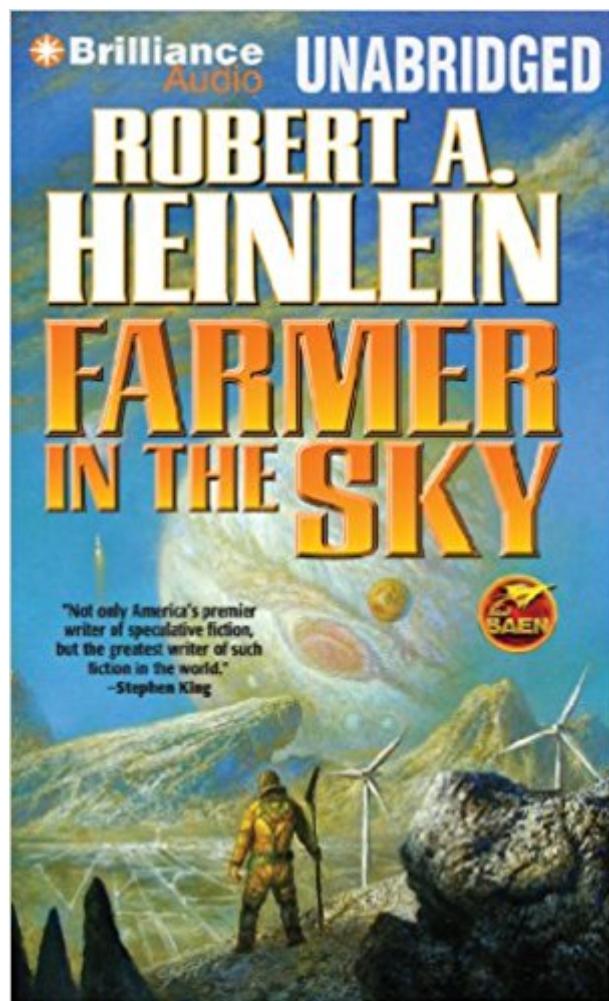


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# Farmer In The Sky



## Synopsis

The Earth is crowded and food is rationed, but a colony on Ganymede, one of the moons of Jupiter, offers an escape for teenager Bill Lermer and his family. Back on Earth, the move sounded like a grand adventure, but Bill soon realizes that life on the frontier is dangerous, and in an alien world with no safety nets nature is cruelly unforgiving of even small mistakes. Bill's new home is a world of unearthly wonders and heartbreaking tragedy. He will have to face hardships, survive dangers, and grow up fast to meet the challenge of opening up a new world for humanity. Praise for Robert A. Heinlein: *if there is any single author who defines science fiction, it is Robert Heinlein . . . there is no other writer whose work has exhilarated me as often and to such an extent as Heinlein.* • *Dean Koontz* *One of the most influential writers in American literature.* • • The New York Times Book Review *Robert Heinlein is America's acknowledged master of science fiction.* • *Chicago Tribune*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Like many people, I go way, way back with Heinlein. My very favorite book (and one that stands out in my mind--and with much affection--to this day) is *Tunnel in the Sky*. I really, really wanted to go off to explore new worlds with a covered wagon and horses, like the hero does at the very end of the book. But one of the nice things about Robert Heinlein is that he's got something for everyone. One of my best friends has a different favorite: *Podkayne of Mars*. Go figure. --Shelly Shapiro, Executive Editor --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Bill knew his destiny lay in the stars, but how was he to get there? George Lerner was shipping out for Ganymede to join the fledgling colony, and Bill wanted to go along. But his father would not hear of it -- far too dangerous a mission! Bill finally talked his way aboard the colony ship Mayflower -- and discovered his father was right! --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A classic view of the colonization of a moon of Jupiter, and a little about the problems that a space colonization effort in general would require as it goes from being a tightly controlled science outpost to more of a town. Relies a bit heavily on a not-very-plausible giant energy shield, which was kind of a sloppy assumption even when this book was written, but the plot is interesting anyway. As with the other juvenile I reviewed recently ("The Rolling Stones") this one is interesting and maybe suited to younger SF readers even today, but it's not Heinlein's best work. If you want a better Heinlein young-protagonist book see "Tunnel In the Sky" or "Citizen Of the Galaxy".

First, I should say that, although Farmer in the Sky is one of Heinlein's "juvenile" works, I still enjoyed it a great deal as an adult reader. The plot was satisfying, the writing was succinct and the emphasis on personal responsibility is as helpful to an adult as to a teenager. That being said, I do wish that I had read this when I was younger. Too much of the young adult literature that I remember was built around intrigue, destruction and escapism so that, while it may have been entertaining, it wasn't particularly useful. The self-improving example of Heinlein's protagonist is one that any young person could benefit from seeing in print. Heinlein's protagonist provides a real example to younger readers and his focus on personal growth as well as tangible accomplishments struck me as very healthy and positive. It was simply nice to read a well-written book about an ordinary young person who creates something through sheer dint of personal effort rather than a protagonist who is only noteworthy through accident of birth or the freak acquisition of superpowers. Also, kudos to Baen for including a very informative and understandable essay at the end of the book explaining the science involved.

"Farmer in the Sky" is another one of Heinlein's excellent novels. It is set in the "Heinlein solar system" which means Venus and Mars have life. It is about a family trying to be homesteaders on Ganymede as it orbits Jupiter. The descriptions of the sky from the surface of Ganymede are some of the best parts of this well written and engaging stories. If you were ever a Boy Scout, there are some parts of this book which will be a delight to you as well. Just a caution, when considering a

Robert Heinlein book, check the original publishing date. His works from the 1950s are some of the very best. His later works, from the 1970s or 80s are often just not up to the standard he set in his better period. I give *Farmer in the Sky* a grade of A-.

Teenager Bill Lerner travels to Ganymede with his father, and his new step-mother and step-sister. Readers get a Bill's-eye view of a future resource-depleted Earth; life on board an interplanetary colony ship; dirt-level terraforming of Ganymede; and the challenges of adolescence. The latter include adjusting to his blended family, conflicts with others his age, and finding the right distance to maintain from girls. This novel originally appeared as a serial in Boy's Life magazine. There is a strong Boy Scout influence in the story which blends well with the frontier setting and skills needed to survive in it. This is classic Robert Heinlein science fiction from the 1950s. The science is dated, but charmingly so. The adventure of space colonization nicely parallels the main character's coming of age. One disappointed observation--the story could have gone on longer or easily supported a sequel. It's odd that a prolific writer like Heinlein did not follow up with one. Perhaps some detail of the licensing arrangement with Boy's Life explains this.

I read this book as a child, and recently bought yet another copy to give to a young reader. I like the book because it talks about ecology, and farming, and striving when the going gets tough. Do I think we are likely to colonize Ganymede? Not any time in the near future. That really doesn't matter. Heinlein encouraged a whole generation of young scientists and engineers to study harder as kids, and I'm hoping he'll encourage a few more generations in the same way. Heinlein's views on sex are somewhat strange, but they don't come into this book.

Mostly first person narrative. One of Heinlein's best. Family "emigrates" to Ganymede, from a VERY overpopulated Earth to grow food. I've read this before, & Re-read when it arrived. It's a gift for granddaughter.

This has been a favorite book of mine for over 35 years. Yes, the technology is dated, Yes, the book reflects the period in which it was written. Don't get me started on the scientific inaccuracies. The book also represents many of the positives of the time in which it was written. Running under all that takes place over the course of the book is a spirit of hope and belief that things can be overcome. The books written by R. A. Heinlein during this period may not pass some people's test for quality literature. The majority of the protagonists are white males and most things turn out for

the best. Give the book a try and you may find yourself wishing you could put your name on the list for the use of the town's rock crusher!

Robert Heinlein was one of the great science fiction writers of our time. I bought this paperback for my grandson, who is eleven. Why now? Because I read a story in the New York Times about the discovery of water on Ganymede, one of the moons of Jupiter. And that triggered a memory in my mind of this book, in which earthlings colonize Ganymede. I don't recall the details of the story, only that I was his age when this book was published, and that I loved it, and reread it several times. Looking at it now, we remember, of course, that it was written before Sputnik and the moon voyages, even before the microwave oven, which is used in the opening pages to heat frozen food. Heinlein was terrific. I am hoping my grandson enjoys the book half as much now as I did then.

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