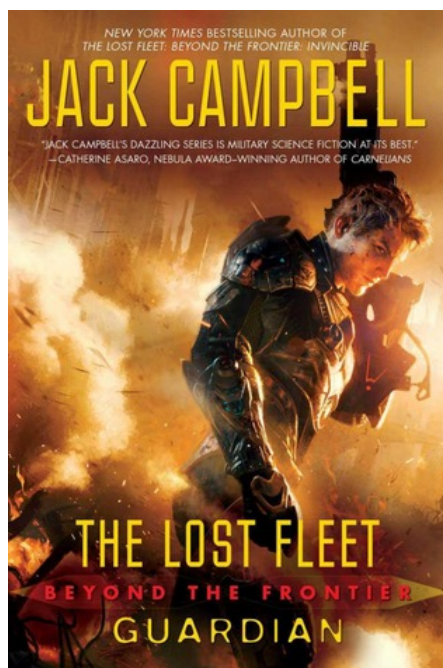




Guardian

Jack Campbell

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Admiral Geary's First Fleet of the Alliance has survived the journey deep into unexplored interstellar space, a voyage that led to the discovery of new alien species, including a new enemy and a possible ally. Now Geary's mission is to ensure the safety of the Midway Star System, which has revolted against the Syndicate Worlds empire—an empire that is on the brink of collapse.

To complicate matters further, Geary also needs to return safely to Alliance space not only with representatives of the Dancers, an alien species, but also with Invincible, a captured warship that could possibly be the most valuable object in human history. Despite the peace treaty that Geary must adhere to at all costs, the Syndicate Worlds regime threatens to make the fleet's journey back grueling and perilous.

And even if Geary escorts Invincible and the Dancers' representatives safely unharmed, the Syndics' attempts to spread dissent and political unrest may have already sown the seeds of the Alliance's destruction...

Guardian Details

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Dreamthiev says

I've enjoyed the Lost Fleet, and spinoff, series so far. Guardian specifically was decent. It was a little slow to begin, the first couple chapters rehashed so much information they may as well have said, "In our last episode..."

I think the governments in these series are becoming a bit too clichéd. Both the syndics and alliance. The various plots, schemes, and double-deals are going a bit overboard. They're, well, dumb. Some of the politicians may have risen to power without being too bright, but that can't be the norm. They're supposed to be motivated by self-interest, and they're theoretically capable of learning, so it's beginning to stretch the bounds of credibility that they keep shooting themselves in the foot.

The book was still entertaining. Decent amounts of action, and I still like the way combat is handled in the series. I'm really starting to wish the series would settle on who of the several different factions are the REAL badguys, and focus more on them. There's the syndics, internal alliance strife, a couple hostile aliens, and now a new faction introduced... While still good currently, with so many adversaries things are starting to become unfocused. I think things would be much more enjoyable if some of these threats could be dealt with or put aside and just one or two drove the plot.

Jacob says

Okay, so it *did* get a little better. The obligatory fight through Syndic space lasted only 2/3 of the book, and the fighting was admittedly different than before, so it was worth the read. In addition, Geary and his war-weary fleet made it back to their home, Alliance space. And they even went on a small adventure within it!

I was looking forward to the political angle of when Geary got back, and that still got short shrift. In particular, the author's depiction of political infighting felt over-the-top petty and backbiting, but it turned out that was on purpose, so I guess it has to be chalked up to skill rather than a lack of it. As a friend agreed with me, these keep being "good enough". If you like military science fiction in terms of a space fleet fighting human and alien opponents, this is definitely the series for you.

Tim says

This book is far less military science-fiction than the other books in the series. Instead, this is more a science-fiction book with a few military battles. In the last section of the book, it's quite reminiscent of a Larry Niven book such as The Mote in God's Eye. As always, Christian Rummel does an excellent job with the narration and he's become the voices of the characters for me.

Overall, I've enjoyed the Beyond the Frontier continuation of the Lost Fleet series far more than the original books. In books 1 and 2 I found the battles and how they played out more interesting. Plus, the addition of aliens added a different dimension that wasn't in the original series. In this book, the interactions with one of the alien species they've encountered led to an excellent last section (and especially final chapter) of the book. I look forward to the next book.

Eric says

Picked it up because it is supposed to be the last in the lost fleet series and I don't like loose ends.

What a mistake that was.

The last few books in the series can already easily be summarized as 'more of the same', this book however takes the series to an all time low. Not only is the setup almost identical to the last few books but this time Geary is also being bossed around by the captain of the Dauntless (who happens to be his wife) and on many occasions the fleet only survives because other people prevent Geary from making fatal mistakes. The Syndic switch to guerilla warfare tactics is the only thing that makes this 'readable'. In the end, it's more of the same but worse. The ending is quite a let down and I really hope it actually IS the end of this series. 'Black Jack' Geary needs to retire and Jack Campbell needs to start writing something new.

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

I enjoyed all the twists and turns in the story, despite the fact that this was a bit of a slow read for me. I love the Dancers. They rock the story. Definitely becoming hooked on this series.

Reviewed for Bitten by Books. <http://bittenbybooks.com>.

Jonathan Lupa says

These are so aggressively sequential, and it has been so long since I read the previous 2, that I had to go back and re-read them before reading this, just to catch up.

Aside from that small annoyance, it's a fine addition to the story. The ending here was fairly hilarious, though I'm not sure that an unchallenged military is doomed to that level of buffoonery.

Mr. Matt says

I give up. There's just something about these books. I like them. They're fun. Sure, they drive me crazy with the sappy relationship between Geary and Desjani and other assorted problems. But, at the end of the day, I just keep reading them. Some authors have a knack for stringing readers along, and Campbell falls firmly in that category. I just keep reading these books because there is something just over the horizon that I want to see. And then, after that, there's the next horizon.

I won't dwell on my problems with the books other than occasionally I want to through them against the wall. Bottom line, these are fun, fun books. Great lit? No, but they are lots of fun if you like big star-ship battles, political drama and mysteries.

Three hell-lance broadsides out of five.

Nico says

More of the same basically. It get's a bit repetitive, but Campbell manages to keep the main plot interesting with many new twists and turns. I'd like him to focus more on that and keep the nearly always same battles in the background. I will definitely stay with the series.

Mary Catelli says

The next book in the Beyond the Frontier series. Spoilers ahead for earlier. I recommend reading this series in order.

It opens at Midway, with the Syndic forces hovering and threatening the newly independent system. A subterfuge gets them out so the Alliance fleet can return home. Whereupon they find that something has gone wrong with the hypernet: they can only get to one system, which shrieks of trap.

But since they are at peace with the Syndics now, they will be able to get back to Alliance territory peacefully, even lugging along a captured alien starship, and accompanied by six (very different) alien ships who wish to return to the Alliance. Right?

Right?

Tricks and traps lie ahead. Marines coming to seriously respect an engineer. An intelligence officer falling in love with a different engineer. Politics. A request to go to Kansas. Forestalling a mutiny by giving the mutineers orders to do what they would have done if they had mutinied. Spreading rumors. Crossing the line across a heliosphere -- rather like crossing the equator -- after which, you are a Voyager. Battles and discoveries. And the Alliance that sent them off to die finds it rather hard to deal with a legend that stays alive, because it starts to scare them.

Mike (the Paladin) says

Stupid to evil politicians...new alien races...plots and subplots...bureaucracy rampant...

Lots of "stuff".

This book stays pretty much up to Campbell's standards...I like it.

Dale (Aus) says

Enjoyed this latest installment and the new change in direction for the characters and the story. I hope to see more of these in the future. Read the book in a single day so it definitely kept me engaged.

The characters here have grown some with more taking charge and more people coming up with the ideas so its not totally centred around our character.

thanks.

Per Gunnar says

About a year ago when I had read the previous book in the Beyond The Frontier series by Jack Campbell I was a little bit disappointed. I thought that the author didn't really have any new ideas but just got bogged down more and more in (bad) politics, deceit and backstabbing a'la cheap soap opera. Sadly enough I feel that this book is pretty much more of the same.

The parts of the book where Geary and his fleet is trying to get back home with the captured alien ship, not to mention the live aliens that are following them, and the action this entails are nice reading for sure. However it is a very similar scenario as the original series. Fleet stranded in Syndic space tries to get home and the Syndics are doing their best to prevent it. Been there, read that.

After the fleet actually does get home around the two thirds mark or a little more the book really becomes boring with more or less nothing but politics or various dialogs about the repercussions of politics, past actions or future actions. It becomes a little bit more interesting at the very end and there are certainly some elements at the end which would be interesting if they were taken further in the next book, if there will be a next book. However given that the author have continuously shown a preference for the political aspects and forcing Geary to often have to overcome pure idiocy among the Alliance itself rather than external military threats I will continue to have my expectations on these books set somewhere on a fairly average level.

It is good books if you like this type of story. The combat parts and the fairly realistic tactical maneuvering are really good and is what have made me continue to read them. The rest I am not so thrilled about. The end, well I can say very little about it without actually revealing it but I have to say that I was somewhat underwhelmed.

April says

I enjoyed this quick read from Jack Campbell starring Black Jack Geary, his intrepid sidekick/wife/Lt Co. Desjani, and their struggle to bring back an alien ship to the home base, despite the fact that some of the wormholes appear to be collapsing. How they continue to hold their own against the evil Syndicates, who refuse to stop fighting even when they are clearly losing, is a basic treatise on military sf and armed force politics. There's nothing too unusual here (though I did like the alien Dancers), but it was a fun read.

David says

3rd entry in Jack Campbell's (or John G Hemry) *The Lost Fleet: Beyond the Frontier* series, so really 9th(!) book overall in The Lost Fleet series.

Having successfully found the frontiers of 'Enigma' alien space and started his journey back home in the

previous 2 novels, this novel finishes off that journey, with 'Black Jack' Geary's First Fleet finally making its way back to Alliance Space, accompanied by the allied alien 'Dancers' they had previously encountered along the way, and with the captured 'Kick' super battle cruiser in tow.

The bulk of the novel deals with the final leg of the journey back home, with a section at the very end where Geary's flagship is sent back Home (with a capital 'H') back to the Sol system, where human life originated ...

In short, more of the same, with scope left open for even more entries in the series!

Joe AuBuchon says

#9 in the Black Jack Geary Saga. A good, quick, fun read.

Black Jack gets the First Fleet back to the Alliance with the Dancers and the Kick battleship. Dancers want to go to Kansas. Black Jack and Tanya escort them with the Dauntless. The rest would be telling . . . chuckle.
