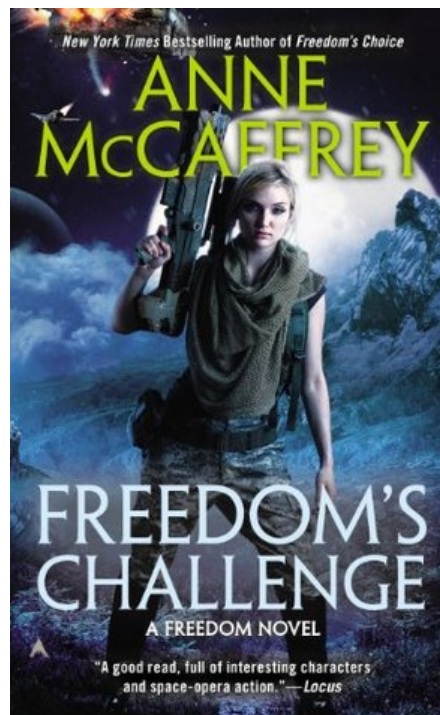




Freedom's Challenge

Anne McCaffrey

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The alien Catteni invaded Earth and enslaved thousands of humans on the planet Botany, where they struggle to survive while colonizing the world for their overseers. Now that they've proved Botany is capable of sustaining life, Kris Bjornsen and her fellow settlers have no intention of surrendering the home they've created for themselves...

Armed with the knowledge that the true enemy behind the Catteni is the Eosi race, Kris has begun a campaign to free Botany's settlers by raising a rebellion among her people against their parasitic oppressors.

Aided by her Catteni lover, Zainal, Kris and the colonists manage to steal warships—and discover dissidents on other Eosi-controlled worlds. If all of the subjugated races join forces, they will have an army large enough to win their freedom and their worlds.

The war of liberation has begun.

Freedom's Challenge Details

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From Reader Review Freedom's Challenge for online ebook

Libby says

Unfortunately, I'm disliking the writing in the series more as I reread it. Still like the characters enough to continue, plus my natural impulse is to finish a book once I've started!

Laura says

Freedom's Challenge was very similar to Freedom's Choice. In fact, even though I just finished it, I'm struggling trying to remember which plot points were in Choice and which ones were in Challenge. Overall, the same things I liked and disliked about Choice are the same for this one.

The plot moves FAST! The beginning moves a little slowly, to try to reorient users to what is going on and I found myself enjoying this part. It explained enough for me to understand and be invested in what was going on. Later in the book though, several Catteni characters get introduced at once. And things move so fast that it took me far too long to figure out that Kris wasn't in a chapter and was oblivious to what was going on. This happened in Choice too and I just found myself losing interest. I tried to stay on top of the action but when things happen so quickly without much explanation or character reactions, you just care less. At a certain point I put down the book and didn't pick it up for like almost a week.

Kris started to grate on my nerves a little in this book – the first time that this has happened. But it makes sense. She's a Mom now. She's going to have different priorities and reasons. And this was just harder for me to identify with. But overall, I still like her immensely. She reminds me so much of one of my friends that even when she's annoying, I still see the good in her.

Beyond that – I've started to read the fourth one to see what I think. I was excited to see a character reemerge (he was in the 2nd book but never made a physical appearance in the 3rd). So we'll see if she goes back to the core characters that made up the first and second books and avoid introducing a ton of characters just because.

A Voracious Reader (a.k.a. Carol) says

4.5

*Book source ~ Home library

The dropped survivors on Botany have come a long way from those first days when they had virtually nothing. They are living very well with many comforts of home and they are at the brink of ending the Eosi domination of several species and many planets and Kris Bjornson and Zainal are at the center of things. Making a good life on Botany isn't enough for Zainal though. He intends to destroy the Eosi for enslaving his people for two thousand years and for enslaving other worlds as well. However, the final piece of the plan will only work at great sacrifice to himself. Will his plan work and, more importantly, will he survive it?

Once again I'm plunged into the fight for survival, the fight to free Earth, Botany and many other planets and how everyone works together for the greater good of the community. It's an awesome ride. All of the pieces of the puzzle come together and if they do so a little too neatly I'm not going to argue. I love this series and I love watching how everyone handles their part of the Great Plan despite overwhelming odds. A fast-flowing plot, great writing and wonderful characters keep me engaged from beginning to end. Anne McCaffrey always has so much going on and yet manages to keep the books to a reasonable length. There's just no way to summarize her stories without going on and on about everything that's happening. All I can say is this; open to the first page and hang onto your britches. It's going to be a wild ride.

Martta says

I've seen this book in the library many times, considered borrowing it because of the sci-fi sticker on the spine (which I look for) and the nice-looking spaceship on the cover. I was discouraged, though, in part by the lack of blurb, in part because it is the third part of a series, and in part because (judging by what I read on Goodreads) very political. Now I finally decided to give it a try after all, and to my surprise, it was very good!

Kris Bjornsen seemed all right. Not much to remark, a strong sensible character, and very well capable of combining duty and hard work with motherhood.

Zainal was nice, too. He was reliable, but then I did not experience his early days in the colony, and I am sure he was not always trusted.

There were many more characters, and most of them seemed all right, but I do not have much to remark about them, either.

I was daunted by the fact that *Freedom's Challenge* is the third book in a four-part series, but McCaffrey was considerate enough to add a short summary of what happened before, and I think that even without that I would have had no trouble understanding the story - of course, reading the previous two books would have added something, but it is possible to read this one as a standalone; the end gives some closure.

The story was great, in my opinion. It was not too exciting or suspenseful; almost seemed too easy, but I actually don't mind. I guess it's nice to read 'good news' now and then.

I wonder about the Catteni, though. They seemed very much like humans, with negligible physiological or cultural differences (except they don't have feminism. The position of Catteni women seems a lot like the position of human women before the first feminist movements).

I do not quite understand the Eosi or the so-called Farmers, though. I suppose I would've had to read books one and two for that.

I am also happy with the cultural diversity. Not everyone was North American or European, and I like the way the Maasai were handled. Of course Botany isn't perfect, but then perfection takes a long time to achieve, and I believe this is set in the near future - within a few decades from now, I would estimate.

In conclusion, I am quite glad I decided to read *Freedom's Challenge* after all. It was a nice, fast read, not too challenging, very entertaining.

Al says

From Library Journal

Abandoned on the planet Botany by their Catteni masters, a group of humans and other enslaved races now

seeks to reclaim their worlds for themselves. This third installment of a series that includes *Freedom's Landing* (LJ 4/15/95) and *Freedom's Choice* (LJ 5/15/97) chronicles the stages of the war for liberation, from the theft of Cattani ships to the liberation of cargoes of slave laborers to a bold strike at the heart of the oppressor. McCaffrey excels as a storyteller and as a creator of worlds. Despite an occasional lapse in suspense, her latest novel provides a satisfying culmination to a saga of desperate courage and the desire for freedom. Most libraries should add this to their sf collections.

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From

Another rousing episode, perhaps the last, in McCaffrey's saga, begun in *Freedom's Landing* (1995) and continued in *Freedom's Choice*, about the colonists on the planet Botany. Botany is now under attack by the Eosi, who are unable to penetrate the planet-surrounding Bubble constructed by the advanced race that had given permission for the colony to remain on the planet. Kris Bjornson, who was with the first group dumped on the planet by the Eosi-dominated Cattani forces, is one of the settlement's leaders, as is her lover, the insurgent Cattani, Zainal. Having built a new home for themselves, the settlers decide it is time to contact dissidents on the various Eosi-controlled worlds and wage a war of liberation. Since the Botany settlers possess stolen technology, including Cattani warships, they are able to rescue other victims of the Eosi and bring them to Botany. Kris and Zainal lead a small band, all disguised as Cattani, to the Cattani home world on the first sortie to enlist Cattani rebels in the battle. The action is fast paced and riveting, and the characters, human and of other species, are well limned and exhibit great individuality. McCaffrey continues to amaze with her ability to create disparate, well-realized worlds and to portray believable humans, convincing aliens of varied sorts, and credible interactions between them all. A very satisfying tale. *Sally Estes*

Douglas Milewski says

Freedom's Challenge (1998) by Anne McCaffrey brought an apparent trilogy to a close. Anne took three books to tell a story that any lesser or better author would have taken only one book to write.

I've spent a while trying to figure out why I care so little for the books, and so little for the characters these books. From my point of view, Anne skips over all the interesting bits, instead focusing on the uninteresting bits. Our lead character, Kris, is so forgettable that I had to look up her name. She does little worth talking about, is often left behind, and only later hears about all the interesting missions and development. We don't follow the story as it happens, we follow the story as it gets reported to Kris. This breaks any reader engagement.

Her best cat friend is Zainal, who I never built an affinity with. I don't care about him any more than Kris. So if I don't care about her, or him, or their relationship, then there isn't really very much to talk about with these books.

One bit about Anne's writing that drives me crazy is her childhood development gaffs. Perhaps her children were extraordinary, but most likely, she no longer has any idea of what children under 5 years old are like. These children have no relationship to reality. Don't base any of your ideas on childcare on anything that Anne has to say.

What aggravates me most is that there's a story in there, but she's not brave enough to tell that story. I see so much of what could be done with the setting merely by showing us the episodes that she tells us about. Show us the story, Anne. Show us. That's the interesting bit.

The entire series sails so easily through its own story. The characters rarely see any setbacks or plan complications. They make a plan, fret for a bit, then see the plan succeed. Anne shy's away from any moments of drama or doubt, which means that we don't see the characters tested to any large degree.

This book is no better or worse than the one before it. If you liked the last one, this one should work out fine for you. If you didn't like the last one, this book has nothing to offer.

Jan says

Good conclusion of the first 3 books. There's a lot of flaws in it. (Everything still goes way too easy, more drunken baby-creating without any remorse thoughts about the cheating factor, and a whole bunch of inconsequent stuff like pacifist Zainal suddenly becoming way less pacifist).

However, I forgive it a lot because of the fairly exciting story-line (survivalism mixed with war is really good stuff). But mostly because of the consequent non-bigotry policy on Botany. I loved that they didn't want to save the colony planet where all non-humans were killed. They had truly become Botanists, and Botanists don't do the only human thing. That was easily the absolute best part of the series.

I totally recommend to stop the series here however, because book 4 makes absolutely no sense with the rest of the series, and isn't really an ending, where this one actually is.

Leslie Cates says

Wonderful

Just rediscover Anne McCaffrey after many many years. I read the Dragon Rider series as a young and was looking for something different to read and found the Freedom's Landing series. As an adult it was just as good as the Dragon Rider series. Was well written storyline was interesting and fun and I highly recommend it. Good read nice suspense I wouldn't want to living on botany myself

Savanah says

this book is cool, if you don't mind a alien book. a girl that falls in love with a cati. WOW. and goes on weird an awesome adventures! trust me if you like this than you should read it!

Lew says

I thought this was a bit of a let down after the first two books.

Joy says

Transplanted human Kris's Cateni husband Zainal pushes through his program to rid the galaxy of Eosi domination, no matter what it might cost him. After listening to the 1st two of this series, it seems I have to go on and finish it. They make good bus and lunchtime reading. The Freedom series is especially notable for its strong sense of community.

JPT says

Audiobook

Personal thoughts

Things are really going to hell in a handbasket with this series. I'm determined to finish listening to the series, but it's getting excruciating.

The Botanicals have miraculously stolen more ships than you can shake a stick at, and continue to go off-world getting supplies, gathering intel and support for the overthrow of the eosi, rescuing other imprisoned people, giving sanctuary to family members of rebel Cateni (including Zainel's two sons), etc. Primary storyline is the discovery that Cateni can have lethal allergic reactions to a compound derived from acacia, which they use to destroy the eosi. To do so, Zainel pretend to be taken prisoner by rogue Cateni--allows himself to be beaten, starved, abused for realism--so he can be brought before an eosi council. While in the closed chamber, the allergen/poison is released, killing all the Cateni and eosi who haven't taken precautions. Only the few eosi not physically present remain alive. The Cateni are free and annoint new leaders from among the rebels. Yay.

So many things, big and little, bothered me about this book. The main thing being that, while on a mission, Kris once again gets drunk and sleeps with a human man who is a friend to her and Zainel. Again, they were both drunk and, you know, these things just happen. La di da. Really? Once was bad enough. I can't believe McCaffrey wrote this set-up twice. And, yep, Kris gets pregnant and hides it from both Zainel and the father. Everything about how this situation was handled was so distasteful. I can't even.

I was also mildly unhappy with the way McCaffrey handled the introduction of a group of Masai the Botanicals rescued. It seems they were viewed in some kind of noble savage way, especially in the beginning, with their grotesque misogyny being excused as just being their way. Zainel's young sons are sent to live with the tribe since he thinks their ways are more compatible with the Cateni warrior ethos. But, then it gets way worse when, later, a group of misbehaving human teenaged orphans are also sent there to have some discipline knocked into them. Kris has no problem with the one teenaged girl in the group being treated as chattel, a kind of drudge who is threatened with the FGM practiced by the tribe. The attitude is that the girl is a slut who needs to be reined in. Really, Kris? This from you? After the FGM discussion, Kris leaves the girl there without a backward glance or further thought. It was all so sickening. I barely like Kris the Magnificent anymore.

I also found Kris's behavior towards the Cateni women and children who are sent to Botany for safety to be unsatisfactory. Yes, the women were spoiled and arrogant as they were used to thinking of themselves as

superior to other races and did nothing for themselves since that's what they had slaves for. That's offputting, but they didn't know better. Kris was tasked to be in charge of them and, because she didn't want to deal, had them all dumped in one of the enclosed valleys on their own to fend for themselves. They hadn't brought many useful items so they were given some basic supplies and ration bars, and that was it. Later on, someone else made the very valid point that most of the Botanicals themselves didn't have the skills necessary to survive on their own and had relied on others with better/different skills to show them the way. So, right before they were picked up for return, they finally showed the Cateni refugees a few helpful things. Oh, and they were very unattractive. Whereas some Cateni men were attractive to humans, there was no way a Cateni female would be. Guess that means even less competition for Kris. Given that these women were the mates of Cateni men who were risking everything to overthrow the eosi and earn freedom for Cateni, humans, and all the other races, I think that Kris and the Botanicals should have made an effort to put themselves out a bit more rather than shunning and belittling them.

There's more but I'm just too fed up and exhausted to itemize it all. I've started the 4th--and last--book and can't wait for it to be over.

D

Mike (the Paladin) says

Called a space opera...good word.

kingshearte says

OK, I really would like to talk more about the story, but I'm just so distracted by what McCaffrey has made Kris into, which is truly appalling. In the last book, I was incensed because Kris was, in effect, raped while drunk. Bad enough that McCaffrey trivialized the fact that that *does* happen to women by treating it as no big deal, and even making it into an "oopsie!" that Kris just accidentally cheated on her man. But would you believe that it happens *again* in book 3? This time I definitely wouldn't call it rape, because in this instance, they were clearly both way far gone. But it still further trivializes what happened to her in book 2, and frankly makes me despise her as a character. I mean, I know I said in book 1 that I wanted her to have flaws, but come on. Such an utter lack of self-respect, or self-restraint, or I don't even know, that you'll sleep with anyone handy every time you have a bit too much to drink? Especially when you claim to be in a committed relationship already? That's mind-bogglingly appalling, in my opinion. She's bloody lucky that Zainal seems to have no problems with any of this, and just appears thrilled that there are babies (Oh, I didn't mention that part? Yeah, she gets knocked up while drunk *again*.), but seriously? I would kind of love for him to start sleeping with other people, and when she objects, be all "Oh, are we not in an open relationship? I'm sorry, baby, I must have gotten the wrong idea from your willingness to give it up to anyone handy whenever you get drunk." I mean, seriously? WTF? I truly cannot fathom why McCaffrey turned this character into this? The only thing I can think is that, in order to not anger the feminists too much by having Kris just capitulate to the demand for her to bear children more or less against her will, McCaffrey thought she'd get around it by having her have the babies, but their conception is totally not her fault. Except that making her the kind of woman who basically makes herself helpless and available after a few drinks is so unbelievably anti-feminist that that couldn't possibly be the reason. But what other explanation is there? It's truly baffling.

I'm probably taking this too seriously; after all, it's really just a piece of fluff sci-fi. But I just find the whole situation so repulsive, and it makes me pretty much despise Kris. I wasn't fond of her before, because she was too perfect, but this? It's gross, and I can't stand her anymore. Which is really unfortunate, because McCaffrey normally really is so good at creating likable, strong female leads. I really like almost all of them, and if they dropped into my universe, I would love to be friends with them. But Kris? I don't think I'd want to have anything to do with her.

Caitlyn says

This series has a lot of promise, a compelling concept and interesting characters, but it fails to deliver. There is too much plot, scant character development, and a distinct lack of conflict between characters. While there are some promising set ups for dramatic opportunities, they go unrealized. This series is not McCaffrey's best and is a disappointment.
