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Karl Drinkwater

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Opal is on a mission. She's been seeking something her whole life. Something she is willing to die for. And she thinks it might be on a Lost Ship.

Opal has stolen Clarissa, an experimental AI-controlled spaceship, from the military. Together they have tracked down a Lost Ship, in a lonely nebula far from colonised space.

The Lost Ship is falling into the gravity well of a neutron star, and will soon be truly lost ... forever. Legends say the ships harbour death, but there's no time for indecision.

Opal gears up to board it. She's just one woman, entering an alien and lethal environment. But perhaps with the aid of Clarissa's intelligence – and an armoured spacesuit – Opal may stand a chance.

“Think Event Horizon with a bit of ‘Mother’ from the Alien movies and that was the overall feel when I first started this book. [...] Opal is a fantastic character, complex, a history we learn a bit more about as we read on, she is heroic, loyal, strong and long long overdue in fiction. I loved the AI too and the relationship that formed between the two, the ballsy choices and bravery through frightening encounters and life and death situations.”

—So Many Books, So Little Time

Lost Solace Details

Date : Published October 31st 2017 by Organic Apocalypse

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Author : Karl Drinkwater

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Genre : Science Fiction, Space, Space Opera

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From Reader Review Lost Solace for online ebook

Bandit says

It would be fair to preface this review by stating that it mainly reflects the lack of chemistry than any fault of the author per se. I just don't care for military sci fi, at all. Or military other things for that matter. I was hoping for something like a ghost spaceship and this turned out to be more of an action driven wham bam explosive sort of adventure and while there certainly is the right audience for that out there, I'm not it. Other than that and objectively the author did a very good job. I've never heard his name outside of basic hydrating advice, looks like he's been around for a while and dabbles in a variety of speculative genres, it's entirely possible that his scarier thrillers might be more up my alley. The writing was good. The plot of a woman and her AI on a quest to find someone while battling space marines and sexybots and so on was absolutely uninteresting to me, and I really tried to get into it, but it was just one prolonged action sequence with very minor and dramatically insufficient respite provided by the fun repartee between the aforementioned woman and her AI. Actually the first 40some% in when I made the effort, that was mostly tech and not quite as tedious as the subsequent action that resulted in abandoning all interest and just finishing the book on an autopilot. In fact the entire book sort of read like a first person player perspective in a video game narrated in great detail. Again...someone out there must be into this sort of thing. So yeah, kudos to the author for creating a strong female protagonist and dedicating the book to strong women everywhere...aww...but barely readable for me, quick as it was, and certainly no interest in the sequel. For me good science fiction is about world building, elaborate plots, awesome flights of imagination. Mind has to be boggled, not merely addled by the constant barrage of action scenes or exhausted by technological descriptions. So more about where the ship is going instead of how it is propelling itself through space. Personal preference. So not this book. Thanks Netgalley.

Alina says

****Note: I received a copy curtesy of Netgalley and BooksGoSocial in exchange for an honest review.*

This is a fast paced sci-fi military, the action taking place in space and featuring two main characters: one female ex-space marine, Opal, and her stolen ship's AI, which she calls Clarissa. The characters quite well defined, and I especially loved their humor.

As for structure, it's mainly written from the space-op's PoV, but it also has a little of the AI's vision. I liked the idea of countdown chapters, and also the graphics for delimiters.

As a downside, it bothered me that the novel focused mainly on action, neglecting the world building and the circumstances leading to the current situation; it does eventually explain some of the precursor events, but dispersed throughout the novel and not enough for my liking.

Brian Clegg says

There was a time when you would be hard pushed to find a science fiction novel with a female main character. As I noted when re-reading Asimov's Foundation, in 189 pages, women appear on just five pages - and they're very much supporting cast. But the majority of new SF novels I've read this year have had female main characters, including The Real Town Murders, Austral and Andy Weir's upcoming Artemis.

That's certainly the case in Karl Drinkwater's engaging *Lost Solace*. It's really a two hander between military renegade Opal and her ship's AI, Clarissa. There are a few male characters, but they are either non-speaking troops she battles or a major with whom she has a couple of short video conversations. That summary gives an unfair military flavour to the whole thing - in practice, the majority of the action, which is practically non-stop throughout the book, involves Opal trying to survive as she explores a mysterious, apparently abandoned liner in a decaying orbit around a neutron star.

The whole book takes place in real time, which adds to the claustrophobic tension of Opal's adventures, mostly while cooped up in an armoured space suit. It's pretty well impossible not to relate to Opal's character, even though she is apparently enough of a psychopath to be unfazed by killing hundreds of people to achieve her goal. The ship she explores is distinctly weird with some elegantly nasty touches thrown in by Drinkwater - and Clarissa brings in a really interesting AI side to the whole thing.

The only real downside with the setting and the real time action is that Opal has very little interaction with other people, which is usually the central core of a novel. There are also a few oddities - she (and Clarissa) take an awfully long time to realise what's pretty obvious about the abandoned liner, and the ending feels a little rushed and too much like a lead on to the next book, rather than giving much sense of conclusion.

Despite that, it was a book which I read with enthusiasm, wanting to find out what comes next, involving a good deal of atmosphere, particularly on the liner, plus some satisfying David vs Goliath work. Assuming this is the first of a series, I await the next with interest.

Mike says

I often say that if you give me a motivated protagonist in a dynamic situation, as long as you don't make any serious craft blunders you'll hook my attention for the duration. Extra points if the protagonist is a competent, capable woman.

Well, this book ticks all those boxes with a big thick pen.

It's a thrill ride of a space opera, with a mysterious lost ship full of alien danger, a giant gravity well around a neutron star, and well-equipped ships from a fascist-sounding military, all threatening Opal, the protagonist, and the AI-equipped ship she has stolen. I don't normally read military space opera, but the main reason I don't is that so much of it is the same, and this was a very different take on the possibilities of the genre.

I appreciated the fact that she tried repeatedly to convince the military that she wouldn't harm them if they let her go peacefully, even though that never worked and she always had to fight. The fights were suspenseful and varied, and, while the backstory became evident from clues long before it was explicitly revealed, it gave her a good reason to do what she was doing. The degree to which she, a former low-level grunt, was able to defeat better-equipped and more experienced military officers through cleverness and the assistance of her unparalleled AI did strain my disbelief a little, but I was willing to play along because it was so well done.

I do hope her refusal to follow the rules becomes a liability at some point, rather than just a motivation and a character trait, but I will certainly look out for more in this series.

I received a copy via Netgalley for purposes of review.

Koeur says

Publishing Date: October 2017

Publisher: BooksGoSocial

ISBN: 9781911278122

Genre: SciFi

Rating: 3.9/5

Publisher's Description: The Lost Ship is falling into the gravity well of a neutron star, and will soon be truly lost ... forever. Legends say the ships harbour death, but there's no time for indecision. Opal gears up to board it. She's just one woman, entering an alien and lethal environment. But perhaps with the aid of Clarissa's intelligence – and an armoured spacesuit – Opal may stand a chance.

Review: This received good reviews across the board except for one asshat that does not like anything with the military in it. Forget the things that matter like character development, story line etc.

This was epic SciFi at its best with some really creepy shjt underlying the surface. Take Alien and make a horror menagerie out of it and you will get the sense of a place you never want to be. Thankfully the story does not reside solely in the SciFi horror genre but embraces grand world building and believable technology.

A fun read. Get it!

You can read all reviews, [here](#).

The Behrg says

Science fiction is an easy genre to botch. Too much techno-garble, too little research, too much world building or an overabundant cast of characters; I find most authors lose the core of their story within the infinite array of possibilities they're incapable of leaving alone.

Drinkwater's latest is a great reminder of what makes sci-fi so appealing. Take a strong yet flawed protagonist who needs to accomplish something and then set obstacles in her way. It's not rocket science but man does it make for a compelling story.

The set up here is great, with Opal coming upon a "lost ship" circling the outer rim of a potential black hole, a ship that is far from what it appears to be. It's obvious Drinkwater is a horror author as the tension and atmosphere really keep this novel moving at full speed. Add a lot of questions and intrigue and a dynamic relationship between our protagonist and the ship's AI and you've really got a unique story that's just exceptionally executed.

Part "Alien," part "Cast Away," part "Interstellar," this exceeded my expectations and came in as one of my top Sci-Fi reads for 2017. Definitely worth checking out.

Amy Kitcher says

Lost Solace is a brilliant read. Superbly-written, gripping, action-packed, with an absolutely kick-ass heroine to boot. Essentially, Opal is a futuristic 'treasure hunter' aided by a loyal and wry AI called Clarissa as they try to salvage something from a Lost Ship. The danger just keeps mounting as Opal faces aliens and Marines sent to apprehend her. What I particularly loved was how well we come to know Opal through her actions, not her thoughts, and for me, this is a sign of a writer who has really got to know their main character. Sci-fi fans will enjoy this a lot, but I'm not one of those and I loved it, too. It's as much about Opal internal journey as much as anything that happens out in space. I dare say this would make a great film.

Leo McBride says

Space, it turns out, is not the final frontier.

Oh no, you see, there's something else out there. Somewhere that the Lost Ships go to. And when they come back, well... you may not survive the experience.

Karl Drinkwater is a horror man, you can tell as you read this haunted house story in space. Rogue soldier Opal and her pirated AI ship are on the trail of a Lost Ship, which has reappeared in our universe from that mysterious somewhere - and Opal is intent on exploring this vessel for personal reasons. With the aid of her AI, Clarissa, they discover the passenger ship has changed, warped, become something... almost living. There's a Lovecraftian air to this voyage of discovery, with animated robot dolls, flesh growing from the ship, the vessel itself morphing its shape to repel unwanted guests - and all that is even before the military that Opal fled from show up with their own agenda.

They are after the treasures of the Lost Ship - while Opal has her own goal, but the two missions will bring them into conflict in the deadliest of battlegrounds.

I really enjoyed this read. Drinkwater is a dab hand at creating an air of dread, and every corner of the ship feels like it might have a dark secret lurking in its shadows.

More than that, I really loved his AI creation, Clarissa. Her hacked persona really does raise questions of identity and personality throughout the story - does it matter who an AI is? Isn't it just a computer? Or is it more than that - could it even be a friend? The bond between AI and Opal is tested more than once, and is a fascinating relationship.

I'll confess I was still left with lots of questions about the nature of the Lost Ships themselves and their origin by the end of the book - but it was a cracking read, certainly evoking the horror worlds of space such as those in Alien, Pandorum or Event Horizon. If those are your kind of horror treat, then the Lost Ships await you.

Noelle Kelly says

Lost Solace is a clever space horror with a feisty ball-buster female lead!

Opal is essentially a space pirate, she has stolen a ship, hacked into its' artificial intelligence and has her own hidden agenda.

Opal has programmed the ship's AI to her settings and named her Clarissa. But Clarissa is no normal AI and displays strange traits. They are the key characters for most of the books and they develop a close, but

curious relationship.

Before the horror starts, tension is added to the story with the isolation of the Opal and her yearning to find one of the mythical 'lost ships'. When Clarissa detects one of the spaceships, Opal sets out to board it in an awesome space suit. I want one! The atmosphere on the ship is claustrophobic, it is 'alive', although abandoned and strange horrors wait around every corner – enter alien robots and mysterious substances. I'm slow to divulge any more but there are lots of weird, tense and eerie scenes on the ship.

Opal is a mysterious and sometimes angry character, but there are small glimpses of her softer, human side. She is a force to be reckoned with and I would hate to have her as an enemy!

The descriptions of space, the ships and the gadgets were excellent, allowing me to easily imagine the scenes. The cleverly created action sequences kept the pace of the story moving. As with Karl's other books, the writing is excellent and to the point.

This is an thrilling space horror with an unconventional female friendship at the core. I think this would appeal to fans of adventure, Sci-Fi and horror. I can't wait to see what happens in the next installment.

Nerdish Mum says

I'm giving a spoiler away for my Twelve Books Of Christmas by saying that Lost Solace is 100% on that list! I absolutely loved this book. It's been a while since I read my last sci-fi (that isn't Star Wars related) novel and Lost Solace made me remember just how much I love the genre.

Opal is a kick ass protagonist and I instantly felt a connection with her. She knows she isn't perfect but she is determined and passionate. Over the course of the story we learn snippets about Opal and her life before Lost Solace, each bit makes me want to know even more and find out what she has gone through to get to this point.

I love Opal, but I have to say I think Clarissa, the AI, is my favourite character. She is intelligent, straight to the point and just a little bit sassy! Her personality develops over time and she becomes her own "person" instead of just a programmed robot and it is really good to see this process. I think the author has done an excellent job of representing female friendship (even if it is between a human and an AI) and I recognised things from my own friendships over the years.

The story is excellent and there is a perfect balance of sci-fi and horror. At one point not long after Opal boards the Lost Ship. I had to put the book down for a few minutes because I'd been so creeped out. It wasn't down for long though as I needed to know what happened next. Lost Solace is absolutely compulsive reading.

I enjoyed the fact that there is technical terminology and logical facts throughout, but not too much to take you out of the moment (to figure out what it meant haha) or to make any scenes drag. It's punchy and fast paced. The technology and armoured suit are incredibly thought out and intelligent. The armoured suit is definitely the kind of thing I would want if I was in that kind of situation.

I honestly cannot emphasise how much I loved this book. When I finished it my initial notes were as follows - Omgoodness ALL OF THE STARS! 5/5! It's creepy, it's action packed, it's awesome! - so I think that shows maybe just a hint of my feelings! Also I don't often think or say that books should be made into tv shows/movies, but I would love to see this as a movie on the big screen!

Cheryl says

"They were called the Lost Ships. And sometimes they came back."

Opal is serving her required military service when she goes AWOL, hacks into an experimental spaceship, steals the ship and takes off, following a rumor she heard in a bar.

When she wakes from cryosleep, she finds herself in a faraway section of outer space and believes she has found a Lost Ship - a ship lost in outer space with all its crew and passengers and then later found - changed.

She also finds that her hacking job has enhanced her AI that she named Clarissa.

This was a fun sci fi adventure story that brought back memories of THE SHIP WHO SANG by Anne McCaffrey. Opal is a strong female protagonist and I loved Clarissa.

I received this book from BooksGoSocial through Net Galley in the hopes that I would read it and leave an unbiased review.

Lainy says

Time taken to read - 1 day

Pages - 273

Publisher - Organic Apocalypse

Source - Review copy

Blurb from Goodreads

Sometimes spaceships disappear with everyone on board – the Lost Ships. But sometimes they come back, strangely altered, derelict, and rumoured to be full of horrors.

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Opal has stolen Clarissa, an experimental AI-controlled spaceship, from the military. Together they have tracked down a Lost Ship, in a lonely nebula far from colonised space.

The Lost Ship is falling into the gravity well of a neutron star, and will soon be truly lost ... forever. Legends say the ships harbour death, but there's no time for indecision.

Opal gears up to board it. She's just one woman, entering an alien and lethal environment. But perhaps with the aid of Clarissa's intelligence – and an armoured spacesuit – Opal may stand a chance.

Can she face her demons and survive?

My Review

Opal is a woman on a mission, she has stolen a ship and took off looking for one of the Lost Ships, many have gone missing and rumours of horror on those that come back altered, Opal is driven to find one specific ship. With an experimental artificial intelligence (AI) built in, that she calls Clarissa, Opal puts her very life at risk both from the military and what lies waiting in the Lost Ship.

Oooh think Event Horizon with a bit of "Mother" from the Alien movies and that was the overall feel when I first started this book. The AI is a brilliant character add as just one human in space would take a lot of work to make engaging. The story breaks down into a fair few parts, the journey to find the Lost Ship, the understanding and development of the AI as the story unfolds. The bad guys who are chasing her, what lies within the ship awaiting and everything that transpires after.

The action on the ship is creepy and you are left with questions, well I was and sought out the author to find out if there will be another visit to this story. Thankfully there will be as I hate being left with unanswered questions and we are going to get another two books woohoo!

Opal is a fantastic character, complex, a history we learn a bit more about as we read on, she is heroic, loyal, strong and long long overdue in fiction. I loved the AI too and the relationship that formed between the two, the balsy choices and bravery through frightening encounters and life and death situations.

Whilst the build up was slow in the very beginning it created a tense, claustrophobic and eerie atmosphere, perfect for space and kept me flying through page after page. Where was it going, could I trust X,Y,Z or rather could Opal, her choices, was that right, what would happen! I love when a book keeps you on your toes and I think sci-fi is such a tough genre as fans can be hyper critical. I thought this was a great opening to new characters and definitely a foundation book, the origins are done now I can't wait for the meat of it all, the where, why, what are they, what is next! 4/5 for me this time, I have read this author before but not this particular genre from them, I very much look forward to the next installment and will be rooting on my fav character(s).

Shaz Goodwin says

<http://www.jerasjamboree.co.uk/2018/0...>

I love how, with the help of a writer's words, our imagination can take us anywhere at all. For a couple of days I've been in deep space, confronting all sorts of challenges that have taken me to the edge of life and back, all done with the assistance of a 6th gen AI who is closer to me than anyone else in my life.

Magic? Oh yes.

I loved the fact we have two (I'm counting Clarissa, the AI in this) strong female leads who make split second decisions from very limited options, showing true grit and resilience. Who are not adverse to breaking the rules to get what's needed and pushing through to the end and yet are loyal and steadfast. An appearance from a senior member of the military only serves to highlight issues of freedom and morality. Do you follow what you know to be true or do you bend your knee to the hierarchy? It's not until later on that we find out for sure what drives Opal's behaviour. For once it didn't matter to me. She had my vote from the beginning. All readers will be able to identify with the psychology that underpins the story as well as feel a connection to Opal.

I was interested in the technological side of the story. Not that I know much about hardware and software or military programmes so it could all be a load of hokum but I did find it fascinating! I often forgot that Clarissa was an AI ...

The challenges and action keep moving at a fabulous pace. And what a setting! Within the space ship, so many nooks and rooms as well as open walkways for anything to happen. I was quite happy to be 'blind', with no expectations of what might come next, to let Karl Drinkwater lead me on through this alien territory. I knew whatever was coming would up my adrenalin and get me sitting on the edge of my seat. Plenty of those moments throughout Lost Solace.

I'm hoping there will be a sequel! What are the consequences? What happens about the stowaway? What happens when they get to the coordinates? I don't have an issue when a story ends and I have questions because it can lead your imagination to all sorts of places. However, I would love more from Opal and Clarissa ? I think Lost Solace would make an awesome console game.

This has been a fast paced read for me and a story I have no hesitation in recommending.

Julie Cohen says

Great fun—a female-centred science fiction space adventure, with lots of action, creepy mystery, and satisfying emotional depth. I enjoyed it a lot.

John-Michael Lelievre says

This was a pretty good read, basically our protagonist, Opal, has absconded with a military spacecraft, and an artificial intelligence she names "Clarissa", in search of a lost ship, which is basically the future equivalent of the Mary Celeste.

There's not a lot of human to human interaction, but the dynamic between Opal, and the somewhat sassy Clarissa more than makes up for it. Opal for sure is a great, strong-willed, and well realized character. Pretty much my one gripe for the novel is that it was a little short.

I hear there is a sequel in the works so I'll definitely stay tuned for that!

P.S. Bonus points for the really cool cover.
