

From the back jacket

Dale Perkins, a male human, changed by an accident into a chakat, a hermaphrodite felitaur, struggles to come to terms with a new body, new sensations, and a new sexuality. In doing so, shi learns more about himself, hir new species, and how they fit into the mixed human and anthro society.

My Thoughts so far – Presented as a fish out of water story and a transformation tale, it covers the aftereffects of the transformation, a far more interesting story than the transformation itself, which far too often is reversed before the consequences must be dealt with.

Overall: A recommended read for most transformation fans, despite its flaws. The hero, though passive, is forced into a situation he cannot walk away from and must learn to adapt to his new situation. The story is largely solid with no major fatal flaws after the first act. The drawbacks in my mind is that the main characters lack significant depth and the protagonist is mostly a passenger in his own story.

Characters:

Dale Perkins

A fish out of water and arguably the central character, Dale is changed by a transporter accident and left in a new body. While initially starting out as a very generic character with little backstory, he is an essential character that slowly learns how to master his new body and how he fits into a new lifestyle, eventually finding love. Though the story is short, his character is realistic in his search to return to his normal form, though he himself has little to do with the quest itself. Moreover his efforts are spent adjusting to his new body and finding his way. Despite being a passive protagonist, Dale is easily relatable as a young Ensign in the Star Corps, and the aspect of exploring the transformations after effects is a fruitful area of furry storytelling.

Chakat Goldfur

The secondary main character, Goldfur takes custody of Dale after the unlikely set of circumstances that makes him a physical twin of her. Despite having no experience, Goldfur extends her compassion to this new chakat and welcomes him into her home attempting to help him in his new form. Goldfur herself largely remains the same character throughout the book, changing little from her initial presentation.

Chakat Forestwalker

The third main character and Goldfur's sister, she is a doctor who takes primary charge of Dale's care from the moment she meets him.

Analysis:

While a better entry than some of the other works in this same universe, it still has some serious flaws. The protagonist is generally cared for by others, rarely being left to his own devices or needing to find his own solutions to his own problems. He is guided along most of the way by the other characters, who provide nearly everything he needs with little effort. Despite the issues, I recommend this book for any transformation fans.

Story Structure: Split into three main sections, though not necessarily three acts, the story opens with a problem that must be dealt with, and the struggles to solve it.

Dialogue: While largely containing realistic sounding dialogue, the only noticeable flaw in this area is Dale's slurred speech disappears rather quickly into the story and does not return.

Introduction:

As with the other books in the chakat universe, the foundation is somewhat unlikely. Genetic engineers created war beasts for the military, and sex toys for a decadent populace, though as one might ask in such a series as *Blade Runner*, it makes little sense that such a proposition which would cost a small fortune for each unit (assuming each unit is obedient and minimal loss), would be financially practical. *Blade Runner* proposes that it is cost effective to create androids that match humans close enough so that only a complex psychological test can tell the difference. For almost all conventional purposes, such as a warrior or a love slave, such complexity is unnecessary and a poor use of resources. This causes a war (the Gene Wars) which lasts for forty years and wipes out entire nations. As an aftereffect, it is then determined that the morphs are needed to reconstruct the planet and they are given equality as well as creating new creatures such as taurs and chakats. As mentioned in my other review, this is nonsensical, even on a fun level because fantasy elements aside, it is well proven by history that rights are NEVER given to a new group, they must be earned or taken. (See the Women's Suffrage Movement, the United States Civil War, *Star Wars*, *Alien Nation* (TV Series) and so on for further historical and pop culture examples). Secondly, it is unlikely that after forty years of war the resources exist to create genetically engineered life, never mind new custom varieties.

Plot:

The story begins with Chakat Forestwalker arriving at the Star Corps spaceport. Upon her arrival, she finds her sister and a physical duplicate of her, identified as a former Ensign by the name of Dale Perkins. Transformed into a chakat, Dale is stuck in his new form, unable to master proper speech or the ability to walk. He is thusly taken in by Goldfur and Forestwalker, the former of which feels responsible for his well being. Goldfur describes their meeting, which occurred shortly after an EVA. Dale had been returning to Earth with a significant amount of exotic foods and goods. During his transport, an apparent accident occurs. Soon it is proven that the most likely conclusion is sabotage.

Goldfur goes on to explain in a somewhat overly technical fashion how the transporter works. A tale of its early failure is explained, describing the 'mind matrix' that now protects a user's higher brain functions from damage. Returning to its present, Goldfur continues her story. Here, a logical flaw in the story appears. The accident on the station that destroyed the sending pattern had lost Dale's pattern, yet it is able to retain the biomatter from his luggage to create a copy of Goldfur's body for Dale to inhabit. This makes little sense, as while his consciousness can be explained via the 'mind matrix, and Goldfur's pattern was in the receiving buffer, the sending buffer, containing both Dale's pattern and the biomatter used to build a second Goldfur, were both damaged beyond repair.

It is at this point that Dale has decidedly less trouble speaking, and they arrive at Chakat Goldfur's home.