



Makepeace

Anna Butler

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****Second Place Winner 2016 Rainbow Awards: Best Gay Sci-fi/Futuristic. ****

Returning to duty following his long recovery from the injuries he sustained during the events recounted in Heart Scarab, Shield Captain Bennet accepts a tour of duty in Fleet as flight captain on a dreadnought. The one saving grace is that it isn't his father's ship—bad enough that he can't yet return to the Shield Regiment, at least he doesn't have the added stress of commanding former lover Fleet Lieutenant Flynn, knowing the fraternisation regulations will keep them apart.

Working on the material he collected himself on T18 three years before, Bennet decodes enough Maess data to send him behind the lines to Makepeace, once a human colony but under Maess control for more than a century. The mission goes belly up, costing Albion one of her precious, irreplaceable dreadnoughts and bringing political upheaval, acrimony and the threat of public unrest in its wake. But for Bennet, the real nightmare is discovering what the Maess have in store for humanity.

It's not good. It's not good at all.

Makepeace Details

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From Reader Review Makepeace for online ebook

Jacque says

My overall feeling after finishing Makepeace can be summed up in ten words: Wait, I'm confused. Holy cow! He did what?! That's disgusting! It all begins and ends with the cover which I may never be able to look at again. It is absolutely the perfect cover for this book, but all it can think about is EWWWW!!!! Oh wait, I need to do some backtracking here. Let me start from the beginning.

Bennet has finally been released back to duty after the injuries he sustained from his last mission, only he can't return to Shield yet. So in the meantime, he accepts a tour of duty in Fleet as flight captain on a dreadnought. He's been working on decoding the Maess data he collected from T18, which has him now investigating a former human colony that is controlled by the Maess on Makepeace. Things are not looking too good and he hopes he's wrong but he puts together a mission to investigate what is going on. With the assistance of Commander Warwick on board the dreadnought Caliban and Captain Van Trion on the Shield ship Dhow, an infiltration plan is put in place and possibly rescue any humans they may find.

Where the previous book was more of an emotional rollercoaster, Makepeace is a return to how the series originally started: as a science fiction story with a little bit of romance on the side. The romance is actually where I am confused. No Flynn this time around. Instead, it is...complicated and completely unexpected. How is that possible and why did he even go there? I keep thinking I missed something because well...humph. Okay I'm struggling with it especially with that 'OH!' ending. However, for the sake of not giving things away, I'll be moving on.

The Caliban, Warrick, and the goings on by the Maess on Makepeace was just a jaw dropping shock for me. One I think we were slowly being prepped for through the series, because you knew the Maess were not good from the get go. But, actually reading it in all its gloriously, disgusting details is more than enough to invoke full body shivers. Ms. Butler certainly has a very creative mind and has now provoked me into thinking why on Earth would anyone want to explore space?!

If anything Makepeace has provided is that this is a series that needs to be read in order, no skipping book or jumping in mid-series. There is quite a bit of build-up that is taking place over the series both with fighting the Maess as well as Bennet and his personal life. Both are equally intriguing for me because while I adore a complicated romance I really get off on a Sci-Fi story with all its technical details and what-if possibilities. This isn't a series for everyone but for those of us who prefer to have their stories reaching the far distance of space and time, Taking Shield series is going to scratch that itch and leave you begging for more.

Lada says

Believe it or not, but Bennet was deteriorating as a Shield warrior. Actually, most of the military personnel were unbelievable in their reaction to the war that had been going on for more than a century. I mean, a century of war with drones and unknown alien, imagine how many people had already died in that war, and now you made scenes over a hundred dead people?

I know this is fiction, but let's be a bit realistic. Remember World War II? It's human vs. human war that

lasted only 6 years and 1 day but ended with US dropping nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and killing at least 129,000 people.

The emotional state and moralistic view of the military personnel in this story didn't make them human, it made me question their capability to win and end the century-old war.

And let's not forget the romance subplot where Rosie was now saying, (view spoiler)

I think I'll wait until the whole series finished and published before I read the next book.

Alison says

Spectacularly good. This is the best yet in this amazing series. It's a sweeping story full of action, heart-rending emotion, creepy aliens, magnificent tension, intriguing drama, corruption, and a whole lot of peril. This is book three and it really does not stand alone, so do read the first two books first. This book is completely engrossing and Bennet's personal and professional struggles continue to be riveting and have taken over my brain and my heart. It's full of excitement and feeling and I could not put it down. The writing is fantastic, the world-building is amazing, and the level of detail is impressive and never intrusive. There's a lot going on in this story and it's fast-paced and vibrant. The characters are captivating and believable and so well drawn. Remember that this is not a romance series and there is no contact at all between Bennet and Flynn in this book, though I suspect the next book might be a little different in that regard. This is glorious, exciting space opera and I loved every minute. The ending is fantastic and the fourth book can't get here soon enough.

Kristin says

Review rounded up to 4.5.

This cannot be read as a stand alone. Please read Gyr Falcon and Heart Scarab first if you haven't done so already.

When the book left off in Heart Scarab, I noted in my review I was uneasy. Heart Scarab wasn't quite a cliff hanger, but it had me drumming my fingers on the table going *Hmm...* I was still going *Hmm...* when Makepeace started. I knew this all had to be leading to something, but...what exactly, was the question.

Premise of Makepeace is Bennett has been recovering from his injuries over the last year and filling time by teaching at the University. The Supreme Commander decides Bennett can begin to serve his mandatory rotation out of Shield in the main Fleet. Not what Bennett wants, but it's the fastest way he'll get back to Shield.

Meanwhile, Bennett has found a gruesome discovery on the abandoned planet of Makepeace – the Maess have a colony of humans they are using for what Bennett suspects are experimental projects.

When the Makepeace situation is brought to the Supreme Commander attention, he assigns Bennett and his

counterpart, Felix, to head the task force. Once on the ground on Makepeace, the situation is more horrifying than anyone realized. It only gets worse when the dreadnaught *Caliban* abandon's its post, leaving the mission in peril, and Bennett – who's on the ground – to blame.

Enough recapping – there is so much going on in this book that I can't summarize without writing a small novella myself. Everything is so well interwoven and integrated that it all flows together seamlessly.

The title of the book, as the reader will find out, I think covers a lot of nuances – making peace with himself, his father Caeden, his girlfriend Rosie, and, ultimately Flynn.

A couple things niggled at me, and I fully admit this is coming from my scifi background. I found it difficult to understand why the military/Bennett found what the Maess were doing to the humans so horrific. This is a future society, this is the military, *humans* do horrible horrible things to others, so why the overly dramatic reactions?

The Rosie/Bennett aspect – Rosie wanted Bennett, Bennett thought he wanted Rosie. But when Bennett provided a solution, Rosie was upset and turned Bennett away. Gave me brain skids a bit, even though Rosie hit the nail on the head (purposely being vague and ambiguous...).

Lastly...ARRRRGGHHHH!!!!!! I have to wait for the next book! This should fall under cruel and unusual punishment.

And it's SO worth it!

Review cross-posted at Gay Book Reviews

Book provided by the author publisher in exchange for a fair and honest review. Thank you!

Richard Derus says

Rating: 4.almost-...ya know what, 5* of five

#ReadingIsResistance to thinking all space opera is fluff, made to entertain the SFnal hoi polloi.

MAKEPEACE is anything but fluffy, silly, action-packd stuff. My 5 star review says that it's because its premise and execution made me shiver, hard to do by the third book in the *TAKING SHIELD* series. I should be ready for it. That's why I push y'all to get this series for #Booksgiving 2017.

Okay, I surrender. I am officially Author Butler's fanboy. I'll be reviewing the entire series at my blog this Booksgiving.

A warning for those who follow me down this rabbit-hole: Do not buy the books one at a time. When you get to the ending of this book, you will be *very*frustrated* if the next book isn't already queued up.

I am an old-time fan of space opera. I like the sweep of a long story. I adore space battles (I'm a guy, shut up). Tech talk isn't up there with dirty flirty but it's close. I want to be told stories that make sense (not necessarily in a straight line you understand, just make *sense* please) and I like 'em set in space because SPACE my goddesses what could possibly be more interesting?! I mean in fact as well as fiction. And I'm

also a big old mushball and want my heroes to find love because heroes have hearts too. Sexytimes are fine, but I *need* my men to fall in love as well as get 'em some or why not just watch porn. (For the sake of argument, you understand.)

So here I am telling you to buy the series, ye fans of SF *and* ye readers of love-novels but not expecting sex or romance-novel level involvement in our hero's world. He is the hero, the story isn't totally about him, and his world is rich and densely packed with great stuff.

Susan says

I received a copy of Makepeace from the author Anna Butler in exchange for an honest review. Makepeace is the third in the Taking Shield series. If you like classic sci-fi mixed with issues from contemporary times (as I would argue does all great sci-fi), this is the series for you. The hero Bennet is an intelligent guy who is better with concepts than with people, which leads to his emotional crises in each book. Bennet is part of Shield (think special ops) and his family has traditionally been part of Fleet (think Navy), creating some family issues. Each book of course has space ships, lasers, and much derring-do against an amorphous and implacable foe. Said foe has captured humans being held prisoner on a former human colony lost to the enemy in the centuries-long war. Bennet must rescue the people while trying to learn more about the enemy. The mission does not go as planned, exacerbating political issues back home. And after all that Bennet has to deal with being assigned to his father's ship for a year as part of his rotation out of Shield, thus setting up the premise for the next book in the series. One of my favorite aspects of the series is the culture's grounding in a second-coming of ancient Aegypt, as I am an Egyptologist manqué. This is a truly addictive series, as we see what new perils befall our hero in this well-done future universe.

Joyfully Jay says

A Joyfully Jay review.

4.75 stars

Makepeace builds heavily from the rest of the Taking Shield series, which must be read in order. When we last left Bennet, he was recovering from the mess on Telnos and had enjoyed a brief leave with Flynn. These two seem destined to never be together permanently and while that makes me want to scream, it's also feels very realistic and true to the story. It would be easy to just make all the barriers between them vanish, but it wouldn't be believable and I applaud Anna Butler for building a solid, complex story without giving into romance for the sake of romance. This is well-developed science fiction work whose characters happen to be gay. The romance is there, painful and poignant, but off page and backseat to the reality of an intergalactic war.

The action scenes are fanatic here, as throughout the rest of the series. Butler writes taunt, edge of your seat moments where the stakes are legitimate. I will say I felt the situation on Makepeace was resolved a little too quickly and the outcome felt slightly obvious. Still, it's a credit to Butler that even an event that comes off as predictable is still so enjoyable.

Read Sue's review in its entirety [here](#).

G G says

I have followed this series with interest. Gyrffalcon, the first book, was so poorly written and edited that it was barely readable. However, if you were willing to slog your way through the bad writing, there was a good story to be found. The second book, Heart Scarab, was better written. Which brings us to the current book, Makepeace.

It's still an interesting story, but... and that's a big but. Bennet, the hero and central character is a Shield Warrior. Think Navy Seals, Army Rangers, and Delta Force combined. The elite of the elite of warriors. The story deals with his discovery of an enemy installation on a remote planet, where enemy aliens are conducting medical experiments on captive humans. Bennet and his team rescue most of the humans and destroy the installation, but after that, the story falls apart.

For reasons passing understanding, the author has turned Bennet, who is the epitome of a warrior, into a sniveling basket case who spends an entire night crying on his father's shoulders over the things he's seen and been forced to do. That is totally out of character for a warrior, and likewise totally unbelievable. Men, particularly warriors, are not like that, and do not respond to atrocities with tears. The author has taken her character and thoroughly emasculated him. In fact, she might as well have given him a sex change operation, so thoroughly has she feminized Bennet.

PaperMoon says

One thing Ms Butler does well is to create believable sci-fi spaceship settings and conditions into which she places her characters. Like the earlier two books in this series, I was well and truly drawn into the crew banter, oneupmanship, intrigue, wheeling and dealing, political games and corruption. The battle-action and fighting raised my heart-rate accordingly. The vindictive post-action inquiry re: loss of an entire dreadnought battleship was harrowing for Bennet as he ponders his career/fate. I finished the book in one sitting.

Now for the minor quibbles

The focus of this book rests squarely on Captain Bennet's shoulders as he gets sent back into action in a regular Fleet role (instead of his beloved crack-squad team). As he has to re-orientate himself into functioning with a much larger crew and under a superior commanding officer (who saw him grow up from toddlerhood) - the mission takes him to a completely different space sector to investigate very disturbing findings on the planet 'Makepeace'. For readers looking for a reconnection between Bennet and ace-flyer Flynn - be warned. Flynn is onboard a different battleship in a different sector of space under the watchful eye of Bennet's father who is not too thrilled with the boys' relationship. As such, readers expecting M-M action ... there is none. This is an excellent 'action' read however.

As to the truly awful Maess deeds hinted from the advertising blurb (view spoiler)

On the plus side - there is significantly more interaction between Bennet and his father - opportunities to redeem their fractured relationship (one particularly moving scene near the end of the book caused my eyes to tear up). The book does 'clear the deck' of road-block secondary characters (Rosie and Joss) as the author clearly does want to pave the way for more Bennet-Flynn dynamics and action in the next book. And the 'taster' chapter provided at the end is designed as a consolation for those feeling bereft/cheated of the M-M action. After all ... how can there not be ... when Bennet gets relocated back to his father's battleship where there is not only a disapproving parental presence but a further complication with his newly-graduated younger sister who has seemingly set her eyes on Flynn - hmmm. One can only imagine how many fraternization rules are going to be transgressed.

So overall - a 4 star read for me, downgraded from 4.4 stars due to the quibbles mentioned above.

Kaje Harper says

Book 3 in the series, which must be read in order. Bennet is mostly recovered from the injuries he suffered in book 2, and is ready for active service again. He has to take his tour out of Shield, though, and ends up on a Fleet ship, although not his father's with the twin issues of Flynn and his Dad there. Bennet is also still doing his intelligence analysis work, and in so doing he stumbles across a secret project of the Maees which will change him, and may alter the whole war.

In this book we see a Bennet with some of the shine rubbed off him, coping with uncertainties, with decisions when the choices are "bad" and "worse." There is political intrigue, a touch of cold horror, and just a few moments when Bennet and Flynn get a glimpse of what they might have, in the absence of duty and regulations and all that stands between them. The romance is very light in this installment.

This gives us more of Bennet's relationship with his father, and furthers the SciFi plot. The strength of Bennet's reaction to the Maees horrors seems perhaps extreme - man has done to man things that seem equally evil, and Bennet is both a military man and a historian. But perhaps it is tinged by the horror he felt from having once seen a Maees. In any case, the story was engaging and satisfying but once again, the end leaves us waiting for more. Worth it, though.

M'rella says

The. Best.

However, if you are after erotica, UST, romantic relationship... all that, this is not a book for you. This is pure sci-fi with a gay protagonist and a gay secondary character, who in this book is behind the scene. No sex in this installment, which doesn't make this book any less appealing. Like I said pure sci-fi. Love these books to pieces! :D

Saphirablue says

I love this world and its characters (especially Bennet) so freaking much. <3

The plot thickens and the discoveries on Makepeace? OMG. And Bennet having to make all these decisions on the ground and having to deal with Warrick-the-deserter and the fallout from that? *hugs him so much*

This book, no this series, is pure sci-fi in which the main character(s) happen to be gay/bi/pan(?). I love that so much. <3

My heart is aching so much for Bennet and Flynn. They haven't seen each other in two years and now they have to serve on the same ship and the rules and everything else are between them? :(Also, major evil cliffhanger there!

But, my heart is also aching for Rosie. Knowing that she'll lose Bennet and then it happening? *hugs her*

makes grabby hands for the next part

Amazonaute says

Start with the first one.

Good solid continuation.

Bennet's reaction to what he does discover, does convey that they have lost much human history. Or maybe in this alternate universe the people on earth didn't get up to what they did in our universe?

Daniel Mitton says

(Originally reviewed for Love Bytes Reviews with a copy provided by the publisher / author for an honest review.)

I've been eagerly awaiting this book. I thought it was coming out a couple months ago and was sooo disappointed when I found out I was incorrect! You might remember that I read and reviewed the two previous books in this series, Gyr Falcon and Heart Scarab and I was ecstatic over both.

Well, now we have a new installment in the series. Do I like it as much as the previous ones? No. I like it more. I'm loving this universe that the author has created. It is huge, there are aliens, there are space battles and there is political intrigue. Winding through it all is our hero Bennet, the character we've been following since book one.

He has recovered from the injuries he received in Heart Scarab and is now ready to return to active duty. Unfortunately that won't be with Shield, since he is due to rotate out of the super-secret Shield portion of the military and has to serve time in the regular fleet. In addition to his regular duties he still has duties with the super high level secret unit where he and his friend Felix work to decrypt the secrets of the alien Maess.

Something has come up in the data that Bennet found on the planet T18 in the last book. When they decode a horrifying secret, Bennet will have to travel to the planet Makepeace and find out if the secret they think they've decoded is what is really happening on that former human colony world. That journey could change him and the entire human race forever...

I loved this book. I would not recommend reading it as a standalone. These books are the continuing story of Bennet, and the people and events he comes into contact with. This is a mainstream Sci-fi book that just happens to have a gay protagonist. It is not a romance, and I don't believe there is any sex in this one at all.

The world building is phenomenal...with a wide sweeping story and the book is heavy in detail. I highly recommend the entire series if you are a Sci-Fi/Spec Fic reader. I think there is another installment coming in the fall, and the author wets our appetite with a brief teaser at the end of this one. Please make it come quickly!

Carnell says

The ending just about killed me. I read the teaser chapter expecting to learn more about that last scene but of course I didn't get any answer!! Grrrrr!!

Dear Anna Butler,
Why did you do this to us??
What am I supposed to do now??

takes deep breath

While the book is focused on Bennet, my heart broke for Flynn because we do get a few chapters from him and we can see how much he is still hurting after Bennet (And can I just say here how much I love Cruz?). And now that they're going to be on the same ship it's going to get even worse... Regulations are between them and Caeden is watching!

Have to say that when I was told there wouldn't be any interaction between Bennet and Flynn, I was worried I might not like the book (I still have in mind Anna Butler's words but the plot kept me turning pages late into the night, and I'm amazed by Anna Butler's universe.

Book 4 can't get here fast enough! Hear me Mrs Butler? :)
