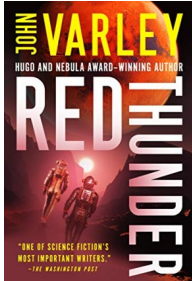




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Red Thunder
By John Varley
Discussed September 2004

Discussion Questions

1. How does *Red Thunder* compare to other John Varley books you have read (such as *Steel Beach*, one of the previous Book Discussion subjects – or the Gaeen Trilogy: *Titan*, *Wizard*, *Demon*)? If this was the first John Varley novel you'd ever read, would you want to read more? Is there any GLBT content?
2. *Red Thunder* has often been compared with *Rocket Ship Galileo*, one of Heinlein's first juvenile novels. How do you think it compares with *Rocket Ship Galileo* or any of the other the Heinlein juveniles? How does it compare to the semi-fictionalized storyline in the film *October Sky*?
3. What do you think of the science: building a spaceship out of (essentially) junkyard parts vs. the "Squeezer bubbles"?
4. If you have read any of the "indies in space" stories listed below, how does *Red Thunder* compare/contrast? What does Varley (or, indeed, any of the "indies in space" stories) seem to be saying about Government-backed space programs (in general) and NASA (in particular)?

Books/stories with similar themes:

Fiction:

Flynn, Michael. *Firestar* (1996) - first novel in the "Star" series
Graham, Daniel, Jr. *The Gatekeepers* (1995)
Heinlein, Robert A. *Rocket Ship Galileo* (1947)
Ligon, Tom. "Amateurs" (*Analog*, July 1996)
Koman, Victor. *Kings of the High Frontier* (1998)
Niven, Larry, Jerry Pournelle, & Michael Flynn. *Fallen Angels* (1991)
October Sky (Universal, 1999; dir. Joe Johnston)
Verne, Jules. *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865)

Non-Fiction:

Ligon, Tom. "Prospectus" (*Analog*, July 1996)
Stine, G. Harry. *Halfway to Anywhere: Achieving America's Destiny in Space* (1996)