



Blackhawk

Jay Allan

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Blackhawk. A wanderer, a man running from a dark and sinister past. A genetically-engineered warrior, a capable and accomplished killer, he is also a lost soul, a man who has fled to the deepest reaches of space seeking his true identity.

The Far Stars. The farthest extent of human habitation in the galaxy, a sector of a hundred inhabited worlds, it is a dangerous expanse full of pirates, mercenaries, and cutthroats. The sector is a rough and rugged frontier, lying beyond the darkness of the great Void, and the only place in all the vastness of space where men live free of the brutal empire that rules the rest of mankind.

Celtiboria. Once the premier world in the Far Stars, now a planet wracked by centuries of brutal civil war, driven to the edge of a dark age by the unending struggle among its Warlords for power and control.

Augustin Lucerne. One of Celtiboria's feuding Warlords, a brilliant tactician and a respected commander. Lucerne is something rare on Celtiboria, in all of the Far Stars...an honorable man who fights not for personal aggrandizement but to save his world.

When Blackhawk meets Lucerne he comes to a stark choice. He can continue on his way, a drifter wandering from world to world, alone and without purpose. Or he can join with Lucerne, fight at the Warlord's side in desperate battle for survival. But whatever he chooses, he will have to face the demons that have pursued him across the stars, the dark version of himself that still lives deep within his mind.

Blackhawk is a prequel to the Far Stars series, set twenty years before the existing books. For those who have read the Far Stars trilogy, this is the origin story of Arkarin Blackhawk. And for those who have not read the existing Far Stars series, Blackhawk is an ideal place to start.

The Far Stars Series

Shadow of Empire

Enemy in the Dark

Funeral Games

Also by Jay Allan

Crimson Worlds Series

Marines (Crimson Worlds I)

The Cost of Victory (Crimson Worlds II)

A Little Rebellion (Crimson Worlds III)

The First Imperium (Crimson Worlds IV)

The Line Must Hold (Crimson Worlds V)

To Hell's Heart (Crimson Worlds VI)

The Shadow Legions (Crimson Worlds VII)

Even Legends Die (Crimson Worlds VIII)

The Fall (Crimson Worlds IX)

Tombstone (Crimson Worlds Prequel Novella)

Bitter Glory (Crimson Worlds Prequel Novella)

The Gates of Hell (Crimson Worlds Prequel Novella)

Crimson Worlds Successors Series

MERCS (Successors I)

The Prisoner of Eldaron (Successors II)

The Black Flag (Successors III - Coming Summer 2016)

Crimson Worlds Refugees Series

Into the Darkness (Refugees I)

Shadows of the Gods (Refugees II)

Revenge of the Ancients (Refugees III)

Portal Wars Series

Gehenna Dawn (Portal Wars I)

The Ten Thousand (Portal Wars II)

Homefront (Portal Wars III)

Pendragon Chronicles

The Dragon's Banne

Blackhawk Details

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From Reader Review Blackhawk for online ebook

Charles T. Fincher says

Great story with lots of action

This is a well written first in a series of books about Blackhawk. The story goes into the character's personality, and the book does not leave you hanging at the end. Sometimes in trying to make a particular point he tends to repeat details that most readers would have already gotten, like saying again and again that the millions to pay the army was a huge sum of money. But it is a good read and we'll worth the few problems along the way.

Jim says

Jay Allan is a prolific writer! I think that's really a huge understatement. I have read many, many of his books and they all are just outstanding. This one falls into that category, although I did notice a fair amount of editorial errors through out the book. The did nothing to take away from the book, but it was surprising to find so many in a Jay Allan book. I'm wondering if he got a new editor?

Ok, on with the book. Blackhawk is one mean dude. He also something of a construct. He has capabilities that make him deadlier than any man alive on this planet. I mean he kills four soldiers in a bar in the opening chapter. They started the fight, but he sure did finish it. He's also on the downside of life, looking like a tramp with nothing but booze as his companion. We don't get a lot of information about Blackhawk's former life. Let's just say that it was bad and I wouldn't want to push him much to tell me about it. He's kind of roaming around in the Far Star system because no one knows him here. Still, killing four soldiers who were armed is not going to go unnoticed.

Fortunately for him, those that did notice were solders from a different group. These new soldiers were from General Augustin Lucerne's army while the soldiers Blackhawk shot were from a General Ghana's camp. This is the planet Celtiboria, a mostly desert planet that once was great, but has fallen to an age where warfare is the main activity of those living here. On this Northern Continent, various Warlords have been fighting for centuries. General Lucerne and General Ghana are enemies and are just about the last of the remaining Warlords that can do much fighting. All the Warlords have just about exhausted their resource in men and money from the long fighting. There is a truce of sorts now which means most of the soldiers in both armies don't have a lot to do.

Still, being a prisoner in General Augustin Lucerne's brig was better than being in General Ghana's clutches. A hanging awaited him there. And a hanging might still be awaiting him if I wasn't for the fact that General Augustin Lucerne was a honorable man with an uncanny ability to read other people. He had already noticed that Blackhawk wasn't what he appeared to be, but he didn't know exactly what he was. So, General Lucerne went to visit Blackhawk in his cell. That meeting changed everything for Blackhawk, General Lucerne and eventually for everyone on the planet Celtiboria.

Blackhawk finds a man he did not know existed. He has found an honest and honorable man in General Lucerne. This is a man he can actually follow and do what is asked. He's never been in this situation before. And General Lucerne automatically trust Blackhawk. They form a bond that should have made General

Lucerne's enemies hearts grow cold. Yet, before this story is over, Blackhawk will find someone else that almost melts his heart. She is not a general, but a leader. Is this where Blackhawk finally finds the peace he's been searching for for so long? Impossible!

Saugat Roy says

Interesting start to the series

This book was interesting enough to make me stay the whole series. It's a different approach to space Opera. How a civilization can start backwards and decay into civil war and such, is the premises of this story. As usual pretty well written by Mr. Allen.

Loki Lokash says

Blackhawk: Far Star Legends 1 pans in on a dusty, backwater town, then further into what is described very similarly to an ol' West waterin' hole. There's the classic "Fist Full of Dollars" gunfight, in which our hero (I won't use the term protagonist here, because it's very clear that Blackhawk is designed from the ground up to be a HERO with a capital H) guns down four drunken soldiers in self-defense.

That's the point the book had me.

"Space western?" I said to myself, thankfully with no one around to hear me ramble, "Oooooohhh, I fucking love these."

I read on eagerly.

Unfortunately, although the book continued to engage me, the western vibe was lost slowly but surely throughout the course of the book. I'd have gladly read three hundred pages about Blackhawk in that pseudo-western town, stuck between the Rohos and the Baxters.

For a while there it transitioned into something very Dune-like (Why the swords? What practical purpose?), then later on into some very light Military Sci-Fi. Fortunately for me, Dune is my favorite book of all time, and Military Sci-Fi is one of my guilty pleasures when it's not filled with political pulp project vomiting... and this isn't. At all.

Blackhawk the character begins the book as a drunken wastrel in a tavern drinking away his memories. He has his gunfight with the Militia-jerks, is imprisoned, and meets the warlord Lucerne - WHO IS A GOOD MAN. LISTEN! YOU! LUCERNE IS GOOD! HONORABLE! BUT NOT TOO HONORABLE! JUST HONORABLE ENOUGH! ...and somehow Blackhawk notices this. Lucerne here is Duke Leto Atreides, let's be honest. There may be character development in further books that take him away from this, but in THIS book, he's Cap'n America. Even his prison is nice and humane, and everyone knows you can judge a society by how it treats it's prisoners.

Our HERO consents to work for Lucerne, is betrayed and captured, and taken prisoner by Ghana - Lucerne's rival warlord. Who's prison observed to be not nearly as nice, which leads to what I believe to be Blackhawk's most cold-blooded line in the book. Don't fret though - we're not on Geidi Prime just yet, not until we meet the man backing Ghana, Carteria. He's the Harkonnen.

The problem here, once again, is the author not quite trusting his reader - hell, for all I know this is a young-adult series, and I, being neither young nor an adult, am as far from the target audience as possible. But I doubt it. We are given information about a character or event, then, in the next paragraph, it is explained to us what the information we were just given implies.

Example:

'Blackhawk took a bite of the bread, chewing quickly and swallowing before he answered. "I think what you say is true...you'd like to know who is backing Ghana..." He looked over and stared intently at Lucerne. "...but I'd also guess you are really hoping to entice Ghana into breaking the truce...or gaining some information you can use to justify your own attack, a casus bellum of some kind."

It was Lucerne's turn to stare wordlessly for a few seconds. He was a man who hid his thoughts well, but now they were on his face to be read. He was impressed.

"You are an insightful man. And very correct. I cannot allow another three months of inactivity...and I cannot launch an unprovoked surprise attack." He paused. "So, we must make something happen by other means, Mr. Blackhawk. We must find a way to engineer a resumption of hostilities as quickly as possible." Blackhawk took another bite of the bread. He was seeing Lucerne more clearly, and his esteem was growing. The men he'd seen in his life he'd have called good were few in number...and almost without exception they were weak fools. Their motivations might have been positive, but they were idealistic, believing what they needed to believe to sustain their outlooks. And, eventually, they were all destroyed by the nature of a universe they refused to see for what it was.'

Allan, Jay (2016-04-25). Blackhawk: Far Stars Legends I (Kindle Locations 708-718). System 7 Publishing. Kindle Edition.

If I had my druthers the last paragraph would've ended after "and his esteem was growing". The rest can be inferred from what little we already know about Blackhawk. This is a common problem with authors, and it really stands out in this book due to the competent writing around it.

We are beaten over the head until we're bloody with the fact that PEOPLE DIE IN WAR. We're not all gonna make it home, boys!

It gets tiring, to be honest, even in the midst of a book as entertaining as this one. Don't get me wrong, it's better than the Jingoistic piss-fests of certain Tombstone-esque Military Sci-Fi authors, but still... it grates on you after the first few times.

Also, the dialogue ping-pongs between really great, and kinda cringy. There's a scene in Ghana's prison where I thought to myself (not yet being aware that this is a prequel and there's an entire series already written after this) "Ah, the author's coming into the voice of this character nicely", when Blackhawk's internal dialog started becoming much more informal than his dialogue with the Gray Rebels. And then, later on in the book, Blackhawk's internal dialog once again becomes very formal and stilted towards the melodramatic. The opposite would be explained by his backsliding to his natural state as a human killing machine (tm), but becoming more formal as your personality devolves into savagery just makes no sense to me. Further exacerbating matters, at that point in the book EVERYONE'S dialogue becomes formal and melodramatic, robbing Blackhawk and most other characters of a distinctive voice.

Now, I'm going to relate to you the greatest tragedy of the book - Bulg Trax.

He heard the sound at the door, a loud clumsy knock. He'd know that sound anywhere. "Enter," he said, turning around to face Bulg Trax. The soldier wasn't just large, he wasn't just strong and powerful. He was a colossus, a veritable mountain of a man. And he was Carteria's creature, body and soul.

...

...

Bulg Trax was like a force of nature in combat, and Carteria had worked his henchmen into a near-frenzy. Failure was unthinkable to the huge soldier, and he would remember Carteria's words, the sound of the Marshal's voice calling him 'old friend.' Bulg Trax would obliterate anyone who came near the treasure convoy...and he would die, along with the thousand men under his command, before he would relinquish a single ducat.

Allan, Jay. Blackhawk: Far Stars Legends I (Kindle Locations 2721-2724). System 7 Publishing. Kindle

Edition.

When I read that, I made a note to myself which read: "I want to know RIGHT NOW why Bulg Trax is so loyal... maybe later?"

But no, not later. Never. Never ever is a specific reason given as to why Trax would follow Carteria to the very gates of hell. I was hoping for a cool story, or maybe a very slight softening of Carteria. But I got nothing... this wouldn't be a big deal to anybody else, I'd imagine, but for some reason I was immediately fascinated with Bulg Trax: The man who followed a monster.

Don't let me put you off, however. This book is overall very enjoyable - there were several times while reading I thought to myself

"That's a very clever way to do that - good on the author."

At one point Captain Sand, who was until recently the warden of the desert prison, (I KNOW! I KNOW!) jumped to a conclusion that, while completely wrong, was both reasonable and moved the plot forward. I would've clapped, but I'd have dropped the book.

There was a point about halfway through the book when I thought to myself - "Awesome - I just figured out how the good guys are going to win."

I was dead wrong. Couldn't have BEEN more wrong, actually, and I was super happy with that. (Rarely am I happy with being wrong.) Not only did what I predict not come to pass, what I thought was going to be a deus ex machina turned out to be a major complication for our heroes.

Jay Allan is full of surprises. Good surprises.

This book is worth a read if you've heard anything I've referenced, and liked it.

Dune, Tri-Gun, Firefly, Non-Political Military Sci-Fi - Hell, if you liked Star Wars, The Man With No Name, and Captain America all at once at any time in your life, I'd say give it a go.

Aizzia says

Damn i like and dislike this book at the same time. It has huge potential... lots of action with plenty of twists and turns....some you see coming but some surprises too.

But I found myself skimming over whole paragraphs of character thoughts because i already know this stuff, the character thought it/told us all about it 15mins ago when we were last in his POV. I also hate reading unnecessary chapters/pages - why devote time and energy to an unnecessary character?? It really annoyed me because we didn't really need to read all this crap about him when a single paragraph from another POV would of been sufficient to impart the info/background we need without losing the momentum of the story.

Anyway I enjoyed it for what it was...a light sci-fi military adventure. But don't think I'll pick up the rest of the series unless someone promises me the writing improves :)

Ray Carter says

One Mean Mutha

Although our Hero is the meanest Murtha in the valley, we aren't given much info on how or why he got that way. Nevertheless, this is a good read for all us space Warriors. I do recommend it highly. Jay Allen continues to provide us with top notch space opera goodies.

Mike Keller says

Arkarin Blackhawk, a genetically enhanced warrior from an army in the core worlds of the Empire, has fled his past in the Far Stars.

Bringing his special abilities and skills to aid a warlord on a planet controlled by feuding armies, Blackhawk seeks to escape his past in service to a man he can admire and trust. Can even Blackhawk's remarkable skills win the day against the cruel warlord Carteria with his massive bankroll and huge army of veteran fighters and mercenaries?

The action is constant and terrifically well-written. The characters are typical for Jay Allen - described with his standard attention to detail, and brought to life in the pages of this exciting story. They live, fight, love and die as Jay brings us into the world of the Far Stars, the beginning of a remarkable series of tales.

This sci-fi space opera set far in humanity's future will give you a front row seat to the lives in the Far Stars. Don't miss this introduction to brand new heroes in an all new series.

Jacque Holst says

Great Military Sci-fi

Jay Allan is one of the best. I don't know how he does it but he's extremely prolific. If you like Sci-fi with a military bent pick up Far Stars Legends and start reading, when you finish that pick up the Far Stars series and keep reading. Read the future in the battle for independence fought by the far stars and the men and women that fight for their freedom. That includes Blackhawk, Lucerne, DeMark and others, some old friends and some new. Highly recommended.

Walter Scott says

A warrior, in the greatest battle of his life – his own humanity.

I had a lot of mixed feelings as I finished up reading Blackhawk. It is a story of centuries-long conflict that takes place a long way from Earth. It starts out like a standard Western, with a stranger coming into a tavern and drinking awful whiskey and getting into a fight. I pictured a younger Clint Eastwood in the role. It is a desert-like setting. The combatants deal out death with pistols, rifles, and the occasional sword or knife. But there are also trucks, fighter and bombers in the air, rail guns, radios... Yet two sentences past each of these kinds of higher tech references, you feel as if you are back in America's western frontier. Must be my age, and growing up with Roy Rogers and the Lone Ranger.

There is a lot of introspection, mainly on the part of Blackhawk, and it does get a bit repetitious after a bit. But I got to know the main characters, and I really liked the people that Jay Allan revealed. The setting was always interesting. The action was well paced. And I will read more of his books

Michelle Mellon says

I read this as part of the Kindle version of 25 for One, the book bundle benefiting hurricane victims. This book is not part of my go-to genre for reading, but I enjoy war adventures when they're engaging, as in this case. Allen mixes bits of Dune and Star Wars and Rambo mentalities into a tale of a genetically enhanced warrior with a dark past, seeking refuge in the far reaches of space on a warring world. The weaknesses for me with this book are two: first and minor, the relationship between Blackhawk and Cass. It seems to happen too quickly, almost "off-camera," as it were. One scene between them that was more intimate/vulnerable with traded anecdotes, secret fears, hopes, etc. would have helped me buy into their relationship better. The bigger issue is the repetition. While I appreciate reminders every couple of chapters when there's a lot going on, there were places where the text felt like filler, because it was a rehash of what had been said just in the previous paragraph. There were a few instances where shifting the POV would have been a good tool for character development as well as tying all the pieces together. That being said, I enjoyed the read and will definitely consider exploring the series further.

Stephen says

To tell you the truth, I really was not expecting to like this book at all. I ended up loving it. It started really slow and I almost put it down, but I am really glad I kept reading. I love the story and how it unfolds. There was one character that got killed that I really hated to see go but I see why it had to be. The author does a wonderful job of getting you pulled into the story. Great main character. I will be reading the series. Great reading Everyone!

Lisa says

A good beginning

I bought Blackhawk when it was offered at friendly pricing. However I rarely read until the series is complete and I can afford it. Yes sometimes that is a pain!! However the author has not only managed to write the follow up trilogy, but also placed it on KU for a month. I am overjoyed. Now I am reading. Blackhawk itself was to me an old fashioned telling of a hero in the making. I greatly enjoyed it, though it frequently came across as a bit dry and dusty.

Marshall Clowers says

A drifter walks into a bar, words get said, thugs get killed, drifter gets arrested... Old story? Sure it is.

The Far Stars is well and away from the "Empire" that emerged from early colonization, our hero is on the run from that Empire. He's a genetic "super soldier" bred for combat, and he's tired. Finding himself stuck in the Badlands trying (without success) to drink his memories away. The altercation in the bar leads him into the service of one of the warlords who are set on control of the trade routes.

Cliché? Yes, a little bit. But it's a decent spin on it, and I do want to find out more.

Gregoire says

Facile à lire mais rien de franchement passionnant Beaucoup de répétitions et de clichés Des scènes de combats et d'intrigues entre des parties qui se disputent l'hégémonie sur un monde à l'écart de la grande puissance qui tente de s'implanter dans le système et un héros qui fuit sa nature essentiellement belliqueuse Le tout m'a semblé un peu artificiel comme sa relation avec la chef des Greys (résistants) Bref, je l'ai tout de même lu jusqu'au bout Je le qualifierais d'un bon roman de série B

Mike (the Paladin) says

I go three stars on this book simply because after I read it, I completely forgot it. When I looked back at it on this list at first I couldn't remember if I'd read it or not (please no comments on my age here). I turned back to it (I still had it from the library) and as soon as I started it it was an "Oh Yeah" moment.

Blackhawk is (another) taciturn hero (and that word may be somewhat poorly chosen. He'd never call himself a hero but [of course] ends up acting the part) who's world weary (or in this case possibly "universe weary"). He's tired of war, killing and is trying to hide from his past.

Of course his expertise at the said war, killing and mayhem drags him back into conflict.

I think that on the whole most space action jockeys will enjoy this one. It may not have anything really new and the story may not stand out from the crowd of similar stories but it is enjoyable and holds the interest.

While it isn't near a favorite I can recommend it as a good space opera read.
