



A Few Good Men

Sarah A. Hoyt

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Original trade paperback, sequel to *Darkship Renegades* and *Darkship Thieves*. The son of a ruler on Earth instigates civil war and revolution when he attempts to take the place of his assassinated father and uncovers a terrible secret that has been used to enslave humanity.

The Son Also Rises...

On a near future Earth, Good Man does not mean *good* at all. Instead, the term signifies a member of the ruling class, and what it takes to become a good man and to hold onto power is downright evil. Now a conspiracy hundreds of years in the making is about to be brought to light when the imprisoned son of the Good Man of Olympic Seacity escapes from his solitary confinement cell and returns to find his father assassinated.

But when Luce Keeva attempts to take hold of the reins of power, he finds that not all is as it seems, that a plot for his own imminent murder is afoot—and that a worldwide conflagration looms. It is a war of revolution, and a shadowy group known as the Sons of Liberty may prove to be Luce's only ally in a fight to throw off an evil from the past that has enslaved humanity for generations.

Sequel to Sarah A. Hoyt's award-winning *Darkship Thieves*, and *Darkship Renegades*.

About A Few Good Men:

"Hoyt creates a fast-paced and entertaining tale about a revolution and its reluctant leader."—*Galveston County Daily News*

About the Darkship series:

"First-rate space opera with a moral lesson. You won't be disappointed."—Glenn Reynolds, Instapundit.com

"[A] tour de force: logical, built from assumptions with no contradictions . . . gripping."—Jerry Pournelle

"[Three Musketeers creator] Alexander Dumas would give [Sarah A. Hoyt] a thumbs up."—Steve Forbes

"[F]anciful and charming."—*Library Journal*

"Exceptional, wonderful and enormously entertaining."—*Booklist*

A Few Good Men Details

Date : Published March 5th 2013 by Baen (first published February 14th 2013)

ISBN : 9781451638882

Author : Sarah A. Hoyt

Format : Paperback 384 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Space, Space Opera



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From Reader Review A Few Good Men for online ebook

Marina Fontaine says

A Few Good Men is a story with three key characters, of whom one is dead and the other two at least marginally insane. If this sounds like the latest selection at your local literary books club, it isn't. On the other hand, neither is the book as campy as the cover promises to a casual reader unfamiliar with Baen Publishing cover styles. Instead, it's that hard to achieve combination of action and introspection, pitch-black darkness and brightly shining light, world-shaking insight and lighthearted humor.

In other words, Sarah A. Hoyt has written a sci-fi novel set 400 years into the future that is perfectly true to life.

The main character/narrator, Lucius lots-of-middle-names Keeva, is a study in contradictions. He calls himself a monster on Page One, then proceeds to risk his life saving strangers. He kills with ruthless precision, but feels guilty even for deaths he hadn't caused. He had repeatedly tried to kill himself, yet at some point declares he wants to live because he just got some new reading material. With all the world-building, technology, and plot twists introduced in the story, the internal forces driving the main character are the greatest mystery of all.

Even though there are at times pages and pages between (spectacular) action scenes, the story never drags because even when the pace of events eases up, the tension does not. And no wonder. It is hard enough for a man who spent fourteen years in solitary confinement to rediscover how to live and function in the real world. Add to that a horrific family secret and the fact that many powerful people want him dead, and you can begin see the seemingly insurmountable level of challenge that our hero would face throughout the story.

To be sure, Lucius "Luce to friends" is far from helpless. Aside from being in great physical condition and with an intellect to match, he does have assistance. He is aided by Ben, a long-dead friend who lives as a ghost in his head (sorry, Dean Koontz fans, this dead man talks- a lot!) and the Remy family, the life-long household servants with secrets of their own, some darker than others.

Somewhere between admiring the futuristic weaponry and contemplating the marvels of a flying device that clips easily to one's belt yet can carry a 300 lb man at high speed, I started appreciating just how packed this book really is. Aside from the obligatory but well executed world building, we get history lessons, a crash course in propaganda, insights into the nature of family, love and faith, and- more than once- fairly heavy political discourse. No worries, though, not a John Galt speech in sight, and one of those political discussions ends up in the sweetest- if also briefest- romantic moment you're likely to read in a while.

And that brings me to another point: A Few Good Men is a story permeated with strong, even violent emotions, and reader can expect to be tearing up one moment and uncontrollably giggling the next. Those familiar with Sarah A. Hoyt's work are used to her propensity to drop in humor where no humor could possibly belong, and here she takes it to another level, with both the horrors and the irreverence magnified by the juxtaposition. This level of emotional impact is the one quality that makes the book stand out in a crowded field of futuristic fiction. Many more authors in the genre are capable of creating interesting worlds and rocking action than can make us connect emotionally to the characters involved. I can't recommend this book highly enough, even to readers for whom if sci-fi is not a preferred genre.

NOTE: This book is billed as Book 3 in Darkship Universe (a sequel to Darkship Thieves/Renegades) and Book 1 in Earth Revolution Saga. It can stand on its own, although the experience would be different (not better or worse, just different) without knowing some of the characters and the backstory going in- basically

it's a tradeoff between more depth and bigger reveals, but enjoyable either way.

Jo (Mixed Book Bag) says

While this says it is a sequel to *Darkship Renegades* and *Darkship Thieves* the action does not happen after the first two books, Most of the action is happening at the same time but on Earth instead of in space. There are several places where the characters and action from both are together but the author assumes you have read *Darkship Thieves* and does not repeat what happened in the other book. As a result you could be very confused.

Luce Keeva tells *A Few Good Men* in the first person. He has been in prison for 14 years and escapes where there is a prison break. He goes home to find all of his family dead. When he tries to take his Father's place some long held secrets are revealed. As a result he joins in with others to bring about change. His story is the story of the revolution that follows. Because it is what one man remembers there are large sections of the book that just present information and there is action only where Luce is present.

Books where you spend a large amount of time in a characters head are not my favorites. I prefer getting information through dialog and action and there was just not enough of that in *A Few Good Men* to satisfy me. As a result it took me a long time to read the book. I would read a little and then put it down, as it just was not holding my attention. I did finish because I had read the first two books and kept going back to see if it wouldn't get better.

This would stand along but there are sections where the actions from the other books intersect. Where that happens some things just would not make sense if you only read this one book. I am glad I finished the book but it is far from one of my favorites.

Steve says

A quirky book, a little on the weak side in the character development arena. I enjoyed the pretty original story. I'm always amazed that authors can come up with something completely new. It's probably why they write and people like me just get to be lucky and read.

I got this book on the amazing Baen publisher website, as an ARC.

This was my first book by this author and I was not disappointed. An enjoyable read. The story kept me engaged but not on the edge of my seat. I never like to say anything negative about a book, I'm always so impressed by people that write, but I just can't come up with any one thing that made me say WOW. it was just one of those novels that had an interesting hook, started out quite interestingly, but I found myself reading it, not hating it, but not really caring about what happened.

I've read SCIFI that pumped up the blood, like David Weber...who kills off main characters like nobodies business. Then Rob Preece's *Nanocorporate*, so freaking brilliant and well written it makes your teeth hurt. This wasn't like any of those.

The book is of course set in the future, and the world is divided into 50 "cities" run my guys called Good Men. The main character escapes prison, turns out to be the son of one of these guys, the Good Men aren't good at all and he leads a revolution. A twist is he's gay, which really didn't add a thing to the story, but sounded like a shout out to someone close to the author. That's it. Oh, they do zip around on something called 'brooms'.

Well, I've struggled to say something nice and can't think of anything. I started out with positive generalities, because I am not inclined to be critical. But I'm scratching my head trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. The bottom line is this book was perfectly mediocre.

Kelly says

Set in the same universe as *Darkship Thieves* and *Darkship Renegades*, Sarah A. Hoyt's new novel *A Few Good Men* picks up the story on Earth from an alternate viewpoint. Luce Keeva has been in prison for fifteen years, fourteen of which were spent in solitary confinement. He's sure he's no longer sane. A raid on the submerged prison where he is being held frees him.

Luce is not prepared for the world he emerges into and, as it turns out, that world is not prepared for him. His father and younger brother are dead, leaving him Good Man (ruler) of Olympus Seacity. It's a role he was trained and groomed for until the incident that led to his imprisonment or so he thought. The truth is actually more insidious.

Fifteen years away has left Luce ill-prepared for society in general. The secrets revealed shortly after his release will change his perception of the world entirely. Being a Good Man is more than being a ruler. He is different in a world where being so might be illegal. His former lover also held a host of secrets, casting doubt on a memory that keeps him strong. Finally, his household is staffed with revolutionaries heeding a charter older than the Seacity, itself.

Before Luce has time to adjust, civil war is upon them and he must choose between himself and people he barely knows. Will he be a Good Man or a good man?

Fans of Hoyt will know what's going on before Luce does. That does not mean there is nothing new here. Luce is an engaging character and I enjoyed reading events from his point of view. His struggle to accept the facts of who and what he is made for an engaging story. His feelings for Ben, his former lover and best friend, were deftly handled. His odd friendship with Ben's nephew, Nat, is intriguing.

Once the war starts, however, the author seems to lose interest in the plot. So much of the action is summarized by Luce's thoughts. Nat's point of view would have added action and verity to these events and a degree of sympathy in the reader for the odd relationship developing between him and Luce. We're also cheated out of a proper view of events at Circum as this story intersects *Darkship Renegades*. Again, we're offered another summary instead of a decent slice of action.

I enjoy Hoyt's characters and I think she has created an interesting universe. I would like to see her spend less time in her characters' heads and more on their deeds. Here's hoping the next book shows us some more action as the story continues.

Written for and originally published at SFCrowsnest.

Nathan says

Sarah Hoyt writes good books and great characters. This book is definitely readable outside of the "Darkship" series that it's a part of, and presents a pretty grim, but well set and believable, future in which a handful of "Good Men" rule the rest of humanity with an hidden, iron fist until one of their own finds out

about what's really going on and decides to do something about it. Or has the need to do something about it forced upon him. Well worth the read.

Karen Myers says

I've been waiting for this book with a great deal of anticipation. As other reviewers have said, free up your schedule once you start reading -- you won't be going anywhere until you finish it, not even to bed.

Sarah Hoyt takes on a complex story and carries it off with skill. Her reimagining of a second American Revolution manages to retain intimacy with the characters while covering a broad sweep of events. Well done.

Karen A. Wyle says

I'm rounding up some -- which wouldn't be necessary if not for a surprisingly poor copy edit (see more below).

I picked up this book without realizing it was the third in a series. I haven't read the first two, and while I'm sure there are nuances and "aha" moments I missed, I didn't have trouble following the plot. I may, however, have reacted to the book differently at times because of my lack of background. For example, I was willing to sit through what amounted to an info dump at one point because I was very, very curious about what was going on. I don't know whether I would have been that curious if I'd read the first two books. I also felt that the eventually revealed backstory for Earth's future ruling class had one too many elements to it, but the earlier books may have made that necessary.

What really made the book work for me was the highly original and poignantly well realized POV character. His development, and the suspenseful and frequently traumatic events through which it occurs, are absorbing and compelling.

I was frequently distracted from the story by copy editing failures such as omitted words or phrases, wrong words (such as "why" when the context clearly required "where"), and redundancies. I have not noted such problems with Baen Books publications in the past, and hope that whatever has changed there changes back.

Clyde says

A Few Good Men is advertized as the sequel to Sarah A. Hoyt's *Darkship Renegades* and *Darkship Thieves*. This isn't strictly true. It is set in the same future and takes place over much the same time period, but is more of a companion story than a sequel. (It does intersect the earlier stories a couple of times, but they need not be read first.)

Basically, this is the story of a revolution told from the inside.

The main protagonist, Luce Keeva, is one super tough hombre. He has to be, because the story gets very violent and bloody. (Starts off with explosions, gunfights, and a jailbreak.) He also happens to be gay. That doesn't have anything much to do with the story, but seems to have been necessary to set up the initial background conditions.

The "Good Men" in the story are anything but good. They are the most powerful men on Earth and basically

hold the planet in slavery. Their methods are pure evil. And Luce, well ... But, that would be telling. Read the story. It is good.

Melody says

I have a great deal of sympathy for the hero of this book. The author handles his trials with humor and sensitivity. This is a great extension of the Darkship series. Reading the first two books isn't necessary but would help even though this book has only a brief intersection with the character and events of the first two books. I quite enjoyed this book and will recommend it to my husband and my teenagers.

I have read this book before but this time I listened to the Audiobook. As usual there were many instances of missing words including the last sentence of the book.

Cedar Sanderson says

If you liked Hunger Games, but wanted more grown-up protagonists and solutions, you should explore the world Sarah has built in her series that began with Darkship Thieves. While the first and second books (Darkship Renegades) are more straightforward space fantasy, the bulk of A Few Good Men takes place on an Earth ravaged by wars, plagues, and genetic engineering of a sinister sort. Lucius, the main character, was only a teen when he was unjustly imprisoned, and he remains emotionally scarred by the experiences that landed him there, and the fifteen years in solitary confinement that followed.

This book may be set in a dystopian world, but it is one where a revolution is ripening, along the lines of the one that set the United States of America into motion more than two centuries ago. Lucius and his right-hand man, Nat, set out at first merely to save their own lives and the lives of family, but it becomes much more than that for them and those around them. Lovers of liberty, equality, and the pursuit of happiness will enjoy the well-plotted and researched depths of this book. It's no surprise to find that Darkship Thieves won the Prometheus Award from the Libertarian Futurist Society, and it would be no surprise to me to see this book receive it in the coming year.

While this is a third book, it could be approached without reading the first two, and it is important to note that there is a third book due out soon, which will expand on the latter half of this book, as the revolution expands in scope to a point where it is not practically viewed from one man's eyes.

Above all, it's a good read, with a compelling plot, characters who will draw you in (including the dog, Goldie), and you will find yourself visualizing the world they inhabit, grittiness and all.

Lizzie says

When I just finish a really good book that impresses me on every level, I don't know what to write. The first two were very good, but the 3rd book in the Darkship series, which concentrates on Lucius and Nat and what is happening on Earth during the time period during and after Athena's and Kat's adventures, is even better. It has it all - science fiction, adventure, revolution, prison breaks, individual survival, politics, and philosophy.

Argus says

I vaguely recall reading *Darkship Thieves* a while back, which I guess was a precursor to this book. I didn't read my own review of it before I launched into writing this, but I'm going to afterward and see if I had the same complaints. I think I might, though I think I used the term "space princess biker chick", which I'm not about to repeat, so there's at least one major difference.

A Few Good Men is a book that tries to make a big deal out of the ideals of the United States founding fathers being turned into a religion in the far future. That's kind of interesting, on its own, actually. The deification of actual historical figures, and the warping of their original ideals, is something that we already kind of *do*, and seeing it taken to the logical extreme in a sci-fi sense is neat.

Sadly, the book doesn't know what it wants to be. It never goes too deep into the politics. In fact, the politics are kind of glossed over. So is the revolution aspect. So is the philosophy and the covert ops and the economy and the romance and just all sorts of things. Honestly, the romance arc gets the most attention from the story, but it was kind of a huge letdown. The main character spends a lot of time pining for his lost love, for **very legitimate reasons**, and then sometime in the last three chapters or so, I guess he's in love with his old boyfriends brother? Who was himself in love with the main characters younger brother.

And you know, for a while, it was some great character drama. They were united by having lost someone; both of them had lost a sibling and a lover in the two people who died. But they also kind of disliked each other, and the whole dynamic was shaping up to be really interesting to watch. And then it just fell off.

Am I focusing too much on the romance arc? I think I might be, but I have a good reason. See, it's kind of the only thing that's going on. Having read the book, I'm aware that there were some awesome things in it. They raid a space station! And if it was the same space station from the first book, then it's based around an enormous organic solar power station that eats sunlight and grows power cells! How fucking cool is that?! And there's a revolution against the clone-enabled immortals that rule the world, and there's anti-grav biker gangs, and there's the revolutionaries rebuilding the internet, and there's floating high-tech cities! This stuff sounds AMAZING!

So why is none of it ever really developed?

None of that stuff I said gets more than a chapter, or in some cases, a few sentences. And it's such a massive shame that the stuff that is focused on isn't very engaging and the stuff that I really want to see more of that could have saved the story is left out.

Okay, I went back and read my original review. It is almost exactly the same as what I just said here. Clearly I, like the revolutionaries in the story, have failed to learn from history.

Stephen Gallup says

This novel grew on me, which is to say that I got a good ways into it before feeling really caught up in the story. Partly that's because it's not the same kind of page-turner as the Andrew Klavan thriller I had just finished. Also, a story like this, set hundreds of years in the future, in a society radically different from our own, has an extra burden in getting readers up to speed.

Once in synch with it, however, I was indeed hooked.

Here's (part of) the premise: Our current world structure has long since crumbled (presumably because the population split into groups who nurtured grievances with one another), and what has risen in its place is a worldwide feudal system under the not-so-benevolent rule of about 50 elite "Good Men" (hence the book's title), each in charge of his own domain, and all of them more or less in league to continue the exploitation of everyone else. The story is told from the point of view of Lucius, the heir of one of those despots—who is also essentially an outsider, learning the true lay of the land along with the reader because he has spent the last 15 years in prison (for reasons that only gradually become evident). He never understood the way the system really works until he escapes and assumes his dead father's place.

Lucius has always known about the existence of a generally despised network of people, the Usaians (a name no doubt derived from the defunct USA), who cherish long-dead ideals such as the notion that man has a God-given right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." But he has never given those people much thought (probably less thought than our own urban elites give to the Tea Party, in case the parallel isn't obvious yet). But then it turns out that his father's retainers are closet members. These are the heroes. While the old Good Man was in charge, they tried to blunt the impact of his most damaging edicts. Their long-term dream is to overcome the inertia of the general population, to somehow show that government in this form is not the friend of the people and that therefore opposing it would be just and worthwhile.

Lucius, of course, *IS* nominally the government now, as far as his piece of the globe is concerned, and he isn't predisposed to accept their point of view. Also, having studied history, he knows that that idealized lost democracy was characterized by "bickering ... lack of organization, cross-purpose efforts." (His objection sounds like an echo of certain figures known to us all who complain about our "messy" checks and balances.) On the other hand, his ascent to power did not occur according to plan, which means he needs all the friends he can get. As for continuing his father's kind of dominion, Lucius senses that it's wrong, without knowing why. A few basic truths must be explained to him:

"Any regime that puts too much power in the hands of a single human assumes we're perfect, flawless. We're not, and given absolute power, the flaws will show ... [the former Good Man] became what all humans become in that situation: a monster. Because, you see, the other humans, the ones he ruled, weren't perfect either, so they didn't obey orders, and he kept trying to whittle them into people who would follow orders. ... He was denying other people the power he abrogated completely to himself. The power of self-determination."

I've said more about the story than I normally do in reviews, but perhaps knowing this much may whet your appetite. My own had been whetted when I happened to stumble across a blog post in which Sarah Hoyt discussed the American Revolution. Liking what she had to say there, I was willing not only to sample one of her books but also to stick around long enough for it to become really interesting—until, as with that Klavan thriller, I looked forward each day to getting back into it.

I wasn't particularly enamored with the narrative voice, and the conclusion felt rushed and only semi-coherent. However, the world-view struck me as being just right—to the extent that (unless we as a people learn to grow up) this is an entirely plausible future. I plan to read more of Hoyt's work soon.

Michael Hirsch says

This is the third book in the Darkship series and by far the worst. Hoyt is a talented writer, but she is at her best when writing action and the story moves quickly, and at her worst when writing her simple-minded political essays. Unfortunately, this book has too much of the former and not enough of the latter.

The hero in "A Few Good Men" is male. All of Hoyt's other books had female leads and she does a much better job with them. I found him thoroughly boring and don't think Hoyt has any insight into the male mind, not even homosexual males as is the case here.

The book started out okay, but got slower and less interesting with each page. I love a good revolution, but the one at the end of this book is the slowest, least interesting, most boring one I've ever read. Although it was a war, there was no action, just a lot of sophomoric political philosophizing. I think Hoyt was writing for the Prometheus Award judges, and not for the general public. Yawn.

This is supposed to be the beginning of a new "saga", and I don't know if I'll be able to read the sequels.

Henry Lazarus says

Sarah A. Hoyt tells of the rebellion against A Few Good Men (trade from Baen) which is set in the same world as her Darkship Thieves (paper) tales. Lucius Keeva was the son of a Good man who found himself in the wrong place and time and ended up in solitary confinement for fourteen years. Coming out he discovers that his brother and father are both dead. So he goes to the island his father ruled and takes control to protect it from other 'Good Men'. But he doesn't know that the other 'good men' are genetically modified mules who have been using brain transplant on their cloned sons to survive three centuries. Lucas is modest and tries to downplay his role in the revolution that follows, but the tale is still lots of fun. Review Published by the Philadelphia Weekly Press
