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Armada: A Novel



Synopsis

The new novel from the best-selling author of Ready Player One It's just another day of high school for Zack Lightman. He's daydreaming through another boring math class, with just one more month to go until graduation and freedom - if he can make it that long without getting suspended again. Then he glances out his classroom window and spots the flying saucer. At first Zack thinks he's going crazy. A minute later he's sure of it. Because the UFO he's staring at is straight out of the videogame he plays every night, a hugely popular online flight simulator called Armada - in which gamers just happen to be protecting the Earth from alien invaders. But what Zack's seeing is all too real. And his skills - as well as those of millions of gamers across the world - are going to be needed to save the Earth from what's about to befall it. Yet even as he and his new comrades scramble to prepare for the alien onslaught, Zack can't help thinking of all the science-fiction books, TV shows, and movies he grew up reading and watching and wonder: Doesn't something about this scenario seem a little too...familiar? Armada is at once a rollicking, surprising thriller, a classic coming-of-age adventure, and an alien-invasion tale like nothing you've ever heard before - one whose every minute is infused with author Ernest Cline's trademark pop-culture savvy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Oh boy. Where do I begin with this one? I really wanted to like this book, especially given I am such a fan of Cline's "Ready Player One." But after forcing myself to the end of this mind-numbingly boring and unimaginative story of clichéd alien conquest, I can't help but feel extremely

disappointed. For one, the blatant rip off of ideas from "Ender's Game" made me cringe as I consider this book to be a much less engrossing and developed adventure than Orson Scott Card's classic. I understand the concept of paying tribute and drawing inspiration from previous works, but Armada takes ideas from great works of science fiction and then inserts cheesy, one-dimensional, and predictable characters into its storyline. Speaking of characters, the protagonist is just so darn unlikeable, that I can't stand it! An angry-at-the-world, oppositional defiant, geeked out gamer with daddy issues has got to be one of the most unappealing hodgepodge of character traits you can place into a protagonist. Sometimes a story can be saved by really well developed supporting characters, but there are none to be found in this book. There are so many one-dimensional archetypes in this book that it was impossible to develop an attachment to any character whatsoever. All the love interests are completely forced and the romantic dialogue (and I'm being generous by calling it "romantic") sounds like stuff you would read in cheap Valentines Day cards. Heck, the old school "do you like me, check yes or no" is more romantic than any love scene this book has to offer. Another area of insult to me was in dealing with the military rank structure as portrayed in this book. As an armed forces member myself, the blatant disregard of proper military customs and courtesies was appalling to say the least. Captains saluting lieutenants, same ranked individuals saluting each other, and admirals being higher ranking than generals were just a few of the gaffes I suffered through as Cline attempted to depict the Earth Defense Alliance as an actual military organization. There is no excuse for not having this nailed down as the author's brother is a marine I believe. And then lastly, the actual flying/dog-fighting/drone-killing sequences were complete snooze-fests as the protagonist and company shoot down mindless legions of spacecraft in a very predictable manner. In fact, once you read through the first battle scene, the rest of them are pretty much carbon copy showdowns of what happened previously. Also, due to the very nature of the plot design, there was always a lack of suspense in each battle (without giving too much away, think of the whole issue of "drone-fighting" as it relates to our current engagement in conflicts around the world). The only slightly redeeming quality was found in a neatly packaged (albeit predictable) ending that set the stage for a possible sequel while avoiding the all too popular "cliffhanger/unexplained plot holes" trap. The book is also a fairly quick read, though I almost abandoned finishing it multiple times due to sheer boredom. I hope Cline's next book restores him to the former glory of Ready Player One, but until then, I recommend you pass on this dud and re-read Ender's Game for a much better experience.

This is a good book, but not a great book. I found it to have a lot of writing mistakes, both in terms of

story telling and word usage/grammar. But the story itself is fun, just executed poorly. The ending was very rushed, to the point that the "final" battle just felt a bit empty. All said, I was a bit disappointed in this book. More because it didn't live up to the greatness of Ready Player One, which had it's flaws in terms of writing, but those could be overlooked due to the fresh nature of the story and style. In a lot of ways it felt like Ernest Cline did not progress and grow as a writer between books, which is disappointing.

I liked the book. It's well plotted, and a lot of it is interesting, but I couldn't shake the feeling that the frantic pacing and the jokey tone didn't mesh with some of the themes of war and loss that were presented at times. Also, some of the pop culture references will date it badly in a few years. So don't postpone reading it for too long.

Honestly I did not like this as much as Ready Player One which I pretty much thought was a hysterical fun nerd ridden matrix masterpiece. The premise for Armada is nice. Don't get me wrong, and certain parts of its execution are really well done. However since part of the idea that the World Governments are running this whole op then there should be some reasonable order to it. For example there were reasons for the stupidly hilarious post apocalyptic internet ridden world of Ready Player One. For that matter the nerd dialogue is overdone. I sort of feel like he got a license to say whatever stupid nerd thing he wanted and half of them should have been cut. So fails. First off the main character. I know the last Cline character was a fat kid who transformed his life so we might as well have this new character be different. So he is supposed to be a badass shut in of sorts, but it doesn't compile well and he just doesn't come off as believable. Actually the romance (which otherwise functions with the plot) is just so awkward it makes the character even less believable. Maybe that is just intended to be an intentional pipe dream but a few shifted details and it would have been buyable. It makes fun of stuff like the last starfigher while making many of the same mistakes. Ranks are treated like they are in a video game where rank correlates to badassery with perhaps some of the perks of real rank? As in superiors are superiors, but no one really give orders or cares. In other words next to no teamwork that you see in coordinated militaries. Any effort to militarize the planet would have some level of coordination. Perfect opportunity to have conversation about being manipulated into sign up for the defense of earth only to never mention it. Minor fail. When the world decides to spread all of the best technology to everyone on the planet no one goes to war with each other or really makes a big deal. I know this is in the background, but a little shout out would be nice. Maybe that is just the geopolitical nerd in me. Bigger spoilers past

here so be proceed at your own risk.Waste of a damn moon base. As in they have a moon base, but rather than have multiple moon bases or stationing more people there they just have the aces. Not a bad spot but they probably could have spread the aces out in a strategic manner or at least given them backup.I can kind of go either way on the Fathers death, but it wasn't strictly necessary. Though at least it was done with flare.Still might make a decent movie if they clean it up. Also wacky commentary on Aliens but again poorly executed.

Can't believe how many negative reviews this book has. I just about didn't buy it. I'm glad I did--it's a great read. My advise is download the sample and start reading....the book does not let up from there.

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