



## Review of **SpaceWoman** by *Ann Greyson*

Customer Rating:  5 out of 5

### A Rare Kind Of Work Conceived By A Woman

by **Andrea Esparra**

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**SpaceWoman** is a spirited and imaginative sci-fi romp — equal parts adventure and hilarity. The novel deftly blends captivating characters with vivid world-building, and thought-provoking themes with quirky humor. This sci-fi story is true creativity and originality, making it perfect for young readers with a taste for fantasy and excitement. It seemed like every chapter was a reveal or development, and it read like a movie.

Set in a richly detailed interstellar society, the story follows the inquisitive and courageous Neruda, who is on her way to becoming the first Mayorfant to venture into space in over three centuries. Her first planned mission to the planet Z'arva comes to an end when her starship is misidentified as a weapons cargo transport by the hostile Arachtor smugglers (who don't recognize her species and dub her the SpaceWoman). The descriptions of the starship's alerts, and the moment she encounters the Arachtor intruders aboard her ship is particularly well-done. Neruda's growing sense of panic, unsure of whether to fight or flee, works well to create a sense of urgency. You really feel the pressure building when Neruda realizes the situation is spiraling out of control. Her decision to set the starship to self-destruct and eject in an escape pod is logical given the circumstances.

Further along in the story author Ann Greyson developed it into something more. It became a broad landscape filled with political intrigue, interstellar conflict, military strategy, and an array of eccentric characters — from smugglers like the Praloon Infiltrator to the dissident droids of the Perennis Prime space station floating in the Garynx Nebula. The commander droid of the station, Golo-DEX's blend of logic and icy mechanical nature juxtaposes nicely, giving him a lot of depth, especially as he shifts from mild irritation to outright fury. The back-and-forth between his second in command droid, Syn Dat, introduces another layer of tension, which balances Golo-DEX's intensity and creates a dynamic that builds suspense.

With a new starship and crew, Neruda aims to travel to Z'arva — and beyond. At long last, she meets her Hantavant cousins, only to find out that they view themselves as superior to all others. A funny example is the Hantavant docent of the Maroni Educational Institute who has hints of condescension in his demeanor — he's not just self-promoting Hantavant propaganda, he's performing it. Greyson skillfully shows that Neruda and her first officer Welby, despite feeling awe and a bit of intimidation from Z'arva's inhabitants, still retain their sense of dignity. The ridiculousness of the Hantavants' self-glorification drama comes to a head when the Mayorfant characters share a knowing look and a roll of their eyes.

Back on her Sakros homeworld, Neruda seems to regret introducing the Mayorfants to bejeweled objects, she'd obtained from a Jarakan miner during her time on the planet Agrossa. Because this plays a role in the Mayorfants' long-delayed return to space. The sudden demand for custom-designed flashy, eye-catching accessories aren't just physical objects but a symbol of a cultural shift in the Mayorfant society, indicating an obsessive focus on outward appearance and status. This societal change becomes a source of conflict for Neruda who feels even more disconnected and alienated, drawing her toward deep-space exploration.

The **SpaceWoman** galaxy's political conundrums, and explosions add excitement to conflicts stemming from mistrust, demonstrating the tangible effects of miscommunication between alien civilizations. These plot elements steer the narrative into an epic, space opera thrill ride with an underlying tone that space is not a static void to be conquered, but a vastness of unpredictability, insight, and constant adaptation. Yet, at the book's heart, Neruda the **SpaceWoman** finds purpose in a constantly changing universe that reshapes her life path.