



## Saltation

*Sharon Lee , Steve Miller*

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Theo Waitley is a Nexus of Violence

Thrust mid-year into a school for pilots far from the safe haven of her birth home on scholarly Delgado, young Theo Waitley excels in hands-on flying while finding that she's behind the curve in social intricacies as well as in math.

After surviving a mid-air emergency with a spectacular mountain-top landing in her training soar plane Theo's notoriety brings her attention from local thugs as well as a gift from Win Ton, a scout pilot she enjoyed a flirtation with on her first space voyage. When Win Ton appears on campus Theo throws herself into a relationship even as he's on his way to a Liaden marriage-bed.

Meanwhile her mentors try to guide her studies and training into the channels best suited to her special abilities and inclinations, including suggesting that she should join in the off-world student association, a plan resulting in mixed success. After a series of confrontations, fights, and ultimately a riot after which she is thanked for not killing anyone, Theo is named a "nexus of violence" by the school's administration.

Facing suspension and carrying little more than hastily procured guild card, a pistol taken from an attacker, and the contents of her pants pockets, Theo must quickly decide if she's ready to return to Delgado in disgrace, or launch herself into the universe as a freelance pilot with credentials she's already earned.

Praise for the Liaden Universe series:

"Every now and then you come across an author, or in this case, a pair, who write exactly what you want to read, the characters and personalities that make you enjoy metting them.... I rarely rave on and on about stories, but I am devoted to Lee and Miller novel stories." - **Anne McCaffrey**

"These authors consistently deliver stories with a rich, textured setting, intricate plotting, and vivid, interesting characters from fully-realized cultures, both human and alien, and eachbook gets better." -

**Elizabeth Moon**

## **Saltation Details**

Date : Published April 13th 2010 by Baen (first published January 4th 2010)

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Author : Sharon Lee , Steve Miller

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## From Reader Review Saltation for online ebook

### Dan says

A great story! 4/25/16 re-read: Well, Theo's life gets more and more interesting. I love how the books in her series synch with the main series. Superb!

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### Joy says

I bought the e-ARC from Baen because I'm a badass, I mean pathetic addict, like that. This book technically wasn't out until April. Theo Waitley goes off-planet to study to be a pilot--but chaos erupts and, being found at the center of it, Theo must deal with bigger and more thorny problems than ever before--even problems that involve going to the delm of Korval.

This book ended exactly where *I Dare* ended. My torture continues, and *Ghost Ship* won't be out for quite some time...

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### Jacqueline says

This book was much better than *Fledgling*. I did feel that there were parts at school that could have used a bit more explanation than was given. I do like authors that don't info dump but rather sprinkle info in. But here there was a little too little in spots. The story was not real linear in that unlike for example "Conflict of Honors" earlier in the series where there was a strong plot with action and reaction, closely following, it was more "here's some stuff that happened to develop Theo's character over the course of 4 or 5 years". So plot was lacking a bit. Like another reviewer said I thought the end was rushed. I love the whole Korval is pilots and ships thing so I would rather have seen more of her actually piloting and more of Win Ton.

I knew that the book would end where "I Dare" did. It just seemed obvious. So now that I've read these two, I really want to read what happens next which is the book I've been waiting for since I first read "I Dare" when it came out. I really want to see the scene where Theo finds out she is part of Korval. Please don't skip that scene when the story goes on. And please let the story go on from here.

So it could have been better here and there but any Korval story is better than no Korval story. And any Liaden story is better than most sci fi out there. Write faster!

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### Amy says

I just love Sharon Lee and Steve Miller, especially their Liaden space operas. (I was a bit disappointed with Duainfey and Longeye, both a bit too graphic for my tastes.) *Fledgling* and *Saltation* finally tell the story of Theo, who shows up mysteriously at the end of *I Dare*. The intricate plots, delicate politics, and dialogue that has many layers all work together to keep me glued to the story and itching for more once the last page is turned.

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### **Kathleen Lynch says**

The second book of Theo Waitley is even better than the first, and that's a feat. It's good old-fashioned space opera, with elegant writing, well-drawn characters, and enough hooks for future development to keep all series fans happy for almost as long as it takes Lee and Miller to produce the next installment! *Fledgling* is the first book of this arc, but if you really wish to dig in, there's a whole universe built around Liad. (Theo's paternal ancestors are Liaden, although her mother is earth-human.) Eventually I'll put up at least brief reviews of all of the many Liaden novels.

Theo, having escaped the ultra-safe world of her childhood courtesy of a scholarship to piloting school, bounces to the opposite extreme, finding danger wherever she goes. As a student pilot, she follows directions faithfully and pilots her unpowered craft so well that a) she avoids being shot out of the air by government planes pursuing an insurrectionist, and b) becomes a celebrity among pilot-kind. The clumsiness which plagued her childhood has resolved into extreme physical skills which show up as a pilot, as a dancer, and a ball-player. She does not have the ability to fly "under the radar" and remain anonymous, and therefore even playing a sort of super-handball, a game popular among pilots, she is considered DANGEROUS! If I go farther along this line, I'll need to click the spoiler alert.

Sharon Lee and Steve Miller as co-authors guarantee a book with breathtaking action, characters who endear themselves to the reader, and serious issues of individual responsibility.

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### **Laura (Kyahgirl) says**

5/5; 5 stars; A+

I really enjoyed this book. It focuses on Theo's late teen years and her time at the piloting academy. The story is a delightful exhibition of the 'luck' that swirls around these blessed (burdened?) with the yos'Phelium genes. There are quite a few interesting developments in Theo's life and it becomes clear that the plot line is heading towards clan Korval. The last few pages are identical to those of 'I Dare' thus bringing the two stories together in time.

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### **Gary says**

3.5 stars

A direct follow-up to *Fledgling*, *Saltation* finds teenage Theo Waitley at pilot school, learning that her natural talents come with benefits and drawbacks.

Characterization, along with the comforting gentility of Lee's and Miller's Liaden Universe, are the selling points here. Sometimes the pacing is a little slow, but the reader's patience is rewarded.

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## **Lis Carey says**

Theo Waitley has survived the tough year that culminated in pilot school on a planet very different from Delgado. Along the way she caught the attention of Master Pilot Captain Cho, and now she has a scholarship to an elite piloting academy. Surely now she'll fit in?

But no. She's behind in some things, ahead in others, and learned self-protection makes her seem to be looking for a fight far too often. And as she catches up on her math, and finally starts to make friends aside from her roommates, political conditions on this planet are changing. The offworld piloting students, especially the Liadens, are less and less welcome. And Theo, despite having just recently learned of her parentage, is obviously Liaden. After a series of incidents, Theo is declared "a nexus of violence," and expelled. To get offworld quickly, she takes her recently obtained guild card, and signs on as an apprentice pilot with a trading company.

Her life has only begun to get interesting.

Momentous events elsewhere produce major changes in trade routes, and her employers want to move quickly to take advantage of the openings. She gets a disturbing message from her old friend Win Ton, saying he needs to see her in person immediately.

And what Win Ton has to tell her creates even more trouble.

This is a fun, fast-paced book. It suffers some of the disadvantages of being a middle book in a sequence, but the characters we know continue to develop, the new characters are developed nicely, and there's enough background included, I think, to let new readers catch up.

I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Recommended.

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## **Red says**

The continuing saga of Theo Waitley. In this sequel to *Fledgling* Theo goes off to pilot school, sponsored (paid for) by her friend Pilot Cho. Starting in the middle of the term with a small group of students, she again feels like an outsider amongst her peers. She makes friends with her unlikely roommates, concentrates on her studies, and finds herself embroiled in events beyond her control, and political understanding. Once again purposefully misunderstood by questionable authority figures, she is eventually unfairly decreed a "Nexus of Violence". What happens after that finally closes the gap and ties into the final scenes in Lee & Miller's Liaden Universe novel, *I Dare*.

All of the above was from reading the online first draft. I just finished the published version and it was fabulous. A lot more depth than the 1st draft, and now I am left hanging, waiting while the next book is being written.

Update (1 year later): *Ghost Ship* is out and after 30 pages I realize I don't remember enough of the details of this part of Theo's journey. Since *Ghost Ship* starts up mere minutes after *Saltation & I Dare end*, I thought

I'd better revisit. Still loving it!

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## Sbuchler says

Genre: Science Fiction

*Saltation* was a disappointment after *Fledgling*. It felt like a book without a plot. It's obviously the middle book in the series and it seemed mainly to focus on getting Theo from the end of *Fledgling* up to the point in time when we met her at the end of *I Dare* e.g. she has to develop a complicated problem that is worth bringing to Delm Korval (whom Theo doesn't know, and in fact doesn't even realize that she has a claim on Korval).

Now, I think the complicated problem is interesting – in that I've been wondering when/if Lee & Miller would get back to the “Old Tech” stuff that was strongly hinted at in *Balance of Trade*. However, I'm not sure that I see it as a compelling problem for anyone but Theo and Win Ton. I'm not sure it should compel Korval to act. Even if Theo is Korval's problem, Win Ton isn't, so I'm still not sure a positive result from the application is justified... except that long-time readers know Korval has a tendency to stick their noses in business beyond their own. There's also the question of does Korval agree with the Scouts on the question of Old Tech? On a meta-level I'm sure they don't 'cause that would mess up Theo's story by putting her in an adversarial role, but there's no reason internal to the story to believe that. Anyway, I found it rather disconcerting that the entire compelling problem is plopped in Theo's lap in a rather long “info dump” scene near the end of the book. It doesn't build up or get out of control nor is it slowly discovered during the course of the book; instead it's presented gift-wrapped at the end.

The book is rather choppy. First Theo's in school, and we meet all those people, then she's kicked out and starts working as an apprentice pilot, and we meet new people and an entirely different set of concerns. Finally Win Ton comes back onto the stage and dumps his complicated problem in Theo's lap. The only real through-line in the book is Theo and Win Ton's romance... and it's hardly much of a thread; they have two scenes together an a couple letters over the course of 3-5 years, where in both have other, off-screen intimate relationships. Plus, their relationship went from close friends to mutual romantic infatuation during the interval between *Fledgling* and *Saltation* which robbed me of the fun of reading about the transition. Not that it wasn't clear in *Fledgling* that Win Ton was meant to be Theo's romantic lead... but their relationship hadn't developed that way yet.

I think part of the reason the book feels like it has no plot is that, except for her romance, Theo lacks agency. She spends the entire book reacting to outside forces (which are different in the different phases of her career, so there's not even that consistency). Theo doesn't take the initiative and act, which makes Theo running to Korval with her and Win Ton's complicated problem a less then satisfactory solution.

The entire series has an over-arching theme of fighting against anti-foreigner sentiment (and conversely propounding understanding between cultures). We see that again in this book during Theo's time in school. However, previously the main characters were actively engaged with the problem. Theo just gets caught in the cross-fire. It also seemed a bit repetitive given that this version of anti-foreigner sentiment seen in *Saltation* is very similar to that propounded by the Department of the Interior in Liad. However the world isn't Liaden, there is presumably a different political agenda at work. I think *Fledgling* was much more successful at showing a previously unexamined ways such anti-foreigner sentiment plays out and affects the societies that spawns it. The anti-foreigner issues in *Saltation* just felt like a repeat of stuff we'd seen

previously.

There were a number of inconsistency errors (mostly between *Fledgling* and *Saltation*) that I could shrug off... but I think it's telling that I noticed them rather than being too caught up in the story to do so.

I realize this sounds like a very negative review. Despite all my complaints I don't feel like the book was a waste of time. I like the Lee & Miller's Liaden novels a lot, so I had high expectations. I think my disappointment is mostly due to those expectations. The book is extremely good at making me want to read the as-yet-unwritten sequel! (Which rumor says is named *Ghost Ship* and is due out in 2011.)

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### **Doranna Durgin says**

Miller & Lee are pretty much THE best at working the micro-view of personal stakes with high-stakes macro view happening in the background. This book is no different, and of course it's couched in the unique Liaden-verse.

Although publisher Baen doesn't identify it as such, it's the second of two books about Theo Waitley, and is tied into the series closely enough so this second book ends at the same point as *I DARE*. I believe there's more to come.

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### **Michael Smith says**

“Saltation,” the authors tell us, is “that which proceeds by leaps rather than by smooth and orderly progression.” That describes Theo Waitley, certainly. The “space academy” is a science fiction trope that goes back at least to Robert Heinlein’s classic *Space Cadet*, but Lee and Miller ring a number of new changes on it. In this sequel to *Fledgling*, Theo is admitted to the Anlingdin Piloting Academy on the not entirely stable world of Eylot -- in the middle of the academic year, which immediately puts her off-balance. But, as she will eventually figure out, Theo was literally born to be a pilot and she quickly makes her mark, and the friends and enemies to go with it. Delgado, where she was born and grew up, is a strict “safe” world so the necessary adjustment to the occasional controlled violence of the piloting life is considerable. But she’s also the focus of special sympathetic attention from several of the Academy’s senior instructors and administrators, who make sure she’s prepared when politics and peer pressure result in her being ejected before graduation. Still, she has her 2nd-class license now, and a co-pilot’s berth on a small trading vessel, and she’s not at all the person she was only a few years before. But then Jen Sar Kiladi, her father, disappears abruptly from Delgado and Theo begins to get a glimpse of who he really is. And so she finds herself being drawn into the Korval clan’s orbit on Liad, as well as trying to help her stricken friend/lover, Scout Pilot Win Ton.

As readers will already have suspected, Theo is a *nexus*, destined to play a major role in interstellar politics, whether she likes it or not. And I have the next two volumes of her story standing by.

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## **Cyn Armistead says**

Saltation (Theo Waitley, #2) is good enough that I finished Fledgling (Theo Waitley, #1), then read it in one sitting. It simply has the sort of momentum that doesn't allow for good stopping points — something that is true of many of the Liaden Universe novels.

At the end of Fledgling, Theo was sponsored into pilot school by Scout Cho sig'Radia. Saltation begins with her time there, just as politically naive as ever, but a much more confident person than she was at the beginning of Fledgling. Many of the characters from Fledgling reappear, including Win Ton, Kamele, and Jen Sar. There are new characters too, though, such as Kara ven'Arith and Orn Ald yos'Senchul (who, by the way, also appear in a free story, Landed Alien, that has just been released at the Baen web site and should be read after Saltation).

Theo is a legal adult now, but a very young one, and she has plenty of growing up left to do. That said, this is a young ADULT novel, not a children's book — while it isn't discussed specifically, Theo does take a lover.

She continues to flex and stretch into an admirable heroine. She isn't perfect, by any means, being sometimes short-tempered and not understanding social cues easily. She's someone readers can relate to, though, and that is important. We were brought up concurrent with the end of I Dare, which was vastly satisfying. I will go right on with reading Ghost Ship, because I definitely want to know more!

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## **Kerry says**

REREAD: 23 November 2014 to 25 November 2014 (9/10)

Oooh, I loved this all over again. I think I found all the events making clearer sense this time too, especially at the end, where I got a bit confused last time. Are all the time frames are coming together in some fashion?

I had to stop here last time I read the book because there were no more, and as it ends at the same point as I Dare, even though I had new stories, I didn't get to progress further into the future. It is lovely to have Ghost Ship (Theo Waitley, #3) waiting this time, to move straight on to.

At the point when Ghost Ship was published, I decided it was so long since I had read the earlier books and I remembered so little of the details, that I was going to reread the series before going forward. It's taken me longer to do so than I planned (there are another four books out now, rather than just one after all), but with the end of this book, I feel it was well worth doing.

I have the story so far behind me, I'm as eager to follow Theo's story as I am that on the main members of Clan Korval, and it's time to go forward. Yay.

FIRST READ: 26 May 2010 to 6 June 2010 (8/10)

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**Cindy says**

Excellent followup to Fledgling

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