



# Starfishers

*Glen Cook*

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## Starfishers Glen Cook

Starfish: Treasure troves of power. They were creatures of fusion energy, ancient, huge, intelligent, drifting in herds on the edge of the galaxy, producing their ambergris, the substance precious to man and the man-like Sangaree alike. In deep, starless space the herds were protected by the great harvestships of the Seiners, or Starfishers - the independent, non-Confederation people who dared to skirt the deadly boundaries of Stars' End and battle the Sangaree. It is with them on the harvestship Danion that Confederation agents Mouse Storm and Moyshe BenRabi have to fly and fight, probing mystery and myth. And where BenRabi, man of many names, must surrender his dreams and his mind itself to the golden dragons of space and their shepherds, the gathering... Starfishers.

## Starfishers Details

Date : Published May 1st 1982 by Warner Books (NY)

ISBN : 9780446301558

Author : Glen Cook

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## From Reader Review Starfishers for online ebook

### Choko says

\*\*\* 3.75 \*\*\*

#### A buddy read with the Glen Cook mercenaries at BB&B...

The standard of storytelling that I have come to expect from Mr Cook is very, very high! I loved the book, but it felt like Glen Cook light somehow. What I mean is that usually he writes a plot full of various backstabbing, numerous timelines, and endless political machinations, betrayals, and murder! In this book we had some of that, but it actually read like a "regular, normal book". A normal book, guys, and that is just not normal for Glen Cook!!! It made sense straight away, and usually it takes several chapters until you get your bearings and get oriented. Since I expected the most devious of plot twists and got some mostly duplicitous but somewhat acceptable levels of treachery, it was a tad ... normal! Which is just weird.

This story happens about 15 years after the Storm family was devastated and decimated by their enemies and only Mouse is left alive. We get to see the dramatic changes this event has brought to this gentle and caring young man after all this time. It was jarring and very disturbing at times \*shudders\*

Moishe is a friend and a colleague from the Academy to Mouse Storm and they have been paired together for espionage, information gathering missions for the Federation. We mostly get Moishe's POV and he tends to reminisce about some previous missions which have had an effect on his current circumstances, so there is a bit of back and forth, but it is easy to follow and get caught up in.

The story is still very interesting and the introduction of the star dragons, as I call them, was pretty awesome! The world itself is quite distopian and I am soooooo glad it is not even close to our reality!

Overall, I love the way Mr. Cook can tell a story and build a world with the minimum of description or infodumping, creating some very compelling characters and putting them in situations which bring out the best as well as the worst in them. This Space Opera is worth checking out for the fans of the genre, but it is not related to the Black Company, if this is what you are looking for. I am looking forward to reading the next installment!

Now I wish you all Happy Reading and many more wonderful books to come!

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### Mars says

3.5 stars

It's not bad, but two weeks after I've read it I can't really remember anything significantly notable about it - it's mostly just a segway into the third book, which was considerably better.

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**XX Sarah XX (former Nefarious Breeder of Murderous Crustaceans) says**

**? Glen Cook We Love Thee Like Murderous Crustaceans Love Bloodbaths Buddy Read**

(GCWLTLMCLBBR™) with my dear wife Choko, Evgeny the ~~sometimes~~ Wise One, Lee the Ex Noob and Holly the Prodigal Mercenary ?

**Actual rating: 4.35 stars.** *Yeah yeah yeah, I know, I was going to give this one a 5 star rating, but my ~~friends~~ fellow backstabbing addicts corrupted my soul and all that crap.*

*The Special Glen Cook Rating System (SGCRS™) applies here. Again. Missed the previous episodes and have no freaking clue what the fish I am talking about? That's so sad. Your life really sucks, my Little Barnacles.*

**I said it before and I'll say it again:** you know something very shrimpy is going on when a Glen Cook book lacks **confusion** and doesn't make you feel like a **complete retard**.

Yes, this book is **dreadfully unsettling** in its disgusting **straightforwardness**. Okay, so it is as straightforward as a Glen Cook book about intergalactic spies can be. Which is not that very. Straightforward, I mean. Okay, so it is. **A little**. Straightforward, I mean. It's just that it's not quite as straightforward as a Noddy story would be. Or something. Because this is, you know, Glen Cook. And he is, you know, the **King of All Things not Straightforward Even When They Are Supposedly Straightforward and Stuff** (KoATnSEWTASSaS™). Besides, one of the many glorious side effects of being a **Slightly Shameless Hysterical Glen Cook (view spoiler) Fangirl** (SSHGCF™) is that you want to be befuddled so badly you end up seeing perplexing twists and cunning manipulations even when there are none to be found. So you end up being **confused by the lack of confusion** you thought was so not confusing you made up confusing stuff so that the lack of confusion would stop being **so confusing**. Follow me? No? Don't worry, **me neither**.

*Why this gif? No idea. I'm just the crappy non-reviewer here, it's not like I'm in charge of the interior decorating or something.*

**Yeah yeah yeah**, some of my double crossing comrades would argue that this is **Decaf Cook** and that this book is way too **normal** \*shudders discretely\* for His Gloriousness. And our Lord Shrimp knows I hate all things **normal** \*shuddering intensifies\* But Cook is Cook. And Cook is a God. And I am an **Ever So Slightly Biased SSHGCF™** (ESSBSSHGCF™). And stuff. So QED. And stuff.

**Yeah yeah yeah**, some of my delightfully untrustworthy colleagues would argue that this is a kinda sorta **filler** because ~~very little~~ not much happens and it's mostly about **glorious** world building and **wondrous** characterization but because the world building is **glorious** and characterization is **wondrous** I don't give a damn whether this is a kinda sorta **filler** and stuff. So QED. And stuff.

**Now let's talk about** the real problem here. There are enough **revoltingly nice** characters in this book to make any Historical Romance author jealous. I kid you not. It's quite **repulsive**, really. But, hey, at least Cook's characters are slightly **unhinged** and delightfully **conflicted**. And they are about as nice as Cook characters can be, which means they still enjoy slightly **slaughtering things** in their spare time. Still, all this abominable lack of utter viciousness and complete evilness is quite troubling. **It's all very fishy**, if you ask me, and I think this is one of those **Cunning Cook Plans** (CCP™) (view spoiler). I mean, everything was tied up wayyyyyy too comfortably here. **And that ending**. Oh bloody shrimping hell, that ending. It's nothing short of a **revolutionary** concept, if you ask me: a Cook book that ends with a freaking spoiler spoiler spoiler? Let me tell you, my Tiny Decapods, governments have been toppled **for much less than**

**that.** Which leads me to this undeniably logical conclusion: some very dark evil is at work here, and Glen Cook (view spoiler) will get his **much-anticipated Machiavellian** revenge in book 3.

*Yes, my Lovely Arthropods, this hunk here ↑↑ is indeed Niccolò Machiavelli, aka The Babe, aka Hot Stuff.*

**Okay, almost there.** Two more things before I let you go back to your fascinating lives (view spoiler):

① This book reminded me a little of the **Gloriously Glorious Plain of Menagerie** (GGPoFM™). Because starfish and sharks and stuff. And that alone justifies a ~~5-star~~ 4.35-star rating.

② **I used to hate space** in general and space operas in particular. With a vengeance. Because, seriously, what can be more **ridiculously boring** and boringly ridiculous than a bunch of **nitwits** struggling with gravity while wearing **repellently unsexy** space suits? Apart from a bunch of flamenco dancing barnacles, I mean. Anyone? No one? That's what I thought. I have **thus proven** that all space operas were ridiculously boring **until Glen Cook happened.** And that alone justifies a ~~5-star~~ 4.35-star rating.

» And the moral of this **I am Getting Kinda Tired of Trying to Find Highly Educational Morals for Every Crappy Non Review I Write Crappy Non Review** (IaGKToTtFHEMfECNRIWCNR™) is:

**You're welcome.**

(view spoiler)

(view spoiler)

∞ **Book 1:** Shadowline ★★★★★

∞ **Book 3:** Stars' End ★★★★★ ← *you never saw this. This never happened.*

∞ **Book 4:** Passage at Arms ★★★★★ ← *are you seeing a 3-star rating here? I knew it. You're drunk again. Damn, how many times have I told you alcohol was bad for you?!*

[Pre-review nonsense]

**Glen Cook, you kill me dead.** Even when your books don't confuse the hell out of me and make me feel like a complete moron. And that takes **real bloody shrimping talent**, if you ask me. **Let's party.**

? Full **I May Be an Ever So Slightly Biased Cook Fangirl but I don't Give a Freaking Shrimp What You Silly Barnacles Think Crappy Non Review** (IMBaESSBCFbIDGaFSWYSBTCNR™) to come.

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**Alan says**

Enjoyable and a bit less confusing than the first in the trilogy. The Starfishers harvest "ambergris" from the giant transdimensional beings called starfish. The ambergris powers the instantaneous communications equipment and so is invaluable. Mouse and Moyshe join a Starfisher's crew to try to find out more about these very secretive ships.

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### Nick says

A solid sci fi narrative, a far cry from the first book both in terms of narrative reach and complexity. An easier read much more of a serial novel than the first. I had a few significant issues with the book however the focus on two characters did much more for an understandable plot, and the background work of the first novel did much to make the setting a fun and rushing thriller.

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### Eric Wisdahl says

I thought Starfishers, the second book in the Starfishers series by Glen Cook, was a pretty good read. It kind of took me by surprise as it went off in a completely different direction than Shadowline, the first book in the series. The series switched main characters from Masato "Mouse" Storm to Moyshe benRabi. This was a little unexpected as it really seemed like the emphasis of the first book was to get to know Mouse and the events which had shaped his life into the wanton hatred he had for his enemies. Instead, we are presented with a man who is at a bit of a loss as to how he came to be in his position, a little ashamed of what he has been forced to do, and all in all more than a little morose. Mouse is still a prominent character, but he is no longer the narrator.

Where Shadowline was about a sense of impending doom, a passing of an era, and most of all the story of characters learning to hate and to soak in the need for revenge, Starfishers was a book which dealt with learning to trust, to feel and to finally fit in.

I'm very interested to see where things go from here.

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### Lee says

Starfishers was a bit of a surprise for me. I kind of expect a certain type of writing style when I read Cook and I am not entirely sure that this hits the mark for me. Either; a/ it is **Cook lite** and a nice and happy story, or b/ Cook just set me up to kick my ass in book 3.

I like to think it is 'b'. Because 'a' just seems all a bit weird after the madness and mayhem of book 1. This story I am assuming is setting up the final two books, because there was a lot discovery of races/classes in this and what was actually just a space flight adventure that wasn't justifiably explained, with questionable lovey dovey attitudes toward the two main characters, known spies and just a general 'lets all get on' type storyline. If it wasn't for the Sangaree woman on board and her backstory.

So not 100% convinced on this book. It was a good story and I look forward to book three, but I am going to have to give this 3.5 Stars because I had too many questions at the end that failed to be answered.

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## **Brian Richardson says**

This was a better novel than the first in the series (Shadowline)...which is unusual for a series. Again, strong military science fiction. This novel delves into the mysterious Starfisher society and has much more of an espionage feel than the straight-up military clashes of the first book.

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## **Evgeny says**

**This is a buddy read with my fellow Glen Cook fans: Choko, Eilonwy, Lee, and Sarah.**

Starfishers were non-Confederation mysterious (from Confederation point of view) people that try to keep apart from everybody else. Naturally the Confederation was curious about them, so the moment the opportunity for implanting some spies presented itself two undercover agents were dispatched. One of them was Moishe BenRabi (just one of his names, actually brand new just for this mission) and another one was Mouse Storm (yes these were his real nickname and last name). Moishe was only briefly mentioned in the first book; Mouse was one of the major players. These were the only two characters appearing in the previous installment. The whole book is told from Moishe POV.

It took me forever and then some to write the review. The reason is that I do not know exactly what to say. Have you noticed the rating? I think this is the first time I gave 3 stars to one of my all-time best fantasy writers (and most definitely the best living one). For starters as all my buddy readers can confirm one of the signature traits of Cook's writing is that you feel completely lost during at least one third of any of his books.

This time the tale was really straightforward with no confusion and no huge surprises. I hope this is a case of a Middle Book of a Trilogy Syndrome (look at any of Brandon Sanderson trilogies to see what I mean). Also this was the only time I can recall we get to have some sort of HEA.

Secondly there were practically no double-crossings and backstabblings; something Cook is unrivaled at. Action was also kind of lacking; so what the hell happened in the book? Moishe brooding, this is what.

He often had terrible headaches and I felt really bad impatiently waiting to get to the parts of his suffering. Why? Because at this moments he would stop his brooding.

Please do not get me wrong: this is not a bad book. Even minor Cook's efforts are good and I believe he can make a shopping list to be an exiting read. I can see the foundations of some excellent development being laid here. Still the guy can do so much better than that and this time his tale was underwhelming.

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## **Jesse McConnell says**

This book ends on a much more upbeat than the previous one in the series, which is a phenomenally low bar to overcome. The mysterious Starfishers barely mentioned in the first book of this series are the focus of this book, and the intrigue and adventure are great.

It ends with a satisfying conclusion, but there are more than enough unresolved questions that you won't be able to wait to read the next one.

### **Matt says**

This is an interesting departure from the first book in the trilogy. It diverts the plot into a portrait of the internal life of a spy who's been partnered with a character from the first book, Mouse. All the "plot" is background material, things that happen whether or not Moyshe (the main character) gets involved. Again, highly recommended stuff.

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### **Neil Hepworth says**

Those of you who are giving this book four or five stars: are we reading the same book? I like Glen Cook's writing style, but...but...this book has no plot. Like, none. No plot. Zero. I read 230 pages and nothing happened until perhaps there were 30 pages left, and by then I stopped caring. If this book were any longer I would have abandoned it.

Sorry. I just don't get this one. Oh, well.

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### **Larry Kenney says**

I wasn't expecting a ton out of this book, after the first one. It started off a little slow for me, but quickly became very interesting to me. I really enjoyed the espionage in the book. I also really liked the world building, and found the different cultures to be very interesting. In the end, I was rooting for the story to go in a particular direction, which I rarely do. I'm sure I'll be starting the 3rd book today!

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### **Lesley says**

I didn't enjoy Starfishers as much as I enjoyed Shadowline. Shadowline really conveyed an excellent mood, and a great feel of time and place. Starfishers focuses much more on another character, one mentioned in passing during Shadowline. The character is not really as compelling as any of the ones in the previous book, and the Starfishers really don't feel like the alien society that the first book made them out to be. This book is mainly good as a setup to the third book in the series, Star's End. One of the main characters in the first book, Mouse, makes a reappearance here (and in Star's End) but the character not only feels totally different than in Shadowline, but not even in a fashion that would be considered an obvious progression from the life changes he experiences at the end of the last book. An interesting read, but certainly not the impressive experience I remembered from many years ago.

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### **Eilonwy says**

What did I just read?

*This has the closest thing to a happy ending I've seen in any Glen Cook book. And ... I liked it.*

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This is Book Two of a trilogy, yet it almost stands alone just fine. The events take place 15 years after the first book, and the POV shifts from multiple members of the Storm family to consistently following one character, a spy going by the name Moyshe benRabi, but who has been known by many others. The “present” story is woven together with a “past” story that started one year before and which flows into the current plot and shows how everyone gets/got into place for the climactic events that will surely take place in Book Three.

On the one hand, this does feel like a middle book in a trilogy, as it’s a lot of set-up and introduction, with much less of the intricate, convoluted plotting, backstabbing, and neck-breaking twists that usually feature in a Glen Cook novel. On the other hand, I really appreciated how much more lived-in this book felt, with more focus on the characters and their relationships, and expansion of the worldbuilding from Book One. Much of this book takes place on spaceships, as well, and yet it felt a lot less sterile to me. Also, there are many fewer battles, which was fine with me (although this still doesn’t mean any character is safe from annihilation, gulp).

I don’t want to say too much about it, because it’s Glen Cook, which means (a) it’s still twisty enough to be hard to explain, and (b) it should be read without knowing too much. Everything you need to know gets introduced into the story or descriptions exactly when you need it.

If you tried Shadowline and just couldn’t get into it because of all the characters and threads, I’d recommend trying this second installment anyway, because it’s so different. Most of what’s important from the first book gets mentioned at some point. And this book has Space Dragons! *Space Dragons!* And they are just as cool as you would imagine!

It’s funny, because my first inclination was to rate this three stars. But as I’ve had some time away since finishing the book, I’m actually liking it better. So four stars it is. And now on to Stars’ End!

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