

THE LOST STARSHIP BY VAUGHN HEPPNER



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Ten thousand years ago, a single alien super-ship survived a desperate battle. The vessel's dying crew set the AI on automatic to defend the smashed rubble of their planet. Legend has it the faithful ship continues to patrol the empty battlefield, obeying its last order throughout the lonely centuries. In the here and now, Earth needs a miracle. Out of the Beyond invade the New Men, stronger, faster and smarter than the old. Their superior warships and advanced technology destroy every fleet sent to stop them. Their spies have infiltrated the government and traitors plague Earth's military. Captain Maddox of Star Watch Intelligence wonders if the ancient legend could be true. Would such an old starship be able to face the technology of the New Men? On the run from killers, Maddox searches for a group of talented misfits. He seeks Keith Maker, a drunken ex-strikefighter ace, Doctor Dana Rich the clone thief stuck on a prison planet and Lieutenant Valerie Noonan, the only person to have faced the New Men in battle and survived to tell about it. Maddox has to find a place hidden in the Beyond and bring back a ship no one can enter. If he fails, the New Men will replace the old. If he succeeds, humanity might just have a fighting chance...

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A Solid Starship Adventure Story

By J. Perez

What I would have liked to know before I bought this book.

(Minor Spoiler Warning)

1. What type of book is it: adventure, action, drama, etc? Initially I thought it would be a military sci-fi space opera. It is not. This is a sci-fi space adventure.
2. What is the story about, in general? The story is about the difficulties Agent Maddox and his team face as they search for a legendary ship that might have the technology to give humanity a fighting chance against the unstoppable New Men.
3. What/Who is the target audience? Teenagers and young adults seem to be the target audience. There is something for adults as well, but not much. On top of that, those that like space-adventures might find the book enjoyable.
4. How is the proofreading? It is pretty good. I saw only two errors and I think they were more kindle format

problems than actual editing and proofreading mistakes.

5. Is there character development? Yes and no.

Romance wise, this volume leaves a lot to be desired. Any romance was abrupt, badly implemented and uninteresting. There was no build up to it. There was no growth. It felt very superfluous.

On other character aspects, I am well satisfied. None of the protagonists are automatically perfect. They have serious emotional issues, insecurities, desires, crippling faults and manias. The development of trust between the protagonists follows an impressively realistic timeline of character evolution steps. In short, character development gets its due in this book. It is not perfect (because nothing is), but better than a lot of attempts I've read.

Antagonists are incredibly one dimensional and illogical. They are immensely powerful, but don't use their abilities effectively throughout the story. Also, their dialogue is remarkably dull.

6. Are the characters likable? The characters, as individuals, are more interesting than they are likable. I couldn't quite empathize with any of them. I did enjoy that most of them are three dimensional. They have good points and bad points. They have physical characteristics that set them apart and which speak about their origins and dispositions. They have certain mentalities that are specific to the character in question. Some of the characters have particular speech patterns that allow you to identify who is talking without having identifiers. That's very well done.

As part of a group, the characters are very interesting. Story character synergy flowed well. With the exception of romance, character conflicts were very believable. Sometimes they got a little too wordy, but not particularly uninteresting.

7. Does the story keep its pacing? The story keeps its pacing for a lot of the read. It rushes like a runaway train at the end and at some other story points. It's like, pacing wise, everything goes well for 95 percent of the book. The remaining five percent is not merely 'off pace' from the rhythm the author established, but ridiculously 'off pace'.

8. Do you have to suspend disbelief? Well, you're going to have to decide if my logic is faulty or not.

The enemy has been created far too powerful for it to be held back by human capabilities and numbers. I think the author went much too overboard on this.

The antagonists in this book can: subvert human warships and plant them AT EARTH, have infiltrated the highest levels of critical agencies on the planet (including Fleet and Intelligence), control vast wealth within human space, have sensors that can track the tiniest ships in a vast galaxy, have enough influence to manipulate critical components of Earth defenses on a whim, are ruthless and intelligent, have many warships (not as many as humans but given the differences in capabilities...) and are physically superior in every way. Imagine Khan, from Star Trek, multiplied by a billion, immensely rich, with a vast intelligence network and with Borg or Fluid Space alien technology.

Considering all of this, there is absolutely no reasonable way that the protagonists should win. Earth has no advantages it can exploit that might hold the New Men back. Reasonably speaking, human space should have fallen to the New Men before the protagonist's mission was complete.

Why don't the New Men cleanse humanity? No reason. That's it. We can speculate about it, but we don't know.

9. Is the book worth the asking price? I paid \$3. That's smack in the middle of a standard ebook price and fairly cheap.

In conclusion: This is a sci-fi adventure that requires significant suspension of disbelief. The antagonists are incredibly overwhelming in their capabilities and similarly underwhelming in their use of said capabilities. This is contradicting and unreasonable given what we learn about them. The protagonists are pleasantly three dimensional and feel quite real except for the clumsy romance attempts. The pacing is pretty quick and engrossing, with an artistic thinner thread of hope as the story develops. At times, though, pacing is abandoned and the story timeline leaps forward, glossing over battles and engagements. Some readers will not enjoy those abrupt leaps. The proofreading is above average and well done. The price is great at \$3. If you look for flaws you'll find them, but at the same time the reader might find a generally fun read with interesting characters. This is a solid book.

3.2 Stars

62 of 73 people found the following review helpful.

The Lost Opportunity

By everything bagel

Lost Starship is riddled with typos, poorly constructed sentences, strange punctuation and general basic errors. Sadly, this has become fairly forgivable in this Internet infested age.

More damning, however, the tale is poorly told. There are rules for these sorts of stories and Lost Starship breaks every one of them in the worst possible way. The characters are flat with superficial imperfections that only act as benefits (the main character is a half-breed that makes him...stronger, smarter and faster than every other human. What a burden!). The characters are merely pawns to the plot, acting in ways that are inexplicable except that they happen to service the story. Dialogue is stilted. Everyone speaks robotically.

The author also spends a good amount of time justifying his own plot holes then contradicting the very rules he spent a good amount of time establishing. There aren't twists, just inexplicable plot turns. Challenges appear illogically and are solved only with a wave of the magic plot wand. The book is a mess that could have used a few critiquing groups and probably several re-drafts.

Yet the bones of the story are solid. There's nothing new here, but stories are told over and over because they're good ones. Almost despite himself the author creates an interesting conflict that should have been so much more than it was. If I told you a spy, a clone thief, a drunk, and a disgraced war hero were going to escape a prison planet and hijack a legendary spaceship to fight all-powerful beings you'd think "wow, great story!"

Sadly, not so much.

107 of 129 people found the following review helpful.

An Interesting Story Ruined by Poor Writing

By J. Ellis

The premise of this book was somewhat interesting, but it was completely ruined by the execution and the shallow characters. The book was absolutely filled with grammatical errors and super-annoying complex sentences. It's never "Maddox punched her bare stomach with his left hand," it's always, "with his left hand, Maddox punched her bare stomach." The writing style was so annoying I had to struggle not to just give up

reading the book and put it down for good. As it was, I could only get through 60% of the story before finally deciding that knowing how it ends would not be worth slogging through the clumsy writing.

The prose itself is also just boring and and commonplace. You read sentences like "Meta head-butted him, and if her forehead had connected with his nose, the fight would have been over." An author writing at a higher level would have made this more exciting, perhaps writing that "Meta snapped her forehead into his face, missing his nose by a fraction of an inch. Maddox was momentarily stunned by the force of the blow and he realized that if her strike had hit home he would have lost the fight."

It appears that the author has written quite a few novels and stories, but it still seems that he could benefit from more practice and a lot more reading. The editor absolutely dropped the ball on this one.

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