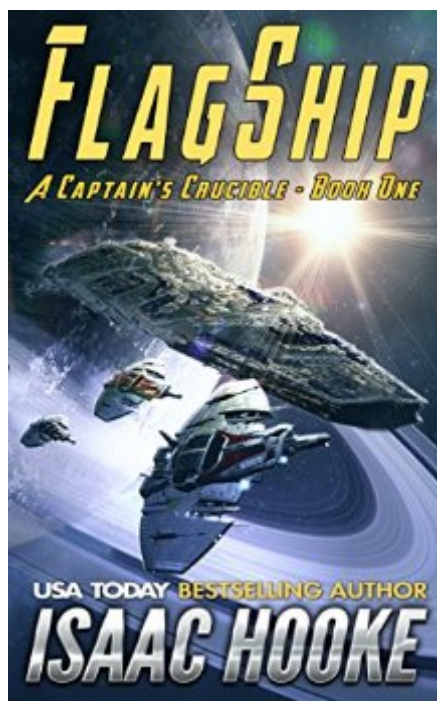


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Flagship (A Captain's Crucible Book 1)



Synopsis

Captain Jonathan Dallas, commodore of Battle Unit 72, investigates the disappearance of a military research vessel on the fringes of known space. When the unit is ambushed by a threat that endangers not only the fleet but also all of humanity itself, Jonathan must somehow find the resources to fight back. Cut off from Central Command and faced with impossible odds, can Jonathan overcome his demons to save humanity and, more importantly, can he save himself? Flagship: where captains are made. Or broken.

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Customer Reviews

â Flagshipâ TM takes place seventy years after the events of â Atlasâ TM and follows Captain Jonathan Dallas, commanding officer of the USS Callaway, as he struggles with his inner demons while confronting a new threat to humanity and the ingrained and unbending mindset of a superior officer and an established order. The story opens revolving around the opposing ideas of the worth of human life. Is it okay to ignore the opportunity to save a personâ TMs life in order to reach a personal goal, or in a wider view, is it okay to sacrifice millions of people in order to make a preemptive strike on a possible future threat? As Jonathan struggles with these ideas, his task force

is confronted with a much larger threat to humanity. Cut off from Central Command and facing a commanding officer too close-minded to consider the possibilities and implications of facing a new hostile species, Jonathan's struggle suddenly encompasses not only his personal beliefs, but also the prospect that his actions might influence the fate of all humanity. As with Mr. Hooke's other books, the technical details of this story are well laid out and explained in detail, the world building is well thought out and consistent, and the Characters are well developed, though I would have liked to find out a bit more about the relationships and history between some of them. The story sucked me in, with the action and suspense keeping me on the edge and reading on, and I finished the book in one sitting. Overall this is a very good story and I am looking forward to reading its next installment.

This first book has some good main character development, a lot of detailed space battle scenes, and some social and philosophic elements. I think it works well, though it is not entirely my preferred style. There are a few editing errors, but not bad at all. The action is well paced, but the universe building is low and the politics are rather heavy handed. The politics also are too thinly veiled references to current world issues for my taste. The touch of idealism and hope is nice.

This apparent space opera battle book gains a bit due to a more complex plot than the usual series of space battles against other human factions or, more likely, mysterious alien ones. Here we have some very mysterious aliens - no Star Trek type latex sporting semi-human love interests for the mighty Captain here. These are alien aliens. The plot complexities surround the humans and a good deal of military office politics with an added dash of moral issues thrown in. I've heard some people say the obvious solution to terrorism is to kill all the Muslims with atomic bombs. That's just a lot of swagger noise but what if you really had a weapon that could wipe out your enemy entirely? Would you? What if the enemy had the same weapon for many years and could have wiped you out but chose not to? Would that change your mind? The only difficulty I had with the book is the rather even matching in tech between the aliens and humans. Obviously this is needed or we don't have a book or the book's silly if there is a huge differential in tech between aliens and humans. I mean, what's the point of having a sea battle between an analog of a Viking ship vs a 21st Century warship. The lightest gun on the modern ship would destroy the Viking in seconds. Forget the rockets. So the new aliens have some highly advanced travel tech but fairly even or maybe a bit behind the humans in weaponry. While this is possible, I suppose, the idea that two alien races meet, the chances of them being at the same tech level in any area are remote beyond belief. Doubt it? Well, how often during

the European Expansion phase did humans encounter other humans at the same tech level.

Answer: never. That's the same species on the same planet. Still, as I said, an enjoyable read. I'm on board for the next volume.

Yet another genre variant for Isaac Hooke. First, let me say that this is a promising start to another series. The Forever Gate series was mostly what I would consider fantasy. The Atlas series was gritty military science fiction. The Ethan Galaal series was espionage/action. This new series, of which Flagship is the first installment, is shaping up to be a series of space battles with a yet mostly unknown technologically advanced alien race. With the categorization out of the way, the basic plot revolves around an imperfect but principled captain of a starship that becomes the leader of a small fleet of ships that must face and deal with a new alien threat that has apparently determined that this human fleet must not be allowed to alert the rest of humanity. I found that it took a few chapters for the main character to be developed sufficiently so that I could become immersed in the story, but once it settled, the remainder of the book set a blistering pace that ended with the promise of more battles in future books. Mr. Hooke is one of the most interesting "new" authors I have encountered in recent years. He does a good job in delivering central characters that create interest in future books in the series. While I didn't find this initial book quite as engrossing as the Atlas books (which are set in the same "universe" several years earlier), I will enthusiastically jump on the next one in his series when it emerges. I look forward to his continued development as an author and recommend that you try him out.

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