



HMS Nightingale

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For Lieutenant Alexis Carew, it should be the perfect assignment - a command of her own and a chance to return to her home star system. What she finds is a surly crew, the dregs of every frigate and ship of the line to pass through on the way to the war's front, a first officer who thinks the command should have been his, and colonial worlds where they believe a girl's place is somewhere very different than command of a Queen's starship. Add to that the mysterious disappearances of ships vital to the war effort and an old enemy who seems intent on convincing her he's changed. Then there's the mongoose with an unnatural affinity for her boots.

HMS Nightingale Details

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From Reader Review HMS Nightingale for online ebook

Per Gunnar says

The books in the Alexis Carew series are somewhat bizarre as Science Fiction goes. They are a mixture of modern science and throwbacks to the days of such characters as Horatio Hornblower. The ships travel faster than light and yet they have sails which are manually raised and taken down by the crew, gun ports that open and manually loaded guns etc...

Once I had started to get over the anachronisms and bizarre mix of old and new I took quite a liking to Alexis Carew and this book series. Unfortunately I have to say that this book felt like the weakest in the series.

The book is as well written as any of the other books in the series. Alexis is the main character of course but the story drags along without really taking off. There are really never any great moments. Alexis goes about her business there are a few skirmishes, the usual "you are just a woman" stuff but it never really leads anywhere. The war is just sitting there in the background but Alexis is never part of it.

A lot of time is also spent back on her home world with her family and Alexis is also having personal problems as well as a drinking problem. I felt that was rather boring to be honest. She never really gets a change of shining as the strong person and hero overcoming any problem thrown in her way as she was in the previous books. Then we have the ending which to me was rather depressing.

It was an enjoyable book but not as much as the other three books in the series as far as I am concerned.

Lucinda Sutherland says

Second Time Through and Still Great

This is an excellent addition to the Alexis Carew books. I admit I started reading them because I have the same last name as the author but quickly read the rest because they are so good. The author creates worlds and multiple governments and intertwines greed and war and military protocol and loss and family and science and fiction with the touch of a gifted cook who knows just when to declare the meal ready. I have loved getting to know Alexis and her worlds and family.

Jon Abbott says

Move over Horatio Hornblower. Lt. Alexis Carew is sailing the skies above your head and far in the future with the dash, guts and common sense you used.

Dan says

Quite good, as is the whole series to date.

Carol Ann says

Swashbuckling Intetstellar Adventures

In this, the 4th volume, Alexis is promoted to lieutenant and given charge of her own ship only to discover her crew to be a ragtag group of misfits with questionable sailing skills. Facing many challenges in her new role, **Alexis leads her crew through exciting encounters, many with pirates and some with - Wait! Could it really be? Ghostly Flying Dutchmen?!**

Entertaining and intriguing as always, the story is brought to life by Elizabeth Klett's stellar audio narration. While I enjoyed this book, I enjoyed it less than the other volumes. This is mainly because there seemed to be less of an emotional connection developed between the characters and I felt certain phrases were overused. Still, this volume is important in the overall story and ends with fabulous news - more volumes are coming!

Lars Klander says

A solid continuation to the series

Another excellent offering in the series, which apparently will continue with Book 5. The writing is crisp, the play complex and yet very believable, and the main character becomes more and more compelling all the time. Well done.

Nancy says

This latest installment in the Alexis Carew military space opera series finds Royal Navy Lieutenant Alexis Carew in command of the Nightingale. This Naval vessel is charged with hunting down pirates who prey on innocent colonists. Politics comes into play when some of the terrorists come from one of the settlements. As if facing down these predators isn't enough, Alexis has her hands full with a crew of misfits. Can she rouse their spirits and train them in advance of the coming battles? HMS Nightingale is another fast-paced tale that will leave readers eager for the sequel.

Sue Lyssa Stone Shaffer says

Honor served

Perhaps the best of this series. Alexis and her Nightingales fight the realities of military service one battle at a time. From bad food, bad practices, to foolish bureaucracy, to superstitions and the horrors of combat. The Lieutenant matures and wrestles with the challenges before as she copes with what went before.

The best leaders are those who care and those who work at challenging and grooming those in their charge to be the best they can. May all of us live up to the example of integrity, compassion, and service. We should all rise to the challenges of helping and doing right in facing down the wrong, be it bullies or segregation.... everyone has the right to choose their own way and we must be valiant in being examples of how to stand for the right with courtesy. Officers and Gentlemen we salute you.

Patrick Barnes says

Not so nice

Still very tense and some characters are brought into more focus. Others seem to recede. The woman Marie Autin is the best example. The action continues and rings true to me.

I'm torn at the portrayal of women in these stories but that's my issue. If you've read the other books, I don't think this one will disappoint you.

I own the above and have to amend it. The sexism isn't just in the character action and words. It is steeped in the writer's easy acceptance of these norms and his justification. Male shareholders on Dalthus strip their wives and daughters of property rights and make them legally property because childbirth was so difficult, thereby making their deliveries much easier?

The indentured worker meme is serfdom at best and more like outright slavery. Possible in this universe but call it by its right name. Look at the history of indentured Irish and Scots workers imported by the English into North America and the Caribbean.

The right to vote is not much of an issue, when you and your children can be sold.

Patriarchal oppression and slavery can be in the story but justifying it and painting it as reasonable is wrong. My buying into it or turning a blind eye to it, is my shame.

Chris says

A fourth turn with Alexis Carew.

I still find the degree to which the author adheres to even the most minor details of the great British age of Wooden Ships and Iron Men to be perplexing. On the one hand, I find myself bemused at how closely the author works to get it right, and how far he's willing to bend the rules of space and physics to make it work.

On the other hand, I'm impressed by how accurately he presents his chosen venue, and how closely he sticks to the details even four books later.

In this book we see Alexis take a turn on a stage that is both smaller and larger. Smaller in that it's in a quiet corner far removed from the war being fought. Larger in that she herself is given much greater responsibility and authority. Like the ship captains of old, she is expected to make her own judgments and her career hangs in the balance with each one.

Another marvelous story, I eagerly await the 5th book.

Great book, highly recommended.

I paid full price for this book, my thoughts and opinions are my own.

Vincent says

Great sequel to the Alexis Carew serie

Another great book in the serie by J. A. Sutherland that I would recommend to all sci-fi fans, once again I can't wait until the next one is out... I'll probably read this one again at least twice (it's that good...)

Julie says

I love the Alexis Carew series. Entertaining and adventuresome reads, with likeable characters and good character growth across the series. In this book we get to see Alexis be in charge of her own ship, struggle with getting a band of misfits to work together as a functional crew, face mysterious ghostly pirates, and begin to face some of her own personal ghosts of past missions. A great addition to the series! If you enjoyed the first three, definitely pick this up. If you haven't read anything in this series yet, and the idea of importing "age of sail" military history and crew style into a sci-fi space faring world setting and following a scrappy young girl as she makes her way through this world appeals to you, then go pick up the first book in the series!

C.T. Phipps says

The Alexis Carew books are a favorite of mine and my go-to books for space opera of a decidedly Age of Sail-esque bent. I absolutely loved the first three books and was very eager to get into the fourth. I will say, unfortunately, this one didn't appeal to me nearly as much as the others for a variety of reasons. It's still an excellent novel but I'm going to say that I hope the author returns to his more traditional style for future ones. I will, however, give him credit for a truly hilarious subplot and also the attempt to handle Alexis Carew's PTSD in a mature dignified manner.

The premise is Lieutenant Alexis Carew has been given her own small patrol boat and is now given the job of patrolling the area around her own home world. This proves to be more of a problem than she expected as the territory around it is full of radical religious groups, misogynists, and her old family rivals. Alexis is also suffering PTSD and refuses to seek any treatment for it, lest she be perceived as weak. After a massacre of several ships, Alexis decides to track down the parties responsible and put an end to them. Also, there's a subplot where her first mate has determined the girl he loves is actually in a romance with Alexis due to them sharing a bed thanks to lack of space on the ship.

The good parts of the book are the story bits about Alexis struggling to get a hold of her mind after the horrible battle with the Hanover frigate when it tried to commit war crimes against fleeing refugees. J.A. Sutherland weaves a sympathetic take on the condition and does not demean the condition or it's aftermath. Alexis also doesn't magically get better but will have to deal with it for, probably, the rest of her life. Too often books make our heroes look like serial killers who can just shrug off traumatic situations and I'm

pleased with this one for averting that.

I also am fond of the Nightingale crew and think they're probably the most interesting of the characters she's had to serve with. I'm especially fond of Midshipman Villar and hope he continues to be a character in the series. While mildly sexist and a bit of a dunderhead, he tries very hard to be a model officer. The fact he's so terribly bad at it doesn't make him a bad person, though, and I like seeing how his casual manner plays against the more straight-laced Lieutenant Carew. I also found his ill-fated romance with Marie to be hilarious, especially as Alexis is completely confounded by his assumptions about her.

Unfortunately, I do have a complaint and that's the book's handling of the religious colonies in this setting. Despite being the Age of Sail in space, religion seems to be a somewhat isolated thing to the colonies with Alexis, herself, being atheist. Fine, that's just how the author has created the character but I was more confounded by the fact the only religious characters in the novel are ten pounds of crazy in a five pound bag. In addition a colony of what appears to be Wahhabi Muslims who are refreshingly not a group of terrorists, a group of Space Amish who believe space is heaven, and a bunch of psychotic zealots. This is mostly notable lack of contrast to anyone who isn't nuts. There's also the fact the word "terrorist" has apparently exited the lexicon of humanity for some reason. Has political extremist disappeared so thoroughly that language has changed? It seems at odds with the retrograde universe which is at times the 17th century and other times the far future while this handling of humanity seems at odds with either.

Despite my trouble with the story, I still think the book has quite a few merits and will be enjoyable for fans of the series. I'm just a bit confused by the world-building choices and they brought me out of the story.

7/10

Jonmontanavega says

Young woman leaves the farm, makes her way in the space navy, climbs the ranks due to common sense, bravery and not a little good timing in being where the action is thickest. She has lots of agency, and a good heart for her men. This is book 4 of a series. I recommend reading them in order. I took off a star for a plot that began to meander a tad. Steampunk sci-fi.

PS You have to willingly suspend disbelief that naval ships traveling through space have sails, use cannons, and need men to climb the masts. A tot of rum is issued to each sailor every day ... or denied if being disciplined. Just like good old England.

Richard Larraga says

This is a wonderful series combining Age of Sail techniques with science fiction coming of age adventure. Alexis Carew is a strong character who is tougher on herself than her peers. Because she is a woman in a man's world, she has many hurdles to overcome, but her pluck, resolve, and competence set her up for advancement and success. Very much in the style of Horatio Hornblower, she meets a wide range of characters who help mold her to become a tough, but caring officer. This series is a satisfying read (I read the first four books in a week) which incorporates many strands ranging from traditions (and clarity) of the British Navy to hypothetical travel through dark matter. The dialogue and humour are witty and gratifying. The second book in the series is the strongest involving an antipathetic antagonist (is there any other kind?) and a harrowing moment of brutality which forever changes Alexis. Overall, an engaging series which I

highly recommend.
