



Spinward Fringe Broadcast 0: Origins

Randolph Lalonde

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It is the distant future and one man, Jonas Valent, is letting his life slip by. He is employed by Freeground station as a port traffic controller, a job he took after completing a tour in the military. His only real joy in life is his participation in true-to-life military simulations with a cadre of friends who come together regularly to defeat challenges made to test the brightest military cadets and officers alike. These restricted scenarios stand as an addictive preoccupation that is so enticing that they ignore the potential repercussions of breaking in to participate.

When someone betrays their identities to the Freeground Fleet Admiralty, Jonas and his friends are faced with a far greater challenge: to venture out into the more populated regions of the galaxy to acquire technology and knowledge. They are tasked with laying the groundwork for the Freeground Nation in their efforts to reconnect with the rest of humanity, and to secure the armaments they might need to defend themselves from encroaching enemies.

Spinward Fringe Broadcast 0: Origins is a collected trilogy that chronicles the early adventures of an ambitious crew. Their leader, Jonas Valent, has the least to lose and everything to gain as he tells the tale of his first tour as Captain of a ship tasked with making allies and discovering new technologies for the good of his people. This simple mission becomes more complicated as the crew ventures further into the settled fringes of the galaxy.

This trilogy spawned the best selling Spinward Fringe eBook series. This is where it all began, when one man was challenged to aspire for more than an idle life.

A Space Opera Adventure enjoyed across the globe by all ages.

Spinward Fringe Broadcast 0: Origins Details

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Author : Randolph Lalonde

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From Reader Review Spinward Fringe Broadcast 0: Origins for online ebook

Richard says

Most good authors perform meticulous research when undertaking a new work of fiction. Authors such as Tom Clancy and Connie Willis spend many hours in libraries and museums gathering information about the subjects of their books. They also conduct interviews with knowledgeable people. That research allows the reader to imagine that the work of fiction might, at a minimum, be possible in the real world. It is obvious that the author of this book performed very little more research than, perhaps, viewing a couple of "Star Wars" and "Star trek" movies.

The book is rife with errors and inconsistencies. Editing is either very poor, or is non-existent. Spelling, punctuation and grammar errors are common. Sentence structure is often so stilted that sentences must be read repeatedly in order to determine the author's meaning.

Captain Wheeler of the Triton suddenly becomes referred to as "Captain Walker" on page 1030 of the e-Book (in two places on that page), and then transforms back into "Captain Wheeler" again. What kind of author can't remember the names of his/her characters? This is unforgivable.

The author's knowledge of military ranks, practices, customs and courtesies is sadly lacking. He mixes naval and land-based military ranks randomly and chaotically, and he makes no discernment between commissioned and enlisted personnel, referring to all as enlisted. He has a low-ranking sergeant act as ship's captain in the absence of the actual ship's commander (who apparently holds the relatively high rank of naval captain, although this is never really clear).

Since the book refers to the ships' departures as "sailing," it would be appropriate to consistently use naval ranks, especially for the commissioned officers, but apparently the author has no military experience and failed to do his homework on this subject.

The book is filled with meaningless descriptions that add nothing at all to the advancement of the story lines, or to the crispness of the dialog, which can best be described as drivel. In addition, the author appears to be confused as to whether this book should be an adventurous space opera, or some sort of fantasy ship-board romance that many juveniles (but few adults) might find appealing.

Loose ends abound. The story is very choppy. The situations and actions of the characters are not even remotely believable. Even at a price of "free," this book is not worth the time and effort it takes to read it. If you like genuine Science Fiction, pay the price for a good book published by a known publishing house, and get some value for your money.

Martin says

I found this book after reading "The Phoenix Conspiracy" and desperately wanting to find another book to try and satisfy my new found hunger for space operas.

It was free from Amazon for Kindle and so I felt I couldn't go wrong. If I didn't like it then I could simply delete it and move on with nothing gained, nothing lost.

I started the book a bit disappointed to be honest. The battle you are thrown into doesn't seem to flow very well, but I put this down to the fact that you know none of the characters. I always find getting to know who is who a fun learning experience when reading a book but here that was just getting in the way of the story. However once the story truly got going it never stopped.

All characters are extremely likable, especially the main character; (Captain) Jonas and he is supported nicely by all crew and additional characters that are introduced throughout the book. It's rare that I feel a slight attachment to all key characters of the story and I was easily putting myself in the same room as everyone I was reading about. I truly was in the story.

The love interests in the story felt right, unlike in *The Phoenix Conspiracy*; in which they felt forced and out of place, here they provided some basic character development that allowed everyone to feel more human. Speaking of human I liked the fact that every single character we came across in the story wasn't introduced as some far out there alien, lizard (or some other animal) hybrid that seems to be the way most space stories go.

I liked the flow of the story, with there never being too much going on yet never being a lull that bored. From beginning to end I was drawn in. I was worried at times of great peril and happy at times of happiness etc.

The ending really struck me. I actually sat there just staring at the page for awhile.

Would defiantly recommend this book and I reckon I will find myself checking out the rest of the series.

Andrew says

This was a free download for my Kindle and turned out to be an enjoyable action packed adventure tale. I will certainly be reading the other titles in the series.

J.A. Clement says

I like sci-fi and had seen a lot of positive comments on Randolph Lalonde's work on several forums, so coming across this in the course of an idle browse, decided to have a look.

I loved it - for a start it's a long, character-driven story where we see the main character develop from an idle, unfulfilled worker in a fairly undemanding job into a new challenge where he has to suddenly take responsibility for a crew and negotiate them through a series of dangerous events. The ending is sudden and dramatic and leaves you with enough of a taste for the next bit that I clicked on the link and bought the sequel on the spot.

It has four stars because though it has been finely edited, it could do with a final proofing - there are only a couple of typos or spelling mistakes that I noticed (and I am something of a pedant for that sort of thing) - but given that I would consider it to be fully of professional standard on everything else, it seems a pity to leave those last couple in.

So, should you buy it? Yes, if you like sci-fi and probably if you're not read enough sci-fi to be sure (though in that case, read the sample first). The typos are rare (ie fewer than in some ebooks I've bought from traditional publishers), the character development is believable and interesting and the story gripping and pacey. I really enjoyed reading it - I'd guess you probably will too. Highly recommended.

JAC

Riki Solanen says

I really enjoyed this book, and will soon be reading the next in the series. A space opera, it has elements that remind me of both Star Trek and Firefly, and indeed, even has a few references for fan laughs. Like Star Trek though, a suspension of disbelief is needed when it comes to how they get out of all their many scrapes.

This story has a number of twists and turns... I enjoy not being able to predict the way it's going to go. The universe building is interesting as well... planets and sections of space owned by corporations, few free populations, the race for advanced tech to survive the neverending conflicts, laws that are far behind the tech's capabilities... a dangerous and exciting place for a crew charged with finding, buying and stealing all advanced tech they can find.

Randolph Lalonde says

I wrote this trilogy and invite everyone to read it for free at Barnes and Noble:

<http://search.barnesandnoble.com/Firs...> or at Smashwords: <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view...>

Fred says

Easily 5/5 stars. This was a truly amazing book from an Indie Science Fiction writer. I look forward to the remaining books in the series eventually. Lalonde incorporates many scifi staples and classics into his tale but manages to insert enough fresh ideas to make the entire universe his own. I think that whether you're new to Science Fiction or an old hand, this is a good read that you won't be disappointed in, not to mention that it's 1,385 pages long and FREE on the Barnes and Noble NOOK.

John says

I really tried to like this book, but...

I found it on Amazon as a free ebook for my Kindle. It is the first story of a series. As someone else said, I would give it 2 1/2 stars if we could give half stars in Goodreads.

The premise of story is that a group of amateurs hack a simulator that is used by the local military academy for training. The group then proceeds to defeat and humiliate the academies best. After being exposed, the group is then not sent to prison, but given a starship and sent out on a top secret mission and the leader of the group is selected to command this ship.

The story line seems to be a mix of Star Trek, Star Wars, and an RPG science fiction/fantasy game. There are too many contrived settings to move the story forward. The hero and his crew have no flaws and are always on the right. Most of the situations are very black and white in figuring out who is right and who is wrong. Right now I have too many books in my too read pile to consider going any further with this series.

Eric says

The one thing that comes to mind when I read this omnibus is that the story is quite similar to the Lost Fleet series by John G. Hemry, only more exciting right from the start. I read a few reviews in which people were complaining that the military ranks used are not correct, or the terms used are not consistent, and they might be right, but if something minor like that is going to annoy you so much then you should not read indie fiction. I personally liked most of the Lost Fleet books, but this story feels more interesting and dynamic from the start. It is not groundbreaking in any way but it has nice characters, lots of action, and an interesting story arc (I also already read the follow-up book, Fringe Resurrection, and it does not disappoint either.)

User PeggyI compares it to Star Trek and the like, and I think that is spot on. It's entertaining and it doesn't pretend to be anything it's not.

75/100

Br1cht says

I won't rephrase what the other 1-2 star reviews has to say. I will just state that the author sometimes has a nice "easy reading-style" type of flow in his writing, there are SO.MANY. Inconsistencies in the plot and behavior of the protagonists and their enemies(Think 60's Star Trek)

It's like an childrens book for 8-12 in that regard, so if you want an modicum of realism in your Sci-Fi this isn't for you! If you are able to turn of your thought processes and aren't to picky about stuff, then this is a book for you.

The Pirate Ghost (Formerly known as the Curmudgeon) says

Let's start, I give the overall series 4.5 stars, this book 3.5-4 stars.

Randolph LaLonde is an Independent Author and this series is his most successful books yet. According to the bio on his website, he's selling enough of these books to stop working and become a full time writer. A rare success story, though surely not the only one. This book is proof that there are gems to be found in Independently Published books if you are willing to look for them. And, he's Canadian (...not that there's anything wrong with that!)

This is the first book of the long running series. It's actually an omnibus of three novellas originally sold independently then edited and put under one title. It effectively reads like a single novel and it's very entertaining.

This isn't "Classic Science Fiction." It's not "Hard Science Fiction" like "Pandora's Star" or "Space Odyssey 2001. It's not Science – Fantasy either like Star Wars and though it more closely resembles Space Opera like Battlestar Galactica 2005 (TV show), I'd say it's not a perfect fit there either. To me, this represents the best aspects of the Indie-e-book revolution. A publisher might take a chance on it because it's good, and any idiot can see that, but, many publishers might pass on it because it is written to the author's own formula not one that they can use to group it in a genre or sub-genre so for marketing purposes. Though there may be better Indie-books out there, and certainly it's difficult to compare across genres, I think this is the best Indie-book I've read to date. (Yes, I liked Wool – Hugh Howley very much but, for me, this was more entertaining.)

Synopsys:

The story starts with a small group of "gamers," some of whom have never met face to face, hack their way into the Freeground Military Academy computers to have a go at their Sims (or computer simulated wargames). They form a team and wind up posting higher scores than the Academy Cadets and even the seasoned instructors. Freeground is a nation of peoples that live in open space on huge space station. They've developed their own independent government and even established some colonies of their own. They had to break away from the evil Super-Corporations of the high tech, money and power driven Futuristic galaxy wide space faring society that govern most of known space outside of the Solomani Rim and Core Worlds that are more earth-bound in their government and society.

Freeground has been in a constant state of war against the corporate controlled worlds for as long as anyone can remember and even though they have defeated one major corporate player, like the hydra, another rises to take its place and the battle continues.

Isolated In the struggle, the Freeground government realizes that it's falling behind the corporate worlds in a lot of their technological advancements. Even though they do some things better than anyone in the galaxy, they know that they will eventually fall so far behind that sooner or later they will not be able to counter the next threat. So what do they do?

Screw the prime directive! (Take that Star Trek!)

They take these "out of the box thinkers" and instead of throwing them in prison, they draft them into the military...you know, one of those "offers you can't refuse...no, I mean it, you CAN'T refuse it!" kind of offers. After a quick test to see how "reliable" they can be under conditions that more closely resemble actual battle, they give the new "recruits" the latest technological miracle space ships and send them on an all expense exploration of the galaxy tasked with finding all things tech and bringing them back to Freeground. Yes, feel free to work as a mercenary...or as an ambassador of good will, hell even a free-trader if you want, just get us something we can use FAST! Then they push them through the wormhole and their off...hmmm...

*" We're off in outerspace
Pro-tecting mother Earth!
To save the human race!*

*(chorus)
Star(star)blazers!
Through all the fire and smoke
We will never give up hope*

You can't defeat all our dreams!"

Oh, sorry, I was overcome by a flashback of Spaghetti Japanese Anime' from the 1970s. (Starblazers) And, that show has nothing to do with this, other than, it was also a really cool idea for a story! Involved a complex set of characters (even if every character on in the cartoon did talk like a Shatner Inspired Captain Kirk impersonator on helium) and defied every military rule and protocol in the book. This book is better than Star(star) Blazzers!

I'll stop there with the synopsis because, I hate giving away too much in a story.

Characters- Characters are one of the story's strengths. I found them a bit sketchy at first but over the course of the telling, their backgrounds came out so that didn't matter. What mattered how much "character" came out of the characters. Loyalty, Love, Courage, innovation, desperation, motivation... all of those things that some writers force into their characters felt more natural and well developed here.

Jonas Valent the leader and main focus of most of the books surrounded by a core group of well developed supporting cast that could (and did) often take up the starring role of the story when needed without missing a beat. He treated female characters with respect and equality, both by giving them diverse personalities and lifestyles, but also giving each role equal importance in the grand scheme to any male role. They weren't just window dressing. They were effective leaders and experts at their jobs. They were innovative, creative thinkers and when needed they were effective courageous tooth and nail fighters. Min Chu Buu-the wise cracking Wing Commander, Oz, or Ozark McPatrick the 2nd in command and security chief, Ayan the sexy-hot chief engineer and sexy genetic freak with an English accent...sure she's genetically enhanced, but .. the accent!... nevermind (maybe it's a Colonial Guy thing?) Laura, the number 2 in engineering and shield expert...I could go on. Even the ship and the crew were an effective "character" to keep the story going. Of course we cannot forget "Alice" the Artificial Intelligence that has been riding in Jonas's command and control device on his wrist since he was 17 years old...ohhh, I bet she can tell some stories on him! ...Loved the characters.

Oh, and a safety tip, don't ever call Jonas Valent, Jonas Valentine... if you enjoy having that olfactory organ on your face intact that is.

World Universe Building – it was a smooth transition from world group to world group. LaLonde did his best to use transportation techniques that stand up to scientific (if theoretical) scrutiny. If you know anything about the true possibilities of space travel, you know that the vast distances of space look impossible to crack even in the midrange future. Wormholes, hyperspace, thrust engines all probably borrowed from the classic Sci-fi of our era, but also the only viable ways of getting from one galaxy to another.

The weapons and weapon systems were high tech and complex but not impossible to understand. He found a way to make some of the more technical details less sticky and more practical so that most anyone could understand and enjoy them.

It wasn't hard to imagine corporations running the show. This isn't a completely original idea, but it's something that has been around since before the East India Trade Company in some form or another. The modern view of corporations as unfeeling, units with plug and play executives seeking the bottom line for profit, power and feasibility at the expense of citizenry makes a good comprehensible villain. They even feed off of each other's missed steps like alligators. Think Google vs. an evil Microsoft corporation or Saturn vs. the Automotive industry. Google and Saturn being the good guys (free-ground).

There are even alien races who are interesting and in some cases familiar.

Themes:

The Love Story – Wonderfully cozy, sad and unintrusive enough to keep those hardliner anti-emotion spok type Techie-trekkies from going..."Eeeewww, girl stuff! " (Yet enough for the Sci-Fi Romantic heart to take hold of...if only for fleeting moments.)

Heroes – Jonas and his crew are Heroes you can count on to be heroes...even with their human earthly faults.

Pobodies Nerfect – Heroes yes, always wining, always right...not so much. Though, they win most of them, LaLonde isn't opposed to his heroes screwing things up, miscalculating or getting themselves into hot water without help.

War Story – The parts of the story devoted to ship to ship battles, fleet against fleet battles, gunfights, and the like are exciting, and, if not realistic, surely entertaining and close enough. We're talking sci-fi anyway. The war tools of the future on display are fun, creative and thoughtful.

Thinking out of the box – This group is a non-military unit with a military chain of command. I think LaLonde might have floundered if he had to make this a tried and true military that these guys were part of so, this is a strength because he made their "non-military" nature part of the story. They were expected to do things differently and that is clear from the start. It also unleashed a creative sense of innovation that worked for me. (More on what didn't work about this later, but over all I'm calling it a strength, not a problem).

Complexity – Perhaps not as complex as it could have been, but it's not as straight forward as a lot of Indie pubs tend to be. Surely it's complex enough to be good. Some genre's need a certain level of complexity in the plot to keep the excitement and entertainment level up and keep the reader guessing, this managed that but it also had a simple, straightness to it that offered a lot of forks in the plot tree, but did not go down them exploring as far as I would have liked.

Great Ending – I got a little misty, it was sad, yet, allowed a sense of satisfaction, not hopelessness. It ended with a new beginning, not a dreary dark end and it ended in victory, and courage with sacrifice. It also left me wanting to read more.

Table Toppers Dreams -

From the "about the author" section on Amazon.com for "Triton" the 5th book of the series.

"Randolph Lalonde has worked in customer service, sales, played drums for several heavy metal bands you've never heard of, dealt blackjack in a traveling casino, been in business doing everything from selling collectibles to repairing and building computers. He refined much of his story telling abilities over twenty years of Live Action and Table Top Game Mastering. He's hosted games in many worlds including; Dungeons and Dragons, Star Wars, Rifts, Heroes, Shadowrun, Vampire, Werewolf and many others. He also plays World of Warcraft when he has time. His first published works were in the fantasy genre and made a minor splash in his local community. Years later he emerged as an independent author with the First Light Chronicles science fiction series of novellas. With readers turning into fans, and a growing following he continues to write science fiction with the Spinward Fringe series. Randolph Lalonde currently writes full time from his home in northern Ontario, Canada."

Why is this important? There is a special nature to the way a bunch of good table top Role Players think and

the way those good games develop. I'm not talking about the more modern versions that they call Role Playing games that are really creative tactical combat games, but role playing (table top) when story was important, and character development counted. It is in the nature of table top role players of my day and age (I haven't attempted participating in an RPG in almost 20 years) to bring in elements from anything they heard of, saw, touched or imagined into the game and work it into the story. Gammers have a an almost second nature that runs on automatic weaving things together that come from, or are inspired by any number of places from historical events and characters, to books from every genre and modern scientific breakthroughs.

This, complex weave of things that we are familiar with, and may, or may not have ever thought of in the same context that covers everything from start to finish is very much a table top gamer's environment.

As you read this, start a list of things that you recognize, or believe to be similar to something you read or saw on TV or in the movies. When you get to 20, go back through the book and I bet you find at least 10 more. Go again and at least 5 more. Some people may think this is "plagiarism," or un-original thinking. You may have a point, and, I think there is another way to look at this. If this were "just like this other book" that would be plagiarism, but this is like no other book. If this were one or two things stuck together seamlessly, then maybe it's not so original but this has so many things going on. If these were identical, that would be a problem, but everyone of the things that are familiar in these books, are not identical. I don't mean that they were changed to protect the author from a law suit, I mean they simply are not identical. They are inspired by things we know and therefore we can recognize them, but that's where the similarity stops. This story is a creative weave of things inspired by things we like, mixed with completely original thinking and ideas of LaLonde's own.

They say that there are only 7 original plots a story can have (at their core) and Shakespeare wrote all 7 of them. I can see people trying to Rip LaLonde for using this or that thing that is similar too, but not exactly like this thing in a movie, or from a book somewhere but that would just be a cheap shot. You could say that about any book written in the modern era. "Let those who be without sin cast the first stone." (as they walked away, they left Eldest first).

Areas I thought could have been better.

I think the initial start was a bit clumsy, and the reasoning didn't completely sync with realistic reactions. It was also to much like being fired out of a cannon rather than developed. I did get over it, and the story did recover by creating some wonderful characters that we learned about through experiencing them, rather than being told about them, but they could have had more "flesh" to their literary bones to start with.

Periods of inaction. Though I enjoyed every word, some of the periods where the ship and crew were inactive (for many reasons) I found a bit too heavy on details of ship repair and crew training which, when time came in the story, sometimes did not come through as an important detail.

Traditional First Person – I liked the later series better that were told in third person point of view. Too much happened while Jonas was away that I wanted to be witness to and experience.

Awkward but groovy love – Sometimes the characters seemed more like high school kids than seasoned war veterans when it came to relationship building. The series gets over that, to some extent, but in this one, everybody is making goo-goo calf-eyes at their perspective mates. It made for some interesting situations in the story and I like the relationships that develop in the following books of the series better but, in this one there were some awkward times.

Idle hands are the devils workshop – not exactly a period of inaction there were times when the crew was off ship or on liberty where the chemistry did not work as well as it did when they were in space blasting through enemy fleets and racing across the galaxy. I'm not sure why, perhaps the timing, but they seemed a little off. Again, these are better in the rest of the series.

Some similarities too similar. It wasn't a problem for me, but I can see some nit-picky perfectionists poo-pooh-ing the tapestry of things inspired by other works of similar art. Star Wars, Battlestar Galactica, Star Trek (original and Next Generation) Deep Space Nine. Though I uniformly came down on the side of the author weaving, there were some "tests" to my author-loyalty. LaLonde may not win over others as he has me and these things would be too easy to take pot-shots at in a review or critique.

Bottom line

A 3.5 to 4 star story. A good start to a series that gets better and better as it goes on. It has some minor things for me to complain about but generally works out to be a good story and recommendable to anyone who loves sci-fi from YA to people in their silver years.

Two thumbs up from me!

Peggy says

This Sci-fi, space opera is very reminiscent of Star Trek and others of that oeuvre. It is what it is, and as it is, it is a fun read that is purely entertaining. Lalonde deliberately writes within the confines of the genre and doesn't pretend to be anything else.

Spinward Fringe Broadcast 0: Origins is actually a collection of three short novellas that do a fairly good job of reading as one novel. The reader will not feel shortchanged as the good guys are suitably heroic, if a bit inept at times, and the bad guys are believably bad. The premise of the book works, especially in this climate of corporate malfeasance, and the plot is hard on the action/adventure side. The whole sci-fi genre is a fairly tough nut to crack, world building is not easy, and the writer has to have the confidence to make the reader believe that space travel, wormholes and strange technology are as real and commonplace as cell phones and automobiles. Lalonde does that.

All in all this is a good example of pure commercial fiction that works. It is fun, entertaining and it allows the reader to forget about the world for a few precious hours.

In the interest of full disclosure; I called my sister (a dedicated trekkie) as soon as I finished the book and told her to read it. I have already purchased the next one in the series.

Kyle says

Spinward Fringe Broadcast 0: Origins is Randolph Lalonde's initial collection of three novellas in what is now a long running series. This book and series fall into the ever changing "space opera" genre depicting large scale themes set in deep outer space. There are a few minor romance plots as well, but they are brief w/out any graphic scenes.

The novellas remind me of Star Trek and Firefly in that they also center around a strong captain with an interesting cast of supporting crew. Origins follows the fate of Captain Jonas Valent in the forming of his initial crew for the spaceship First Light. You accompany them on their first missions where they are the underdog fighting against the tyranny of large corporations that are enslaving much of the free colonies across the galaxy.

The stories feature many *deus ex machina* moments where it seems highly unlikely the First Light would be able to succeed without some outside help/influence. While these are obvious at times, it doesn't detract too much from the fun these books provide.

If you are looking for deep science fiction these books probably aren't for you. However, if you want a light, fun read chasing down bad guys across the galaxy, then I recommend the series. I'm sure Lalonde's writing is going to get better as I get into the series since he now has six additional books published, and I eagerly look forward to continuing the story!

Red Haircrow says

I confess, I'd become more selective over the past few years, having been disappointed in science fiction of the space opera variety. Converse, perhaps, I'd read trilogies like Karin Lowachee's set of three: Warchild, Burndive and Cagebird, that I'd really loved. They had characters with backgrounds and complexities that worked for me. I've been a long time fan of all kinds of sci-fi, however.

Spinward Fringe Origins is the type of sci-fi that isn't just for picking up when you have a few moments. It's the kind you specifically set time aside for. You find your favorite spot, have a few snacks or a beverage nearby, and you sit back and enjoy.

Lalonde particularly has the gift of setting a scene which places you firmly in his universe, and from the first sentences, I was excited and pleased as the story moved along at a good clip and the writing was solid. I suppose I would describe it in a science fiction-y way, for I felt like I was suited up in space slowly observing the amazing orchestra of celestial bodies take place all around me. A great plus for me, also was, although the series is still on-going, there are plenty of ebooks in the series I've not read, so I have much entertainment to which I can look forward.

To read this full reviews and many others, you're welcome to visit my review/interview site Flying With Red Haircrow.

Dan says

Truly enjoyable. One of my favorite series.

Grant Gardiner says

E-Pulp Warning All my e-reading is e-pulp so I review to that standard. Reader beware :) *E-Pulp Warning*

Overall: 4 stars (Recommend)

I stumbled across a recommendation for this series and I'm really glad I did. Spinward Fringe is a fantastic example of space opera fiction with an incredibly detailed world, fantastic technology and a great concept that allows us to explore them both. While it can suffer the usual pacing problems inherent in the genre it is a quality start to an e-pulp series that shows plenty of promise.

Pacing and Action: 3 stars.

Like all the best space opera the battles in Spinward Fringe are fantastic. Epic in scope yet still allowing for the brilliance of amazing fleet tacticians, anyone who's a fan of the genre will feel well at home with SF's grasp of epic confrontation. But the action isn't limited to space as the crew finds themselves in all sorts of sticky situations from bounty hunter chases to jail breaks. The author's use of sci-fi technology definitely helps here as the characters are set up well for the sort of Star Wars-esque running and gunning that makes for great action-adventure storytelling. It's all excellent, fun stuff and the first two stories rip along.

Unfortunately the third story does fall back into the bad habits of the genre. Anyone who loves this genre tends to get used to the tendency of stories to get bogged down in the technology as the author tries to illustrate just how much thought they've put into their sci-fi tech tree (I'm looking at YOU Honor Harrington On Basilisk Station). As space opera that's fine but as e-pulp it can turn into a grind about rail cannons and refit schedules that will bore you to tears. There's also some structural problems with the third story where there doesn't seem to be any stakes or narrative motivation until about half way through the story. Considering this is a first novel that one mistake is not bad but it did bring a rip-roaring sci-fi romp to a bit of a crawl which was disappointing.

But if you like your action full of fleet battles and laser blasters, you'll get something out of this for sure.

Pulp Concept: 5 stars.

Brilliant. The world of Spinward Fringe is well thought out and we get a good sense of just what's happening out there in that big old universe. The technology opens all sorts of potential and the wider political machinations make you want to return to the universe to see what happens. Good stuff.

The ship and tech for the crew also helps. If you've ever dreamed of exploring the galaxy with the sort of hardware that allows you to break the Prime Directive with impunity then this is your sort of exploring. Gunboat exploration with the chance to nuke dirty corporate thugs? What could be better than that?

Perhaps the only drawback may be the stories tendency to fall into wish fulfillment - a lot of really convenient things do tend to happen for the crew to function the way they do - but that's kind of the point. If you're super-sam-serious about your sci-fi this may in fact be a turn off but if you're like me and you want to just shoot up corporate stooges with impunity then this is a story for you. And what could be more pulp than that?

Character development: 3.5 stars.

I'm not going to say the characters are brilliant, nor memorable, nor do they go through any sort of development that may merit a PhD thesis. But there definitely is character development there. Maybe it's the wish fulfillment aspect but the characters do tend to blend into the background, subsumed by the cool stuff. They do however exist and do have a story arc. But it's not why you'll be reading this.

Production: 4 stars.

Good editing make it a very readable book. I didn't notice anything that kicked me out of the story. The story was also free as the first in the series which is always big points for production.

The only real drawback would be the fairly unmemorable cover. It does clearly state which 'broadcast' in the series this is (unfortunately a nice surprise for a lot of e-pulp) but it's still fairly forgettable.

Series Potential: 4 stars.

This series is already selling like hotcakes so the concept is sound. It's also six or seven books strong already so if you enjoy this one you can keep reading safe in the knowledge that there's plenty more where that came from.

On its own merits though you can see why there's such a following. The world that has been imagined begs to be explored further and the impression that we've just started this journey is palpable. About the only thing preventing it from being 5 stars would be the characters. At no point was I desperate to see what happened to them even if I was interested in seeing what happened to their ship. But still, there's definitely gold in them thar hills and I look forward to returning to the Spinward Fringe universe.

Wrap Up.

Excellent sci-fi space opera pulp with fantastic potential for the future. If you're into space opera and into reading e-pulp then this is definitely a story for you. With plenty more where that came from...

Grant.

For more e-pulp be sure to check out my other Good-Reads reviews as well.

liirogue says

I really enjoyed this! I don't usually like hard-core space travel scifi, but this was good. I skipped over all of the technical mumbo jumbo that this genre always has, and was pleasantly surprised by the characters and story line. I will definitely be reading the sequels!

Lee says

I want to start by saying I got this for free from Kindle.

If I could give half stars, this would really be a 2.5 star rating. It is just slightly below a 3 star, but not a 2 star.

Why?

Well there are parts of the book that have a good solid story line, that kept me engrossed and looking forward to getting on the train so I could read some more. On the other hand there were parts that were just very

ordinarily written that became un-realistic.

The romance between characters at times maybe wonder if the author had their 15 yr old niece write parts, it was naive, awkward and just not believable. Dramatic scenes, where the whole ships future lay in a meeting of the key personnel and the captain is massaging the engineers feet ?! The breakdown of command structure was to unrealistic.

One other issue I had, was that I found that in interacting with other characters, usually enemies, the characters tended to give up way to much information to freely. There were whole scenes of power play, where the antagonist would give up their world domination plans just because they were asked. I found that lazy, it was almost like the author couldn't be bothered writing in a more realistic way that the character could have gained this knowledge.

On a positive, the story was solid and interesting, i certainly developed a sense of who the major characters were and what their personalities were like. I can see how the series could play out from here and there is enough there to imagine it would be a good read. I doubt I will be buying the next series, but if you like your space opera and romance with your characters, then you'll probably enjoy it.

Simon says

I am no experienced book reviewer and below probably shows that.

Origins - Review

The main character Jonas Valent is employed as a port traffic controller in a space station called Freeground, his only vice is his after work participation in simulations with his online friends. Soon their identities become known to the Freeground Fleet Command and their lives are changed forever.

The book consists of three parts, Freeground, Limbo and the last 50% of the book Starfree Port. The storytelling is done in a fast paced TV episode style with characters that are very believable even the misguided ones (no one thinks their evil). The plot while predictable in some places keeps to the type of structure you would expect. The background to the universe and the descriptions covering commonly used technology, while rich in detail. I found very believable in a Battlestar Galactica with star trek technology type of way.

I have to say that so far this is STILL the best free book I have read. The minute I opened the book up, seven hours disappeared and I was only half way thru. I had no problem buying the rest of series written by Randolph Lalonde and have no issues apart from one book in the series that I thought was too short.

Craig says

I really really don't understand why this gets such a high rating. This is quite possibly one of the worst books I have ever read. The one dimensional characters blunder through three extra long "Star Trek" episodes, spouting line after line of pointless shallow dialogue.

I could go on, but I think once I start I will not be able to stop.

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Because people don't understand it I will add this to all my reviews

\* = Did not like it <- the only negative option

\*\* = It was ok

\*\*\* = Liked it

\*\*\*\* = Really like it

\*\*\*\*\* = It was amazing

No need for half stars in this rating system. ;)

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