their population carefully, deeply ingrained with the fear of waste. There is a lot of fear in this society, invisible at first as it often is in societies which depend on the support of a huge slave class. Despite the complexity of all these themes, I never felt wholly lost, and everything fit together so nicely and made so much sense. In fact, sometimes it fit together almost too nicely so that events became a sort of conspiracy in the end. That's my only complaint with the plot structure of this book. That, and I often have difficulty swallowing the extremity of violence which is culturally accepted in these dystopian worlds as a reinforcement of power. Not to say that I don't believe such atrocities have happened in our own world (I know they have, and that they've been hushed up), but to have them openly displayed is another matter entirely; I can't wrap my head around such universal brutality.

Tedla is a wonderful character. It (and I say "it" because that is what Tedla prefers to be called, and what all blands are called) has a complexity of emotion and motivation that borders on the contradictory, but is still consistent within itself. I loved how when we meet it and ever after, its emotional state greatly informs its thoughts and decisions, and we see mirrored in Tedla our own state of constant change contrasted with the deep internal truth of who we are. The other characters the book actually spends time on are also well drawn and believable, each locked in their own cultural sphere, so that conversations actually contain a great deal of subtle and not-so-subtle conflict as each speaks from their own culture and tries to make sense of the other. There were even many instances of unspoken dialogue shouting from the page in the little pauses between each character's words! We get to know each character so well that we can tell what they are not saying even without the author explaining this to us.

Tedla in particular stands up for Gammadian and bland culture at several points, calling Val out on her assumptions or biases, and this gives Tedla a strength that I appreciated. This especially soothed my worries that Tedla would be required to abandon its asexual and agender identity in order to achieve humanity. One of my favorite moments comes when Val's husband, Max, is baffled at Tedla's lack of anger at its misfortune.

"Unable to contain himself, Max burst out, 'Don't you have any anger, Tedla? Any indignation at what was done to you?'"

Tedla gave him a sharp look. "What do you mean done to me? Nothing was done to me. I'm perfectly natural the way I am. Why can't you humans ever understand that I might not want to be afflicted with gender?"

I'm sure I'm not the only nonbinary person who often feels "afflicted with gender," so this bit of dialogue really spoke to me, and it also illustrates an important aspect of Tedla's journey in separating what parts of its identity as a bland are natural and healthy for it (asexuality and nonbinary identity) and which are socially imposed and unhealthy (such as feelings of inferiority or worthlessness, or a stagnant unquestioning mind). Gammadians are all more or less neutral in body before puberty, and are only considered "born" after their body develops sexual characteristics. Thus, Tedla looked forward to becoming human while simultaneously dreading the process of becoming male or female, even having a dysphoric nightmare the night before the ceremony. It also protests against being put in what it sees as male clothing, uncomfortable with being seen as a man. It is baffled and slightly annoyed by the fact that many well-meaning people recommend surgery to "correct" its "problem" of not having genitalia or an obvious sex.

Tedla also has some deep-seated disdain for how sexualized society is, although it has had to learn to deal with that in the worst possible ways. This is where things get truly difficult to read. Blands being childlike in their lack of sexual characteristics does not, unfortunately, prevent them from becoming objects of sexual desire quite frequently. The problem of consent is quite complex here, since from the Gammadian perspective blands don't have the ability to really make decisions on their own. In that case, having sex with a bland can be considered a form of pedophilia or child molestation. And indeed Tedla is repeatedly raped, sometimes in gruesome fashion—it is a part of Gammadian culture which is simultaneously widespread and taboo. And yet at one point Tedla decides to willingly grant sexual favors to its guardian because it feels great affection for him and a debt of gratitude for his protection. Tedla even goes so far as to say that it is in love with its guardian, although it still never feels sexual attraction, just a desire to please. Knowing that Tedla is much more mentally and emotionally sophisticated than most Gammadians would admit, does this mean that its consent in this case is valid, or is it still trapped and merely choosing the lesser of many evils, using sex to please its master and keep itself safe from abandonment to some worse fate?

I believe that by the end of the book, Tedla is at least beginning to learn how to separate the injustice it has suffered from the truth of its identity. It has come to understand what parts of its life were due to class difference and oppression rather than its gender and sexual identity. It is learning not to see itself wholly through others eyes, nor throw out the good with the bad, the true with the false. I do have some concern that readers who are less familiar with the issues surrounding asexuality or nonbinary identities will not really "get" a lot of the messages here and instead fall prey to some of the stereotypes both Gammadians and humans have about gender and sexual development being an intrinsic part of human development. I think Gilman does a good enough job of portraying Tedla's character that no one should walk away from this book believing that Tedla's humanity rested on its ability to be not-a-bland. It was different from other blands in the sense that it was able to question whether it was inferior for being different from other humans. And I'm pretty sure it decided that being asexual and agender did not justify its being treated as less than human, even if it does struggle with irrational residual guilt. That's realistic.

I'd say *Halfway Human* is a must-read for any ace or trans* person who can stomach the sexual violence that it covers. I mean, Tedla relates what has happened to it bluntly, not skirting around it nor wallowing in gory detail. Still, it might be a bit much for some readers. I found the story ultimately empowering because of how much I could relate to Tedla's process of coming to own its own life, and how difficult that can be when you've relied on others to shape you and think for you for years. I feel like this novel needs to be read and discussed, and I'm sure that, given the multitude of themes it covers, there is something that will interest anyone who picks it up.

Ido Bar-av says

Imagine a world without gender roles. A world where gender itself only develops during puberty.

A world where there is no concept of "family" - people stay and live with the ones they love, but there is no marriage, and no children to take care of.

Imagine a world where children are being raised in a commune, educated by professionals, away from any intrusion, and away from any gender-bias they might encounter. And when they reach adulthood, they go back to society to the place that best fits them, regardless of who their parents are.

All the adults were raised the same, and instead of traditional gender roles, or any hereditary roles, people are being evaluated by their abilities and actions, without prejudice or bias.

Sadly, there are a few problems with this process of growing-up - some of the children, when they reach puberty age, stay genderless and never become truly human...

Instead, they become "the blands" - the genderless.

Soon after, their mind starts to deteriorate. They become unable to learn new skills, unable to develop intellectually, unable to take care of themselves without guidance and help.

Luckily, the (real) humans take care of them - they give them food, and shelter, and purpose, and work (mostly menial work, such as cleaning and cooking and serving - simple things that their simple minds can still grasp)...

This is the premise of the book.

The book follows the tragic story of one such bland - Tedla - who was found on a different planet, in a dark alley, after it tried to commit suicide.

It tells the story of Tedla's childhood and life - and through it the story of its entire world.

I will stop here to avoid spoilers, but will say this is a well written book, which left me with open questions both about the characters themselves and about society (ours and theirs).

Zen Cho says

Absorbing and fascinating, but hm, I dunno. It's as much about marginalisation and oppression as it is about gender -- well, more about that than gender, really. But I was surprised by the bit where Tedla says that there are blands in Val's world and it's all the people who don't have interests and do menial work and don't aspire to anything better. This was unexpected. I would've thought it'd've said that blands in Val's world are the perfectly ordinary, bright people who are crushed by poverty and oppression and treated like nothing by people who have marked themselves as superior. But maybe that's meant to be a sign of how Tedla's been kind of brainwashed itself by its society?

Ultimately I felt wary of what the book was saying, because e.g. there's the part where the Gammadis people admit to deliberately choosing people to be neuters. Which implies that they are right, to a certain extent, when they say most neuters are mentally deficient or whatever. When you read that as a metaphor for our world, what does that say? Seems kinda hinky.

Jakob Hessius says

Wow! I had no real desire to read this book, but I've had it on my shelf for quite some time. I saw Caroline when she was guest of honor at a book convention in Stockholm. She is a very interesting and warm person. Right now I'm so glad I picked up this book. It's without a doubt the best book I've read in a couple of years. It brings up so many topics it's hard to even list them all. Besides the obvious ones about gender it delves with slavery, class, cultural differences, beauty, sexuality, honesty, secrecy and trust issues, legal systems and corruption, and probably a few more that I can't come to think of at the top of my mind. This is the first time I'm 100% convinced a book deserves all the praise it got. I would definitely recommend everyone to pick up a copy of this book for themselves. It's a story that can be read and analysed a 100 different ways. The story is very complex and full of twist and turns. The worldbuilding and technology feels believable and interesting. The characters are alive and eclectic, and the end is realistic and bitter-sweet with a speck of hope for the future. Reading this story without assigning the protagonist a gender was an enormous challenge in itself, and made me realize how indoctrinated we humans are in assigning gender to everything around us. It's almost hard to even look at bugs without giving them a gender based on their looks. Are butterflies male or female? And what are ants? Had the book been given a more appealing cover, and marketed differently I'm sure it could have attracted a wider audience, much like "The Handmaid's Tale" for example. I will definitely reread this book again and hope to see someone brave enough making a movie out of it before I die. I absolutely loved this book.

Andune says

Halfway Human tells the story of Tedla, a gender-neutral being from Gammadis, who suddenly appears in the world of Capella Two and meets Val, a xenologist who will come to be Tedla's carer and friend.

I found this novel to be astounding and profoundly moving. Tedla's story is one of sadness, oppression, abuse, intelligence, love, loyalty and ultimately empowerment. In this incredibly over-sexualized world we live in it wasn't hard for me to identify much more with Tedla at times than the rest of the world Carolyn Ives Gilman creates as a reflection of our own cultures.

Gender and sexuality are a primary source of manipulation, embedded as they are in our reptilian and limbic systems. It does seem that we forget that people are much more than their reproductive organs and so miss out on an essential part of human connection. Tedla is a refreshing character because the way Tedla responds to the world is, in a sense, much more innocent, honest and integrated. However it is inevitable for Tedla to fall victim in a way to the world that surrounds and consumes it.

The friendship and trust that slowly develops between Tedla and Val is a beautiful component of the story. Val is not perfect, and she struggles with her own conscience about how to handle the situation, her professional struggles and ambition. But in the end Val represents strength, compassion and the necessity to do right that people aspire to. Tedla also struggles with becoming an individual, released from the constraints of the "bland consciousness".

I think Halfway Human is one of the best books I've read this year, it was unique, reflective, enrapturing and multi-dimensional. I think it is one of those books that makes you remember what it means to be human, to be more than a body. I thoroughly recommend this novel to anyone willing to take a journey inward while at the same time enjoying quality science fiction!

TJ says

I started out really excited reading this. I liked the writing style, the idea was really awesome, and I immediately liked the main character. I was interested in the society of Gammadis the whole time I was reading about it, and I really felt for the blands' struggles, and lack of personhood/rights. Some of the scenes are very brutal and hard to read, but there's an honesty in that. Overall, the story was intriguing, and I kept reading, I kept *wanting* to read. However, then the book began to wind down. The ending of the book dropped my rating from five stars to three. NONE of the major conflicts introduced in the book are ever solved. Tedla is left basically in the same state its been it its whole life, hidden and secret and reliant on humans, bound to fall into old patterns, with no one offering it any help for all the trauma its suffered - both as a child, and as an adult. Nothing about the Gammadian society is really ever mentioned after Tedla's escape from the planet. It leaves the reader questioning what the fate of the blands on Gammadis is, if there's even any progression towards the rights of the neuters. It leaves the reader questioning what will actually happen to Tedla, since locking it in a hotel room forever seems really stupid and unrealistic. There are also huge holes in the story, to me (such as the fact that twelve years of Tedla's life are compressed into like two pages). Also, the light-year math doesn't make sense consistently in the book, and that drove me a little bonkers. I feel like the book ignored its own rules on that in a couple instances just for convenience's sake and that really stood out. So overall, the book is really a good read and the characters are mostly very intriguing and enjoyable (even in their badness, in some cases), but it's just a huge let down in the end. For that reason I probably wouldn't recommend it to others without caution. People who like satisfying endings should definitely steer clear of this one.
