

From the back jacket

Escape To Freedom City!

Tired of being pushed around by the State? Visit the tropical paradise of Freedom City, anchored just above the Caribbean Sea. Stay at the famous Rabbit's Foot Casino with its gene engineered bunny folk as your hosts, or prowl the Cat House for sex and drugs. Job opportunities abound for brave immigrants, especially if they don't mind growing fur or wearing a cyborg body. Come and live in Freedom, but watch your step!

Because in Freedom City, no one else will watch it for you!

My Thoughts so far – The back jacket of the book is written like a brochure or other advertising material for the adventurous at heart. It promises adventure, intrigue, and quite literally something for everyone. With inviting language and a presentation that just begs you to read further, it's definitely a book that'll make you turn the cover. Written by Phil Geusz, a proven and talented furry author, this is one to read over and over again.

Overall:

I bought this book having recently met and spoken with the author for a little advice on the craft. I was glad to have found a book that was not 'adult romance' in a market saturated with such titles. Personally I was looking forward to a story told for it's own sake, and I was confident given Mister Geusz's success both inside and outside the fandom that this was a tried and proven story that was well worth the read. I was even more pleased when I discovered this book had a second story contained within its covers which was just as good and added to the depth of the universe.

Characters:

Harvey Foote – The lapine founder of Freedom City and the owner of the Rabbit's Foot Casino, Harvey is an anthro rabbit with a taste for liberty and personal responsibility. Big hearted and a wise businessman, Harvey takes his charges seriously. The de facto face of the government and Freedom City as a whole, Harvey leads his people by example.

Stripes McKee – A former human male now turned female Lobby Cat at the Cat House, Stripes McKee is an example of tigress perfection. She provides all manner of romantic services, and is more than happy to please her rather expensive clientele.

Bea Foote – Harvey's wife, Bea is generally a brain in a box, occasionally plugging into a temporary rabbit body to which she can download herself into for short periods. A dutiful and loving wife, Bea provides a strong right arm for Harvey to depend on.

Felix Morris – The present manager of the Cat House, a rival institution to the Rabbit's Foot Casino. The rivalry is a largely friendly one. He is well liked by Harvey Foote even if they are business competitors.

Chris Standish – Only present in "Pilgrim", Chris Standish is a restaurateur seeking to establish a new business under his own terms. He travels to Freedom City in search for a place where he can develop a high-class restaurant that he can run with no one looking over his shoulder. He hides his money from the United States government, and arrives in Freedom City with a plan.

Analysis:

Offering two stories for the price of one, this is an excellent book for its dual value. The first establishes the universe in which it is set. The protagonist is introduced as he spends a morning wandering his city and helping a visitor that helps set the tone for the rest of the book. It is learned that this is a city where being a charity case is the worst thing someone can be. One is expected to carry their own weight, suffer from their own errors, and make their own way. Featuring a protagonist that leads by example the story unfolds at first as a rabbit trying to run his own hotel and evolves into a fight for survival from powerful forces building with or without his help.

The city is established almost as a character in itself, with several locations being established as city landmarks. The cast is filled with a number of different characters providing a mix of flavors, each of them essential to the story's telling. Though the first story is more action oriented, the second is equally as compelling.

The second serves as a guide for someone immigrating to Freedom City in its protagonist, who provides a first hand view to a new arrival that not only intends to come to Freedom City but to stay there as a citizen. He suffers from his mistakes and learns from them, eventually finding his footing. The tale of his business efforts to build a fine restaurant and do it his way is an entertaining and enjoyable tale.

Story Structure:

The story is divided into two main sections. The first features the main story of the book, following Harvey Foote and his attempts to keep Freedom City and the Rabbit's Foot Casino up and running.

The second features the story of Chris Standish, an immigrant to Freedom City that travels there to escape the oppressive and controlling government of the United States of the Foote universe.

Dialogue:

The dialogue in both sections is well written, with an occasional touch of perhaps a slight bit more formality than feels natural. Overall the language flows well from each character to which it is assigned.

Introduction

The prologue features a brief introduction by Freedom City founder Harvey Foote, detailing the rise of his city and the ideals upon which it was built. Freedom of choice, and responsibility for ones actions.

Plot

FREEDOM CITY

The story begins with Harvey Foote listening to some children on a commuter train. He exits, stepping onto a nearby observation area to watch some of the local air traffic and commenting on its rise. It is shortly thereafter he smells human blood and finds a visitor to his city in some distress. After contacting emergency services and fronting the money for his rescue, the rescue personnel chastise the visitor for failing to be aware of local laws as well as that everyone on in Freedom City is expected to carry their own weight. After hearing his story, Harvey takes the ungrateful man to his hotel, the Cat House. After a brief conversation with Lobby Cat Stripes McKee, he meets with Felix, it's owner, and the two address a problem with local casino Aces High together. Afterwards, Felix relates his backers wish to buy him out, or failing that, be bought out by him. Harvey considers it.

Chapter two begins with Harvey's return to Foote Square nearby his establishment. While passing a few employees coming off shift, he meets a Steven Pearson, a young man who has just been transformed into a rabbit, but has clearly not prepared himself properly for the change. After requesting medical aid, he discusses the situation with his wife. After lunch, he meets a young boy who he gets a ticket to see a taping of a child friendly show filmed with gen-engineered bunnies named Huckleberry and Henhouse. After the show, they discuss their contracts and Harvey signs a new deal with them. Retiring to dinner, he reads the paper. After spending some time with his wife, downloaded into her physical body, they discuss the Aces High situation.

Chapter Three sees Harvey begin a normal day. He makes arrangements with his security people, marketing and promotions, and various other departments in an attempt to remove the Aces High from his city. After a few other relatively mundane stops he makes a phone call to Stripes McKee. He needs Lobby Cats, and he'd like her to join him and bring some of the Cat House personnel along. There's only one problem in the way. One of them is a bit peculiar.

PILGRIM

The first chapter introduces us to our second protagonist, who is attempting to set up a business and not having much luck. Much to his chagrin, doing so requires more hoops and conditions than he is willing to deal with, and he declares his intention to emigrate to someplace far more welcoming, Freedom City.

Chapter two features his actual arrival to his new home, along with the introduction of Ahmed, his guide to help him set up in his new home. Chris obtains information and help from his immigration guide, who teaches him the basics of living in a society with no safety nets and no limits.

In the third chapter, he finds a place to live, and from here he begins to consider how to set up his business in this new land.