



Archive

from the October 30, 1997 edition

Futuristic Coming-of-Age Stories

James Turner

The Merchanter universe has been enriched yet again by C.J. Cherryh.

Finity's End is a classic coming-of-age story, set against the dying embers of the four-sided war between Earth, Union, the stations, and the Merchanter ships. Fletcher Neihart has lived his young life on Pell Station, studying the indigenous intelligent life on Downbelow, and being persecuted for his heritage as a Merchanter child (the traders who travel between the stations) left behind due to war.

When his dead mother's ship, the Finity's End, comes to pick him up and return him to the insular life of a Merchanter Family, he rebels against everything and everyone in sight. As the Finity's End travels a dangerous but critical mission to forge a new political reality, Fletcher comes to trust and finally become a part of the family he had once resented.

Even though the Merchanter universe is well defined by Cherryh's body of work, the reader can drop right into the story. This latest edition serves both to move the narrative of the Merchanter war toward a conclusion and to allow a more detailed view of shipboard life.

Like "Finity's End," Destiny's Road by Larry Niven is also a coming-of-age story. Jemmy Bloocher is two years away from taking possession of his family farm when he kills one of the mysterious merchants who travel back and forth across the colony planet of Destiny.

Fleeing for his life, he embarks on a trip down the Road. This long strip of fused land was created by the landing jets of the Cavorite, one of the two landing shuttles used to bring people to the planet before it mysteriously disappeared. No one knows what lies at the end of the Road, and Jemmy is driven to discover the final fate of that spacecraft.

At his best, Niven tells travelogues. The gradual growth of Jemmy from a naive young man/boy to a worldly and somewhat cynically pragmatic adult is believable, as are the other characters in this richly textured novel. As with many Niven works, sexuality plays an important role, although always handled tastefully.

* James Turner is technical administrator for the Monitor's Web site.

Watch a video with Editor John Yemma: Who we are, what we stand for

Join Monitor readers and fans on Facebook



- Interact with like-minded fans
- Comment on stories
- Write on our wall
- View staff photo slideshows
- See the new Weekly cover art
- Add our 'Most Viewed' stories application



Click here to start following

LINKS OF INTEREST

- [Chinese toy recalls show need for stringent quality control](#)
- [Crisis summit aims to save Iraq's Maliki](#)
- [South African AIDS activists criticize firing of Madlala-Routledge](#)
- [Hizbullah marks Lebanon war anniversary with pomp and piety](#)
- [Democrats gain among US voters, but support is soft](#)
- [Like the look of a traditional newspaper? Try the](#)

MOST VIEWED

1. [Obama wins over a Montana crowd on healthcare](#)
2. [The war on drugs needs a timeout](#)
3. [Truck bomb signals trouble on Russia's southern flank](#)
4. [Riot shows difficulty of desegregating California prisons](#)
5. [Oops, he did it again: Jamaica's Usain Bolt sets new world record](#)

SETS NEW WORLD RECORD

6. Firefighters make progress against Santa Cruz fire
7. As a CIA spy, I saw in Iran what the West cannot ignore
8. Review: 'District 9'
9. Obama's health ideas elicit support, skepticism in Colorado
10. How tiny Jamaica develops so many champion sprinters

[Home](#) | [About Us/Help](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Archive](#) | [Text](#) | [Corrections](#) | [Make Us Your Home Page](#)
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Rights & Permissions](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Monitor Mail](#) | [Today's Article on Christian Science](#)