

**Title: *Aurora Rising***  
**Author: Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff**  
**Genre: Sci-Fi**

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Yujay A. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Date Reviewed: February 28, 2020**

*Aurora Rising* takes place in the year 2380, in the Milky Way galaxy. Humans have found out how to “fold” through space, allowing travel faster than light. While exploring space, humans have found other sentient species, such as the Betraskens and Syldrathi. Tyler Jones, an 18 year old human, is training at the Aurora Academy to join the Aurora legion as an Alpha, or team leader. The Aurora legion is a peacekeeping force. Every year the top of the graduating class of the Academy get to pick their crew. Tyler is at the very top of his class, and is expected to build the perfect team. However, one day, he rescues a girl from a cryo tank on a spaceship where everyone else is dead, missing the draft. The girl wakes up and starts having strange visions. She says her name is Aurora and that she was on a mission to the planet Octavia III. However, the mission to Octavia III happened 200 years ago, when humans first learned how to “fold” space. Since then, it was discovered that Octavia was inhabitable and that the spaceship of settlers simply disappeared. Tyler’s team is composed of mostly misfits, including a Syldrathi warrior named Kal, a Betrasken mechanic named Fin, an antisocial human genius named Zila, Tyler’s twin sister Scarlett, and Scarlett’s best friend Cat, who is an expert pilot. The misfit team’s first mission seems simple and boring, a supply run to a Syldrathi refugee camp. When they arrive at the station, they realize Aurora snuck onto their ship. For unknown reasons, the Global Intelligence Agency, attacks the station with a warship and arrests the crew along with Aurora. Aurora realizes that she had seen this happening during a vision, and knows that the GIA will try to kill her. The crew break out of their cells and attack the guards, stealing a spaceship and barely escaping. Aurora goes into a coma-like state and uses telekinesis and blasts of energy to kill the GIA agents detaining her. Aurora says that they should go to the World Ship, a pirate enclave. At the World Ship, the group steals a precious artifact called the Trigger, and again escapes the GIA agents. When Aurora touches the Trigger it suddenly cracks, revealing a diamond inside which represents a map of the Milky Way. In it 22 planets are highlighted, and Aurora starts speaking in another voice, saying they must go to the planets and “burn all”. When they take off the masks of one of the agents, they discover that the agent has a plant growing out of her eye. Aurora recognizes the woman as a fellow colonist from the Octavia mission 200 years ago. They believe the plant is a type of parasite taking over the human’s brain. The team decides to go to Octavia III to investigate the colony. When they get there they discover a pollen like glowing substance everywhere. They are attacked by a chimp who is under the influence of the pollen. Cat’s suit is ripped open and she is exposed to the pollen. When Aurora tries to heal Cat, she realizes that Cat is becoming assimilated into Ra’haam, a network of organisms who all operate as a hive. A ship full of the Ra’haam arrive, with Aurora’s father as the leader of the group. He tries to convince her to join them, but she refuses and runs away with the group. The book ends with Tyler declaring that they must defeat all of the Ra’haam.

*Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for non-fiction) keep you interested?*

The plot of *Aurora Rising* definitely kept me interested, as it had many plot twists and action packed scenes.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The pace of the book was just right, allowing you to take in everything but still being fast enough to not be boring

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?*

This book is appropriate for grades 7-12 as there is some strong language and violence.

*What type of reader would you recommend this book to?*

I would recommend this book to anybody who enjoys Science Fiction or futuristic novels would really enjoy this book.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?*

Every chapter in this book is told from the perspective of a different character.

*5 stars: I'm really glad I read this book; it was awesome!*

The book was action packed, as there were many fighting scenes as well as spacecraft chases. There was a lot of suspense and many big plot twists. There was a lot of humor and the characters were all very funny. The author described everything in great detail and you could visualize everything happening. Overall, *Aurora Rising* was a very good book that I would definitely recommend.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Kyle F. 8th Grade**

**Date Reviewed: March 11, 2020**

*Aurora Rising* is a fictional novel that is unique in that the perspective of the story rotates through characters after every chapter. The story takes place from the perspective of a soon-to-be A+ captain, in the year 2380, who is currently processing only one thought through his mind: "I'm going to miss the draft." While this seems to be the least of his worries, this quote is definitely a great way to start a book. He is trapped inside a cryopod which has malfunctioned and sealed itself shut, and the ship he is located inside, the Hadfield, is slowly being ripped apart by the vacuums of space, after a critical failure whilst moving through the "Fold". After rescuing the girl who would later be revealed as Aurora Jie-Lin O'Malley, (who would much later in the story play a big role in the group's survival) the would-be-captain-of-the-best-squad-ever returns to Aurora Station, near the "Aurora" star. The next chapter involves switching perspectives to Aurora, where you learn the captain who saved her life is named Tyler Jones, son of Jericho Jones, the renowned adventurer/captain. He was dubbed "intelligent, loyal to the military", and "has a captain-like voice". Captain Jones's twin sister, Scarlett, and Scarlett's best friend, Cat(Catherine) were at the scene. Scarlett has... somewhat of an interesting personality that can't quite be translated to words, while her best friend Cat, as the book describes, can be bitchy and unpleasant at times, but is always a joy to have around. There are three other main characters, one semi-involved with the plot, and two others just there to bring the mood of "interesting" to the story. There is Kal, the alien warrior with "anger issues", the monotone wiz kid named Zila, and the comedic, sharp tongued fool named Finian, who is pretty much a space technician.

*Did the plot keep you interested?*

I'm not much of a book reader, so my interest jumped in and out. However, as the story reached its climax, I simply couldn't put the book down.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The pace of the book sort of rotated between the three. One chapter there is an intense scene where people start hating on each other, and then the next, everyone is confiding about their problems with their history.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?*

Personally, given the uh... “interesting” comedy and an “intriguing” choice of words, I’d say this book is for 9th Grade and up.

*What type of reader would you recommend this book to?*

I would recommend this book to pretty much anyone who likes futuristic-fiction novels.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?*

The only bit of information I’d give them is this: Don’t skip ahead a few pages by accident, it kinda kills the plot. I know this from experience.

*I enjoyed this book and found it worthwhile reading.* In conclusion, I enjoyed the book, but the plot just felt... off at the end. I understand this is a series, and I shouldn’t be talking, (as I don’t read much) but that ending felt very off to me. In fact, it was practically unnerving. I won’t go into details as to not spoil the book for anyone else, but it was still a very good book.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Owen M. 8th Grade**

**Date Reviewed: April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

The book *Aurora Rising* is a Sci Fi novel that takes place in the distant future, after humans have discovered means of transporting themselves over huge distances in a few seconds. This is called the fold. The fold is a monochromic reality that folds space together, making it faster and easier to travel from point A to point B. Teenagers are brought to an off world space station called Aurora Academy, a training place for a special expeditionary force called the Aurora legion, composed of the best of the best the galaxy has to offer. To become a member of the legion you have to choose a role that you would be best suited for, that could help your squad. A squad contains 6 people, an Ace, the pilots of the group. Faces, the diplomats of the group, the Alphas, the commanders, the Gearheads, the mechanics, the Brains, responsible for medical and scientific duties, and finally, Tanks, the muscle in charge of combat strategy.

Each main character fills in one of these roles, starting with Tyler. Tyler is the Alpha of the group, a prominent figure at the academy. It was once said that he “didn’t curse, didn’t drink and didn’t do drugs, like us mere mortals.” Scarlett the face, and Tyler’s sister. Then there is Cat, The Ace. Her nickname was Zero because that was her percent of misses during her entrance exam. Finn the snarky gearhead of this band of misfits is a technological genius, priding himself in his ability to break or fix anything needed. Zila, the “sociopathic” brain of the group, with 32 misdemeanors to her name, she is known for being a bit trigger happy with a stun gun, using dangerous methods of experimentation to achieve unconditional results. Finally the tank of the team, a man who is clouded in silence and mystery using his impeccable fighting to get the team out of many a sticky situation. There is also an unexpected addition to the group, an earth girl from the year 2150 who set sail on a doomed colonizing ship and has been sleeping for the past 220 years.

The misfortunes of this crew begins the night before the most important day of Tyler's life. In the academy there is something called the draft that happens once every year, where, for the last year of the cadets training, they are grouped with 5 other people, each with a different skill set, and given missions to complete around the milky way. Tyler is out in the fold getting some extra training time when he sees the red alert of a distress call from an infamous ship that had gone missing 220 years earlier. As regulation calls Tyler investigates the ship, finding one survivor, Tyler is able to get her off the ghost ship before a Fold storm (an extremely violent storm that melts anything and everything.) consumes the ship. After returning to the station Tyler learns he has lost all of his draft picks, meaning he would be stuck with the dregs of the academy. His sister and Cat, both of which were the best of their class in their category stuck with him. Tyler had the dregs of the draft, and the dregs of the missions, delivering medical supplies to an old abandoned mining facility, while they are there they notice that the girl that Tyler had discovered in the fold had snuck on board the ship and was hiding in some medical supply crates, what they don't realize is that the adventure of a lifetime is about to begin.

*Did the plot of this book keep you interested?* Yes, the plot of this book kept me very interested! It was a page turner, I stayed up for hours every night until I finished this book, and then I did it again! I really enjoyed this book, more so than I have had in a book in a while.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow or just right?* This book was the perfect pace, fast where it was deservedly fast, and slow during an emotional or suspenseful part.

*What grade level is this book appropriate for?* This book is appropriate for kids in 7th grade and up

*Who would you recommend this book to?* I would recommend this book to a great variety of people, really anyone who loves a thought provoking story, anyone who enjoys a suspenseful book, and really anyone who just wants a good read.

*What other information do you think would be useful to teens reading this book?* A good reminder for people is, this may be a story, but the author is so good at making these characters come to life, you will have a hard time not growing fond, or attached to these characters.

*Five stars.* I would give this book a 5 Star rating because of the imagery. The way the author brings the environment or the characters to life is unlike anything I've ever seen before. I grew very fond of all the characters almost instantly. This book was so hard to put down it was like watching a really good T.V. show, or like being there in the flesh, an all around amazing book, that allows me to wonder what will happen next and keeps me on the toes for the entire story.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Dhikshika C. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Date Reviewed: June 23, 2020**

**Describe the setting of the book: It takes place in the year 2380 and in the entire galaxy.**

**Briefly summarize the plot:** Tyler Jones was the golden boy of Aurora Academy. He works harder, has the best grades, and should be one of the best team leaders. He was supposed to be one of the best team leaders. Until, he answers a strange signal for help and misses the big draft. He ends up rescuing a girl who is the only survivor of the ship which was proclaimed dead 200 years ago. As a result, Tyler who was to select the best students from Aurora Academy is stuck

with the losers, outsiders and the misfits. And the girl he saved? They really don't know who she is or what she is doing, and even she doesn't know the answers to these questions, but she is strange and frightening. Squad 312 find themselves fleeing all the major space governing bodies, space crime lords, and even aliens trying to protect her. Can this group of misfits save the entire galaxy.

**Did the plot keep you interested?** Was the pace of the book too fast or too slow?: The plot of this book kept me very interested; It made me wonder what would happen next. I think the pace of this book was just right.

**Name the main characters and describe each briefly:**

**Aurora O'Malley** - Auri is half-Chinese. She is slender, her skin is a light brown, and has freckles across her cheeks. She has dark hair cut into a bob, with a white streak. She is the girl out of this time.

**Catherine Brannock** - Cat had brown eyes, a narrow face and black hair; longer on the top and shaved down to fuzz at the sides, with tattoos underneath. She is daring, confident, reckless and has lightning reflexes and is a quick thinker.

**Finian de Seel** - Fin has short, spiky white hair, skin the color of bleached bone and his eyes are bigger than a human's. Finian comes off as extremely arrogant and sarcastic towards others, but is afraid of showing weaknesses

**Kaliis Gilwraeth** - Kal has violet eyes and olive skin. He has long, pointed ears as well as silver hair tied back from his face into five braids. He has sharp cheekbones and a small tattoo of three crossed blades on his brow. He is a fierce warrior with a soft compassionate side.

**Scarlett Jones** - Scarlett is tall, with red hair, that is cut in a sharp asymmetrical bob. She has blue eyes, a chiselled chin, full lips and strong brows. She is extremely headstrong and confident. Scar also has motherly instincts, she looks after her team members.

**Tyler Jones** - Tyler has golden blond hair, blue eyes. He has a chiselled jaw, full lips and strong brows and has a scar in his right eyebrow. He is strong-willed and an amazing leader. He is tolerant, calm, quick-thinking, and an overachiever.

**Zila Madran** - Zila is short, with dark brown skin and tight black curls. She has dark eyes with an empty stare. She is often seen wearing earrings. Zila is both reserved and highly intelligent, she can also be deeply emotional.

**What grade levels is this book appropriate for?:** Grades 7-12

**What type of reader would you recommend this book to?:** I would recommend this book to any reader that likes sci-fi and adventure.

**What other information I think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?:** This book is part of The Aurora Cycle series. Book Rating: I rate this book a 5 out of 5-star rating. I am really glad I read this book, it was amazing. This book has an interesting plot that kept me hanging onto each and every word.

**Reviewer's Name and Grade: Benjamin W., 9<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Date Reviewed: September 11, 2020**

This book takes place in the year 2380 throughout the Milky Way galaxy. The main characters go to a space academy called Aurora Academy where they train to become a legionnaire in the Aurora Legion. The Aurora Legion is a galaxy peacekeeping force who train recruits to be Alphas (leaders), Aces (pilots), Faces (diplomats), Gearheads (mechanics), Tanks (fighters), and Brains (scientists and doctors). Through exploration, humans have found other species of life like the Syldrathi and Betraskens as well as a super fast way of travel called folding. Folding allows a ship to jump from one point to another in space very quickly.

Tyler Jones is the top graduating Alpha at Aurora Academy and is set to have four of the top five picks in the draft. However, the night before the draft, he rescues a girl from a cyro tank in a ship that disappeared over 200 years ago. He nearly kills himself and ends up missing the draft and his chance to build his perfect team. Instead, he ends up with a Syldrathi Tank with anger issues, an antisocial Terran (human) Brain who doesn't understand humans, and a Betrasken Gearhead who lives in a suit. His Ace is his best friend Cat who is the best pilot in the academy and his Face is his twin sister Scarlett. As for the girl he rescued, she calls herself Aurora and is just weird. Apart from the fact that she's over 200 years old, she's getting visions that don't make any sense to her. Her hair has a white stripe in it and her eyes are different colors. The things she remembers from her past don't match with the records and it seems like her government is trying to capture her. On Tyler and his squad's first mission, they are sent to a Syldrathi refugee camp to deliver supplies. When they get there, they discover that their commander sent Aurora with them. The camp comes under attack but coincidentally, a Terran defense destroyer arrives to help. Onboard are a couple of Global Intelligence Agency (GIA) agents that have come for Aurora. Aurora realizes that everything that is happening occurred in her visions and knows that the GIA will try and kill her and Tyler's crew. They all manage to escape with the help of some kind of telekinesis power from Aurora and head towards the World Ship. Aurora says they need an artifact called the Trigger and they manage to steal it, again with the telekinesis power from Aurora. When Aurora touches it, it breaks open revealing a diamond that contains the map of the galaxy. 22 of the planets are highlighted and Aurora begins saying "Ra'haam" and "All Burn". Tyler decides the best course of action is to head towards Octavia III and investigate, potentially leading everyone to their doom.

Now, I will answer some questions about the book:

*Did the plot keep you interested?* - This plot definitely kept me interested. There was a lot of action and plot twists that kept me wondering what would happen next. Most of the book was filled with suspense and the main characters almost died a couple of times.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?* - I think the pace of this book was just right. It was on the faster side but not so fast that you couldn't understand the story. The fast pace made the plot more interesting and funner to read.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?* - I think this book is appropriate for kids in grades 6-12. There's a little bit of cursing and a lot of violence that wouldn't make this appropriate for younger kids. Older kids will understand and enjoy the story.

*What type of reader would you recommend this book to?* - I would recommend this book to readers who like a futuristic novel with a lot of action and suspense. I wouldn't recommend this book to readers who like non-fiction or realistic books.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?* - This book changes the point of view every chapter. Each chapter has a different narrator.

I would rate this book *5 stars*. The plot was really good and it was pretty funny too. There was a lot of suspense and action that kept me interested throughout the entire book and everything was well explained.