



## Books in *Style* Carronia Incursion

By Denise DeVries

Few people know me as a science fiction fan. I started out watching Star Trek with my father. I read all the “sci-fi classics,” although I could never identify with the male protagonists. I still enjoy interplanetary adventures and stories about artificial intelligence. When I met Ted B. Hale, I was intrigued by his use of a canine character. I don’t remember any others from my science fiction reading.

I began reading *Carronia Incursion* from a writer’s perspective. I wanted to see how Ted would handle the challenges of science fiction, such as worldbuilding, language and culture. Ted copes neatly by setting his story in a colony world centuries after settlement by Earth pioneers. At the beginning of each chapter, log notes show how colonists modeled the territory after their home planet.

Carronia has a simple agricultural monarchy with hints of the old West, but without the pistols. At the time the story opens, the most advanced weapons are swords and arrows.

Galactic Union law, like Star Trek’s “Prime Directive,” closes the planet to visitors and prohibits the introduction of advanced technology. When outsiders smuggle in firearms to support their suspicious activities, Enforcement is called in.

Officer Teo Silva and his canine partner Rasta are sent to investigate events on Carronia, but without revealing their origins or allowing their machines to be seen. Teo receives unexpected help from Nora. He soon finds out that she is much more than a village barmaid. Nora is an inspired character choice and sets Ted’s work apart from traditional science fiction. This capable young woman saves the protagonist’s life multiple times. She has more resources than Teo realizes, and when she needs to be rescued, her own personal cavalry arrives. Nora also provides humorous notes when she challenges Teo’s assumed authority.

Nora’s inadvertent discovery of the technology on Teo’s vessel will later save his life. One of my favorite touches is Nora’s introduction to coffee on the ship. This becomes a running joke as Teo tries to control her consumption. At one point, he thinks, “at least she doesn’t know about chocolate.” Later, Teo’s former girlfriend appears, bringing more trouble ... and chocolate. I confess I’m not a fan of romance, but Ted manages it subtly and without unnecessary drama.

On Carronia, Teo must choose between maintaining secrecy and helping those in need. We learn that Teo’s strong sense of ethics often sets him at odds with his superiors. Everything he does increases his risk of losing his job or his life. A leader on the planet wants his technology. The visitors want him dead. There are fireworks, gunfights and shoot-outs, mercifully without detailed descriptions of bloodshed.

This is a fast-paced read, and I recommend having all three books on hand. They’re a bit like chocolate. You won’t want to stop with one.

*Carronia Incursion*, *Carronia Uplifted* and *Carronia Enlightened* are available on Amazon. Find out more about Ted B. Hale at <http://tedbhale.com/>.