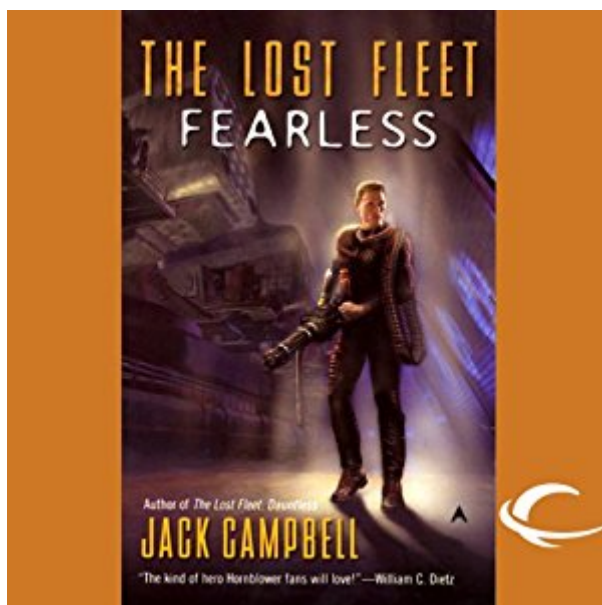


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The Lost Fleet: Fearless



Synopsis

Outnumbered by the superior forces and firepower of the Syndicate Worlds, the Alliance Fleet continues its dangerous retreat across the enemy star system. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've read the whole series now. That should tell you how much I liked the story. After a couple of books you kind of figure out how things are going to develop so I wouldn't say it was full of surprises but it wasn't predictable either. Different people would see the story in different ways but to me it was the consideration of the realities of space that kept me connected. Few people realize how large space actually is. Sci-Fi had lead us to think of space warfare as happening at visual range and perceivable speeds. It just wouldn't be like that. Even modern air warfare strains this idea. The Enterprise would never be nose to nose with a Romulan vessel and shots would be fire from such distances that you might not even see if you hit or missed for a long time. Black Jack Geary has to deal with the truth of relativity and distances measured in light travel time. Even communication is complicated when there are minutes or even hours of transit time for messages. If you throw out sub-space the plot thickens and that is what kept me coming back. Not to mention the subterfuge and intrigue.

I continue to be both fascinated and engrossed in Jack Campbell's The Lost Fleet series. The

second book, like the first, gives readers a character that is memorable and unique - Captain John 'Black Jack' Geary is a legend and an ordinary man who must find a way to balance both aspects, as well as the expectations of the Fleet he commands. As readers know, John Geary was in hibernation for a century before being found by the Alliance Task force. In the time he slept, the Alliance has been at war with the Syndicate for nigh on a hundred years and in that time he has become a legend amongst the Alliance naval forces. Now, finding himself in charge of an entire fleet, he finds to his annoyance that people frequently quote things he said 100 years ago - usually out of context - and expect him to go full thrust against the Syndics. Unfortunately, he is not the sort of Captain that throws away ships or crew with great disregard. His decisions are purposeful, designed to balance good strategy and tactics with minimal loss. He is a disciplined man, from a long gone age who uses his knowledge - garnered from long gone, experienced military men and women of the Alliance Fleet - to protect his Fleet. However, he finds that military discipline has fallen by the wayside and many of his more junior Captains are glory hunters who risk their ships and crew with their constant desire to eliminate the Syndics. Fearless continues the struggle Captain John Geary has, as he tries to demonstrate to his Captains a different way of thinking that will ensure as many of his ships and personnel make it back to Alliance Space. He also battles against the legend of 'Black Jack' Geary that could lead him to take the easy route - domination, power and control - through taking advantage of that legendary status. He would rather people in the fleet saw him as the very ordinary Captain John Geary, not as 'Black Jack'. There is some brilliant battle action; a discovery about the hypernet gate system that has the potential to be devastating; Geary has to match wits with a liberated Alliance Captain who has the potential to undermine his role as Captain of the Fleet and mutiny by some of his more recalcitrant Captains. A thoroughly enjoyable read that is as much character driven as it is tense battle action. I highly recommend this series for its attention to detail, complex characters, fantastic plot, setting, and solid hard science.

THE LOST FLEET: FEARLESS is a terrific book in its own right, and also as an important book in the series. While it continues the strong writing of author Jack Campbell (a pseudonym for John G. Henry), it also quite necessarily advances the central conflicts within the novel AND the series. Of course, there are the Syndics (The Syndicate has been at war with the Alliance ever since the time of Acting Commander John Geary's century-long hibernation), but the beauty of the author's writing comes from his ability to keep several metaphorical plates spinning at the same time. Not only does he have to return his fleet to their allies along with the hypernet key they successfully smuggled away, but he must do so while continually proving his

abilities as a leader to his men (a term that in the military applies to women as well). At the same time he must prove to them that he is John Geary the man, not Black Jack Geary the legend. While he doesn't mind using the alias to psych out his enemy, he knows that his legendary status is just too impossible to maintain. He fears (and rightly so) that the greatest challenge he will face is when that image finally falters in their eyes and they are crushed by the realization. Another interesting aspect about keeping the legendary Black Jack identity at bay is that it employs the otherwise secondary character of Madam Co-President Victoria Rione as a restraining force on his continual rise to greater acceptance, and this is important in two ways. First, it serves as a check as to whether or not he is becoming too powerful, and then in an equally important role for the reader Rione often serves as a foil for Geary. She is a character who helps project or define his character traits as well as a clarifier of his tactics, motivation, or any other aspect the reader is likely to need explained. As a prime example, early in the novel Geary invites Rione to sit beside him to explain rumors she may be privy to, and she offers the following: "You know I distrust you. At first it was because I feared the hero worship that could make you as big a threat to the Alliance and this fleet as the Syndics. Now it's because of that, and because you've proven yourself a very capable man. The combination is very dangerous. I like Rione, though I admit she can sometimes be a bit repetitive with her negativity. Overall, though, I think Campbell makes good use of her as a valuable check on Geary's power. And that power gets a severe test in this book: when they free a Syndic penal colony one of the men they liberate is a legend himself: captured two decades ago, Captain Falco is a man as gifted at self-promotion as he is at compelling his men to fight the enemy. When Geary refuses the man's offer to take the fleet on a very dangerous mission, Falco feels Geary to be too timid and he mutinies, taking a sizeable chunk of the fleet with him. Again, it is time again for Geary to be tested and to see if he is worthy of the command he now holds. One other thing: though there is more fighting in this book than there was in DAUNTLESS, the first novel in the series, it is still a credit to the author that his novel can maintain itself as a military sci-fi while still being a book that primarily discusses factors such as discipline, strategy, ethics, leadership, the abuse of power, and other dynamics of war and leadership that I find fascinating. I was a high school teacher, and when Campbell writes about war I find that his book teaches me as well, showing me how to use leadership as a way to motivate those I lead without demeaning them, to lead with positivity and wisdom and openness. I find these books fascinating in that regard. It's a testament to his skill that he does it so well.

It's obvious from Campbell's writing he was not only a Navy lieutenant commander, but also a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy: his tactics at constructing a complex fleet-wide battle scenario are well-described and boast a strong sense of logic,-- interesting particularly because he must do this in a naval conflict that adds one full dimension to a battle on water. Two last notes: First, ever since the first book I was enthralled with the author's decision to emphasize the physics of relativity and distance when it comes to space battle: its battles have a slow and almost maddening pace to them, since millions of kilometers are being crossed every minute. Messages take seemingly forever to reach their counterparts, as to the weaponry and maneuvering. So many books and movies paint space battles as taking no more time than across a field, and it's refreshing to see how Campbell denies such tactics as scientifically false. Second, and finally: there is a two distinct things being foreshadowed in this book, and both have something to do with the hypernet gates. I will not discuss them except to say that while one has to do with scientific considerations, the other has to do with boundaries, and the implications of just how these gates came into the hands of the Syndics. Both are potentially powerful when it comes to further installments of the series, and I look forward to their impending developments.

Space Opera at it's finest. Characters are developed as you move from one book in the series to the next; no cookie-cutter, here one page and gone the next players. Although each book stands on its own I look forward to the next to see what happens. Only a little discontinuity if you come in later in the series but not anything that detracts from the story line.

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