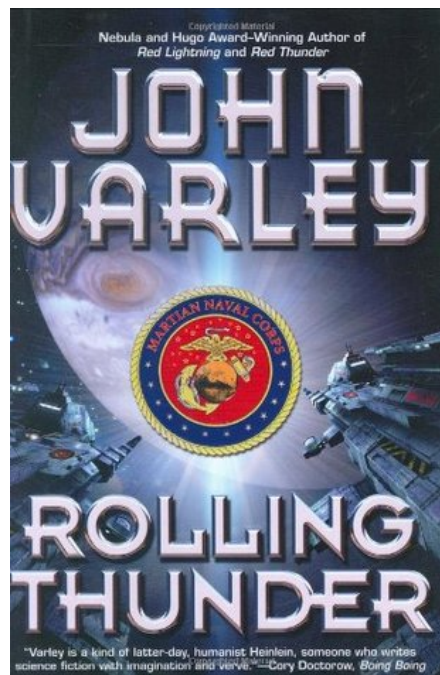




Rolling Thunder

John Varley

Download now

Read Online ➔

Rolling Thunder

John Varley

Rolling Thunder John Varley

Lieutenant Patricia Kelly Elizabeth Strickland-otherwise known as Podkayne-is a third-generation Martian. Her grandfather, Manny, was one of the first men to set foot on Mars. So Poddy has some planet-sized shoes to fill. That's why she's joined the Music, Arts, and Drama Division of the Martian Navy. Though some may say her voice is a weapon in itself, Poddy passed the audition. And now she's going to Europa, one of Jupiter's many moons, to be an entertainer. But she's about to learn that there's plenty of danger to go around in the Martian Navy, even if you've just signed on to sing.

Rolling Thunder Details

Date : Published March 4th 2008 by Ace Books

ISBN : 9780441015634

Author : John Varley

Format : Hardcover 344 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Space, Space Opera, Speculative Fiction, Science Fiction Fantasy, Young Adult

 [Download Rolling Thunder ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Rolling Thunder ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Rolling Thunder John Varley

From Reader Review Rolling Thunder for online ebook

Roger Bailey says

Back when I was in junior high school the school library had a shelf with all the Heinlein juveniles on it. I read every one of them, but my memory of each varies. The school itself no longer exists, but if I could somehow be transported back in time I could still go directly to that shelf and even be familiar with the order in which they were shelved. One of those books was Podkayne of Mars. That is one that, after more than forty years, I have no memory of the plot. I only remember that it had something to do with the adventures of a young girl who was born on Mars and was named Podkayne. This book, Rolling Thunder, is apparently a tribute to

Robert Heinlein and, most especially, to Podkayne of Mars. The main character is named Podkayne and she is Martian born, but this is not a sequel. It is clearly stated that Podkayne is just named for the character in the old Heinlein novel. The book is full of Heinlein references and they come fast and furious in the final chapter. I suspect that if I could remember anything about the original Podkayne of Mars I would pick up on a lot of other references. Even though it has been many years since I read those Heinlein juveniles it was something of a nostalgia trip to read this John Varley novel. It is certainly Heinleinesque and intended to be. I am tempted to reread Podkayne of Mars to refresh my memory and to see just how parallel this is.

Frank Burns says

Another high quality outing in this series. As this series has developed it has broadened from its original premise of Heinlein YA pastiche to become Varley's commentary on the effects of the coming climate change apocalypse. Despite this story starting on Mars and then moving to Europa, it is Earth that represents the biggest pull just because it has the most people. Suffering, being put through changes they can't mitigate or control. Varley has a matter of fact way of having his characters address this which I suspect may become all too common soon enough. This was a great read, I can recommend.

Andreas says

In the sequel to Red Thunder and Red Lightning, we yet again skip ahead a generation, this time to Podkayne, granddaughter of Manny and Kelly. Martian born and bred, she is drafted (as all are) into service with the Martian Navy. The book starts by ridiculing Earthies (those who live on Earth) as generally helpless and whiny. It is hard to find too much fault in that assesment, but more about that later. As is sometimes the case with Varley, he writes more chronicle than anything else, and thus we follow the meanderings of Podkayne. It isn't until the second half that things really start to happen. By then a very gloomy post-9/11, post-Katrina view has settled onto the book. If it weren't for cheery Podkayne, this would not be a very cheerful book. In the end, the protagonists make a big decision, and there is a happy ending, of sorts.

While Red Thunder was a very positive book, and Red Lightning was at least mildly optimistic, Rolling Thunder paints a very bleak picture of Earth's future, with billions dead and the planet rendered uninhabitable. Certainly the catastrophes depicted are not man made (unlike in Red Lightning) but it is clear that mankind had already started the processt". Podkayne is a serviceable protagonist, but she is no Manny or Ray from the previous books. The end, and I won't give away the surprising development there, feels a bit too much as if Varley wanted to tie up the loose ends any which way. I do love reading Varley, and this was, as always, entertaining. His voice is mesmerizing and his insights into human character are always

interesting and novel. However I do feel that this was not on par with most of his work. Or perhaps he just gave me a bit too much of the blues.

<http://www.books.rosboch.net/?p=1459>

Bruce Sanders says

This work is an homage to the juvenile science fiction of Robert Heinlein. In that regard it is very well done; it is very Heinleinesque. I grew up reading Heinlein's juvenile sci-fi, and very much enjoyed it. One way in which this book is similar to those books is that it has what I call a Manichean shallowness to it. The world is black and white, there are certain values propounded as simply common sense, and there is no critical thought provoked vis a vis those values. This is probably okay for juvenile fiction (once again I greatly enjoyed those books as an adolescent), but as an adult I find it a bit annoying (and in fairness some of Heinlein's more adult work such as *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* is very thought provoking with regards to values). There are two ways in which the work is different from a Heinlein juvenile novel. One is the sexual explicitness. That just was not possible in the 60's for a juvenile work, though the sexuality in the book very much reflects Heinleinian values. The second difference is the length of the book. It's just flat longer than Heinlein's juvenile works, and by the time the protagonist reached the Jovian system I had begun to wonder if the story was going to go anywhere at all. The author does an excellent job of describing the Jovian system. The aliens are imaginative, and we do finally get some excitement. All in all it is an outstanding homage to Heinlein's juvenile works, but as an adult I prefer more adult works.

Kathy Davie says

Third in the Red Thunder young adult science fiction series set in an alternate Earth where Mars and its people have the upper hand and disaster has created havoc in America splitting it into several independent countries.

The Story

Lieutenant Patricia Kelly Elizabeth Podkayne Strickland-Garcia-Redmond is fulfilling her required military duty acting as Martian Consul on Earth when she's recalled home. Granny Betty is dying and she wants to say good-bye to everyone. The trip is a blessing as Poddy hates being on Earth so when Uncle Admiral Bill Redmond pulls some strings and arranges for Podkayne to finish up her military duty as an entertainer for military bases on Europa, a moon in orbit around Jupiter, Poddy is ecstatic. Her passion is music. Singing. Playing. Now she just has to get a group pulled together so she has a better chance of finishing her tour as a military entertainer.

And so it begins as Varley extremely slowly creates the primary drama for *Rolling Thunder* which eventually leads to Podkayne's fame, her falling in love, and the diaspora from Mars.

The Characters

Patricia Kelly Elizabeth Podkayne Strickland-Garcia-Redmond is the daughter of Ray Strickland-Garcia and Evangeline Redmond and the granddaughter of Manny and Kelly Strickland-Garcia. Her brother, Mike, and she have a very teasing relationship.

Jubal and Travis are still in the picture with Jubal still hibernating in the blackhole and Travis popping out every few years to see how things are going. Grandma Kelly was the first president of Mars.

My Take

I do like Podkayne's remark about a "rolling stone"...so appropriate as they all go rolling along in *Rolling Thunder*.

It takes forever for Varley to get this story started. I enjoyed it and I am really hoping there will be a fourth in this series but don't expect the same breathstealing drama in *Rolling Thunder* as there was in the previous two stories. Even the major disasters that strike Earth don't provide that much fuss. As much as I enjoyed the depth to which Varley included music, its composition, construction, the dramas of its artists, its history, the tribulations of road trips, Varley did not do a great job of tying it together with Europa's mountains invading and the need to abandon some hopes.

Don't get me wrong. It's still an interesting story. It does advance the history of the Garcia-Strickland-Remonds and Travis and Jubal Broussard—you go, Jubal!!—with the promise of new adventures to come. The in-depth look into the behind-the-scenes action of creating music will also very much appeal to those of you interested in music.

The Cover

The cover is different from the previous two—all these buildings pointing inward into a Martian Naval Corps badge with Europa as the background. The title is very appropriate as you'll discover toward the end!

Beau says

An incredibly lightweight and more-blatant-than-usual Heinlein pastiche by Varley, but great fun for all of that, more delicious cotton candy than a hearty steak. Not much happens, really -- the narrator is a spectator to alien life landing on Earth ("contacting" is the wrong verb) and to what happens after. Still, it's a fun tour of yet another of Varley's Solar systems where alien life has completely outclassed humanity. The ending -- when the meaning of the book's title is finally revealed -- seems to be setting up a fourth part of the series that began with *Red Thunder*, but even if not, it was a fun ride.

Don't pick this up if you're looking for something along the lines of *Steel Beach*, the *Titan* novels or the *Ophiuchi Hotline*, but it's a fun ride more in the vein of the *Golden Globe* or the predecessors in the *Red Lightning* series. (It's probably the most successful of those, in fact.)

Richard Risch says

First of all I want to say it's a pretty good book. It's unique treatment by the author cleverly wraps humor and science fiction together as one in the form as a personal diary type story. It kept my interest fairly well throughout the reading and also was very accurate for the most part in science fact and description.

With that said, however, there were several aspects of the book that I didn't like, one of which is mountains on one of Jupiter moons, which turned out to be some type of celestial life. In the earlier part of the book I can sort of believe it that it could exist, but as events and further explanation goes on and expands on them, it lost its creditability to me at that point. I also did not really care for the ending because it was kind of a let down, but like everything else is a matter of opinion.

Still regardless of the stated shortcomings, I think it's a book worth the buying, reading and enjoying.

Graham Crawford says

I was looking forward to this as it had some good reviews. Alas it did not meet expectations. I enjoyed the first half of the book, then it went sour. I could accept the main character's silly teenage self-absorbed superficiality for a while, but after she'd been through all her physical emotional relational and economic super trials and tribulations she's still driveling on in the same whiny voice. No character development. Her marriage to the old mentally retarded savant was just plain stupid. The Big Dumb Object was just big and dumb, and the Alien attack was powered on a plot device of deus ex machinas. If this was meant to be an homage to Heinlein, he should be turning in his grave. Gets 2 stars for the first half which is a bit of a romp.

Karen says

If you couldn't get enough Heinlein back in your teens, and especially if you were female and aggravated at the lack of strong female characters, well, Podkayne is back, and more liberated than ever! Varley has created an excellent Heinlein homage for we baby boomers, with references to many of "the Dean's" works that are so subtly inserted into the narrative that you might even miss them if you're not looking. I had a blast reading this book! Varley must've been channeling Heinlein. Climb on board just for the fun of it!

Katie King says

Just listened to my Kindle read this to me. Perhaps the mechanical voice is perfect after all for something like this. The first time I read this, well, frankly I didn't get all the way through it actually. The second time I did, and gave it four stars even, but that was a gift really, in celebration of this series and of Varley as a beloved author.

But this time, mechanical voice and all, somehow it got to me -- differently and better. It still felt a bit too rambling, but then so is Time Enough for Love (to say the least). The ending reminded me both of The Number of the Beast with its mad flurry of sf reading refs, but also it felt in companionship and conversation with Spider Robinson's own Heinlein pastiche Variable Star. I liked that too. The politics and philosophy were sometimes attractive and other times repellent, but then, I thought maybe sf really offers that. I'm not sure I want to always be "on the same side" as the authors I care about, since what does that do but mirror me back to myself? (Also just heard on Kindle Methusula's Children too, and this was a good followup.)

First time I hated the Poddie character frankly. Second time grudgingly considered her okay enough, but didn't like the Jubal stuff altho not sure why. This time I liked that quite a bit more, and the range of realities about earthie endings of many sorts felt much more worthwhile somehow, even if not what realities I wish to actualize, but then I'm not that world creating author Heinlein seemed to end up with, and Varley makes gentle fun of here.

What I've always liked about Varley is the making fun of it all aspect -- and here it has a zen edge I really do appreciate, even though I am not sure about the politics and never am!

I confess I still like the first book of the trilogy best, but it is not yet on Kindle and none are on audible yet, my best formats for pleasure reading possibilities nowadays. (Or in this case, to listen to while on a cleaning

house rampage!)

Raja99 says

Why I read this book: I thoroughly enjoyed Red Lightning.

This book was fun, but it strikes me as the weakest of the series. The plotting is very loose, and the book lost all its dramatic tension about halfway through. Also, the references to Heinlein started grating on me after a while. (It felt like the title of every Heinlein juvenile was shoehorned in someplace or another.)

Still, the first half (or so) was every bit as much fun as I expect from Varley.

Will there be more books? It seems to me like Varley set things up so he could stop here, or continue. Unless he has a brash new idea, and an urgency to his plot, I'd prefer him to stop here.

(Finished 09:33EDT 2008-05-20.)

Steven Cole says

It's really hard to review this one without spoiling it, but I'll give it a shot...

Rolling Thunder is a strong third novel in the Thunder and Lightning series, with a wonderful, powerful protagonist in the narrator Podkayne. She's resourceful, energetic, and capable of doing what needs to be done.

The plot devices in the latter half of the book, though, are a bit much. The grand threat the human race faces is unlikely in the extreme (though that's not necessarily a bad thing in science fiction), but the way our heroes deal with it is ultimately unsatisfying.

Extremely unsatisfying.

Days later, I'm glad I read this book---it was good---but those plot resolutions really drag the whole effort down. I almost wonder if Varley had written himself into a corner and just didn't have a good way out.

4 of 5 stars.

Jude says

The last book in Varley's most recent trilogy -- much like Red Thunder had a different feel from the first book, this one, too, reads differently from the first two books. I wouldn't recommend reading this book without reading the first two, as you might be a bit lost, but that's just a better reason to read the whole trilogy!

To me, Varley sort of has two different writing styles... his "old" style and his "new", as I call them. The old style includes many of his Eight Worlds stories like Steel Beach and Golden Globe and his Gaian Trilogy...

the new style has the first two books in this trilogy and Mammoth. The new style is still very good and very enjoyable, more accessible than the old style, but just different. This book, however, felt like a good balance between his old style and new style, and the end result, while still accessible like his more recent novels, really had an old school Varley feel to it. And that is not a bad thing... not in the least.

Bondama says

This is the first John Varley book I've read in a very long time -- and it's made me remember how very, very much I liked his work. His novella, "The Persistence of Vision" is one of my all time-top ten favorites. This is the work that won both the Hugo and the Nebula awards.

But I love John Varley, in particular, because the man has a sense of humour. The protagonist in this book is a 6'4" (or 5") 19 year old, Martian born girl named Podkayne. (At least that's the shortened version of her name!)

Now, Varley's "serious" stuff (as in "Persistence," mentioned above) has a deep, resonating emotion about it. Because "Rolling Thunder" is NOT too serious, it does lack that. Yet it does have an incredible "readability" about it. (I'm not sure that's a word, to be honest!) But to any reader unfamiliar with his work -- if you read nothing else, please try "Persistence" I first read that novella at least twenty years ago, yet I can still remember the tears prickling at my eyes when I read the last of the story. Anything else I mention about it would be in the nature of a spoiler, but I would recommend just about any of John Varley to readers.

Kit says

I really wanted to like this book. It's unabashedly Varley's take on *Podkayne of Mars*, starring 18-year-old Podkayne Strickland-Garcia, granddaughter of Manny and Kelly from *Red Thunder*. I'm starting to wonder if there's some kind of "Curse of the Podkaynes" that turns otherwise hopeful books into bad ones.

The nearest I can come to explaining What Went Wrong is that this book reads like the first halves of three different books one after the other, all of which could have been good, none of which have anything in common with each other except that Podkayne is in them. This is just weird.

If you're going to write a novel, you don't have to introduce all your characters and plot elements in the first fifty pages, but when you *do*, and build them up, and make them seem important, you can't just ditch them partway through for no reason as if the readers aren't going to wonder what happened. The first time the story dumped everything but Podkayne and started over, I gave it the benefit of the doubt, thinking, "Well, *now* I've gotten to the main plot." But then it happened again, and the "ending" has so little to do with the beginning (or even the middle) that you could just start two-thirds of the way through the book for all that the first two-thirds have to do with it.

Apart from the narrative structure, there are some funny parts and interesting ideas, although deeper down the story suffers from some creepy social engineering concepts: the idea that building a good society is a matter of deciding who to keep out is an unfortunate staple of some sci-fi, including Heinlein's. I wish that were not one of the ideas Varley had borrowed.
