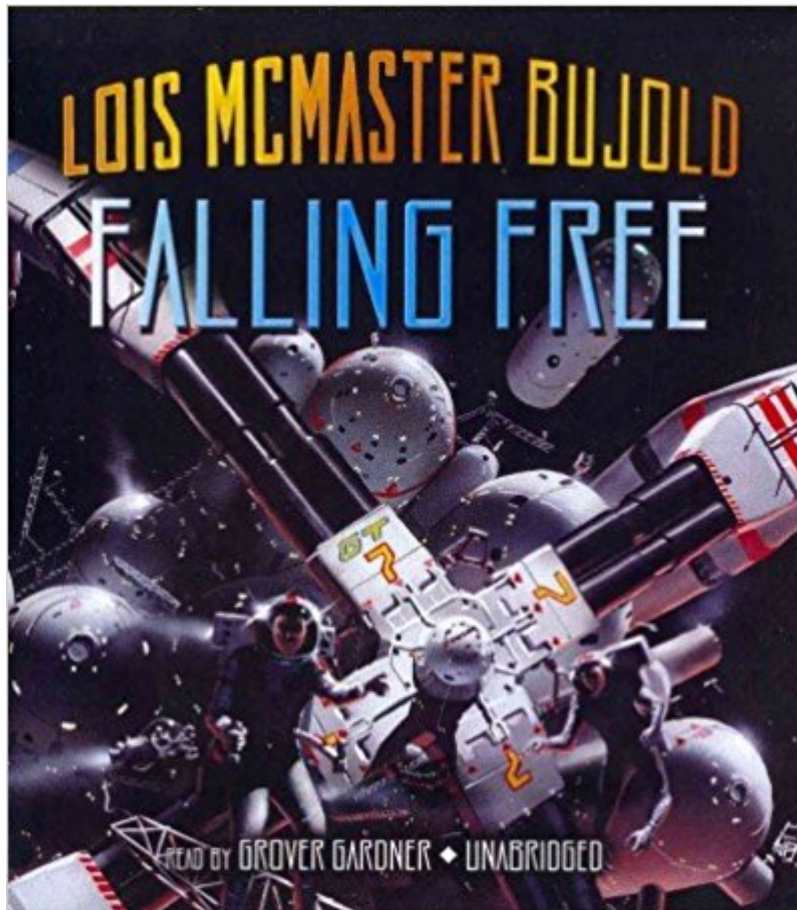




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Falling Free (Miles Vorkosigan Adventures)



Synopsis

[Read by Grover Gardner]Leo Graf is confronted with a moral dilemma when he is assigned to work at the Cay Habitat, where a group of humanoids have been secretly bioengineered as workers for capital gain.

Book Information

Series: Miles Vorkosigan Adventures (Book 1988)

Audio CD: 1 pages

Publisher: Blackstone Audio; Unabridged edition (August 1, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1433250861

ISBN-13: 978-1433250866

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.7 x 5.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 113 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #5,073,103 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in [Books > Books on CD](#)
> [Authors, A-Z](#) > ([B](#)) > [Bujold, Lois McMaster](#) #3398 in [Books > Books on CD > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction](#) #4009 in [Books > Books on CD > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy](#)

Customer Reviews

This recording, based on a Nebula Award-winning sf novel, centers on the moral dilemmas created when a bioengineered breed of humanoid workers are considered capital assets. The narration is shared between Michael Hanson and Carol Cowan, who handle the male and female roles, respectively. The narrators attempt to give each character a unique voice, and although they succeed, the subtle nuances of a single reader are absent. Perhaps more disturbing is the lack of messages instructing the listener on such things as when to turn the cassette over and when to insert a new cassette. The packaging is also a problem, as this reviewer cut his finger on two separate occasions while trying to extract a cassette. Regrettably, not recommended. Ray Vignovich, West Des Moines P.L., Ia. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

A good audiotaped version of the unabridged Bujold novel. Bujold's best work in my opinion. --
Science Fiction Chronicle, July 1996
An engineer sent to an orbital habitat to reach free-fall welding

to genetically altered space workers finds his work goes far beyond teaching skills when his discovery involves him in life-and-death scenarios on the station, and in issues which challenge moral and ethical philosophy. Enhanced by a dual narration by Michael Hanson and Carol Cowan, this unabridged science fiction thriller is remarkably engrossing. -- Midwest Book Review Bujold's literary style is militaristic, scientific and well suited to the audio format. As narrated by Michael Hanson and Carol Cowan (he does the male points of view, she the female) the characters are lent a strength and presence they might not legitimately have in print alone. Like the slogan on the cassette box says, *Falling Free* is a "good story well told." Hints of what it might be like living in null-G are well-integrated into the plot, and the story itself arises fairly believably out of mostly-believable characters. I'd never before experienced a book on audiotape. I was doubtful of the enjoyableness of the experience, but am now a complete convert. It's a great, rewarding medium, and not just for folks with eyestrain. -- Science Fiction Weekly, June 1996

Enhanced by a dual narration by Michael Hanson and Carol Cowan, this unabridged science fiction thriller is remarkably engrossing. -- Reviewer's Bookwatch, July 1996

First I want to tell you that the awards you have received are well deserved! NOBODY can tell a good story like Carol and Michael. The performances are exactly on par, if not better than, the works of art that are read. Audio book companies should place THE READER'S CHAIR as their goal. -- M. P., 8/1/98

I am anxiously awaiting the release of Lois McMaster Bujold's "The Vor Game". I have listened to "Barrayar" and "Warriors Apprentice" -- loved them both; and have just ordered "Falling Free" and "Shards of Honor". Thank you for supplying such a superior product! -- glaboy, 03/05/98

Michael Hanson's and Carol Cowan's narrative talents mesh nicely, creating distinctive voices for the Nebula Award-winning novel's characters through pacing, tone of voice and emotional shading. This production shows dual narrators can enrich the listening experience. -- AudioFile, Nov/Dec 1996

The performance of Michael Hanson and Carol Cowan in this Nebula Award-winning novel is the kind of work you would like to hear with all audiobooks. These two readers among the best of the current crop of narrators. -- St. Louis Post-Dispatch, June 6, 1996

The story and interpretations are great. -- KLIATT, November 1996

The unique format, in which Hanson takes on all the male roles and Cowan the female, is very effective. The story itself is an exciting and imaginative science fiction tale. Highly recommended. -- Billboard Magazine, July 27, 1996

--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

How the heck did I miss reading any of these in SciFi reading career? I cut my teeth on Tom Swift, first editions I bought with lawn mowing income. This is hands down the best SciFi series of books

I've ever read. I bought the first one and simply couldn't stop. The Flying Spaghetti monster only knows how many hours of sleep I missed and how much work time I procrastinated to read these books. I read them in the order the author recommended and they were right on target. Don't put it off, just buy them all now, tell your wife and kids goodbye and read your heart out.

Two hundred years before the birth of Miles Vorkosigan, in a habitat orbiting the planet Rodeo, a genetically engineered people, nicknamed the "Quaddies", have been created as a labor force to work in null gravity, their lower appendages being arms rather than legs as in standard humans, or "downsiders". The quaddies are not human in the eyes of their creators, they are "post-fetal experimental tissue cultures", raised in a controlled environment and taught not only space construction but also how to maintain a largely self-sustaining environment in their orbiting home. Though many of the quaddies are technically adults, their carefully structured upbringing gives them the attitude and dependency of children. The quaddies are a profitable commodity, their bodies engineered so that they do not need time off in gravity as humans do in order to maintain their health. As "property" of GalacTech they are unpaid labor, dependent on their creators for their every need. Leo Graf is a welding engineer, brought to Cay Habitat to teach a select group of quaddies how to build reliable, stable structures in space. Though only in his 40's, Graf feels like an old man compared to the eager young quaddies who attentively hang on his every word and whose ability to function in a no-gravity environment is far superior to his own. From his arrival, Graf is set on edge by the attitudes that project manager Bruce Van Atta and psychologist Dr. Sondra Yei demonstrate towards the quaddies and the more he gets to know them the more their condition grates on his sense of what is right and wrong. Leo Graf can teach these young people how to do quality work that will last a lifetime, but can he teach one thousand quaddies, one thousand children, what it means to be free? Leo Graf is based on Bujold's father, Robert Charles McMaster, a Professor of welding engineering and the pioneer of the nondestructive technique. Falling Free won the Nebula Award for Best Novel in 1998. Falling Free touches on relevant social and biomedical topics while creating an instant emotional bond with readers through Leo Graf and a few all-too-human quaddies. Though the story occasionally feels rushed and might have benefited from another 50-100 pages to flesh out story threads (it weighs in at 255 pages in the version I read) it stands as a shining example of why Lois McMaster Bujold has developed such a devoted following. I highly recommend the book. Falling Free will get your dander up, a calculated move on Bujold's part to make the

reader sympathetic to the quaddies plight right from the opening chapter. The first time Bruce Van Atta calls the quaddies "chimps", you ache for the magical ability to step into the book so that you can land a punch squarely on his smug jaw. The story isn't meant to be subtle, a move that may have been dictated in part because Bujold wrote it to be published serially in Analog magazine, also as a tribute to her father who was a fan of that Astounding-style hard SF. It is clear from the beginning that this story will be about not only what it means to be human but also will address freedoms and rights and fairness and equality. It is a measure of great praise that Falling Free never feels preachy or so focused on social issues that it takes away from the story. Instead Lois McMaster Bujold lays her cards on the table early and then gets down to the business of telling an emotionally engaging, action-packed story that not only offers imaginative science fictional ideas but gives the reader a few well-rounded characters to root for. On the surface a few of the early-identified "bad guys" are one-dimensional, but Bujold also plays with that in ways that will surprise the reader. For certain she gives you a character to despise, but she also creates characters with genuine reactions who must wrestle with moral and ethical implications, particularly in the character of Leo Graf. While I would recommend this story to anyone, it must be pointed out that on a couple of occasions the welding conversations get quite technical. It is apparent that Bujold did her research and aimed to do her father proud. However, those scenes fall short of being plot-stoppers in large part because of the way in which Bujold sets the scene. It is difficult to become too lost with the welding and engineering references when you are imagining a room full of quaddies hovering (literally) in an attentive fashion around their teacher, Leo Graf. Graf is a great character for the reader to inhabit and quaddies like Tony and Claire, their infant Andy, and Silver (pictured in Dave Seely's cover image) will steal your heart. You will start rooting for them early and won't stop until the exciting finish. I was tempted at one point late in the book to let out a cheerful "whoop"! I mentioned in the opening that I wish the story had been somewhat longer. There are a few scenes in the story that feel rushed, and one that happens off-screen and then is related in dialogue, that if fleshed out would have easily made this a 10/10 story. From an experiential standpoint, that is exactly what Falling Free was for me. I can overlook that minor complaint because I liked these characters so much and found the story to have just the right amount of excitement and romance to keep me up until the wee hours of the morning to discover how it would all end. Falling Free comes highly recommended. If you have yet to try Bujold, this is a great starting off point. In researching to write this post I was excited to discover that we learn more about the fate of the quaddies in the Miles story Diplomatic Immunity.

"Falling Free" is a fun sci fi adventure novel. It involves a lot of various topics. Some of them are: life in a space station, corporate power, zero gravity effects, and genetic manipulation of human beings. Positives: Good plot and story. Good dialogue. Nice pace. Interesting living in space considerations. Negatives: A few more typos than I expected. A bit of a caricature of the "bad guys". Overall a fun read. My rating is B

There is good solid science, plot, and characters. I really hate to provide book reports in reviews. I find it fun to explore the story and I hate to spoil that for potential readers. There is plenty of action and drama in every chapter. Kudos to Bujold for this work. I am reading the Vorkosigan series and this book doesn't seem to fit into that series other than descendants of this book's population pop up in the other story lines. I enjoyed this story much more than the other books, even though they are wonderful works.

Intensely interesting story line, plot twists, and great character development. You're very invested in the future and well being of the characters.

Set 200 years before the Vorkosigan saga begins, this is the story of the beginnings of the Quaddies. They are a bio-genetic engineered race of people, created to live in free fall (the state of no gravity in space) with minimum damage to their bodies. What happens to such a people when there are no laws to give them human status? They are classified as organic matter belonging to the company which created them. What happens when their usefulness to said company becomes obsolete? Bujold creates memorable characters and moral situations. She asks us to think about things not in a knee-jerk way, but in a long-term consequential way. She doesn't preach, she shows. For me, the technical bits went on too long and with too much detail, but I'm sure other folks love those bits.

Outstanding original science fiction, especially the concept of the "quaddies". Well drawn major characters and a wealth of technical engineering detail portraying survival in space and null gravity. Most authors would have milked the theme for at least a trilogy (or septology), but Bujold has gone on to many more original themes.

It took me a while to orient myself into the story, maybe because I had not read this author before.

The characters were familiar but none were completely developed to a satisfying level. This was also true of both the conflicts and incidents yet despite my desire for more depth I really enjoyed this read and will read more by this author. It was perfect holiday reading after a tough term teaching.

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