



# To Fire Called

*Nathan Lowell*

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**A dead ship returns to the Deep Dark with a live crew.**

Captain Ishmael Wang finally gets the *Chernyakova* out of the yard and embarks on a voyage into the Toe-Holds where the Confederated Planets Joint Committee on Trade has no authority. Where the law is whatever you say it is as long as you can enforce it.

Where he learns that some will do anything to hide their secrets and everybody has a secret.

## To Fire Called Details

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Author : Nathan Lowell

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# From Reader Review To Fire Called for online ebook

## Terri says

To Fire Called is the second book in Nathan Lowell's A Seeker's Tale series. It follows the story of Ismael Wang, Captain of the Chernyakova, and his crew. We were first introduced to young Ishmael in this author's previous series, the Golden Age of the Solar Clipper Series; Trader Tales.

I love that this epic tale unfolds through and around the Captain, without infringement of space wars and aliens. It's best to read these books in order of their release, as recurring characters rotate in and out. The overall journey captures the imagination and binds you to the story line, without relying on huge battle scenes or aliens. This is an epic tale set in outer space. The characters are very well defined, and they continue to mature before our eyes. This particular installment is full of mystery and intrigue, and caused me to wonder throughout on which side the many players belonged. Well, the pieces are coming together nicely, but I'll have to read the followup, Suicide Run. I can hardly wait.

Note to Dr. Lowell: You old salty dog! You hold your cards very close to your chest. And you only show us one or two at a time. The intrigue is addictive. Well done. And, please, keep it up. Thank you for sharing your imagination with us. I'm in for the long haul.

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## Laz the Sailor says

I really love this author. His characters are usually mature adults, and the situations are usually not very complicated. And yet there is drama and humor, setbacks and success.

If you haven't read the previous 7 or 8 books, this is not the place to start. Go back the beginning, you'll appreciate the journey.

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## Scott says

I can't seem to stop reading these books. I really love this world, characters, and stories. I wish there were more to read, but I guess I'll just have to be patient. And I'll probably hold myself over by reading some of Lowell's other works

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## Mark Zodda says

I really like Nathan Lowell's writing and have enjoyed the Solar Clipper series and his other stories. While his writing is character rather than event driven, I found that this last book tended to drag and I got tired of the Ishmael Wang "dealing" with depression and loss. Pip's return was quite a let down as well as his character was not in the least bit sympathetic. I found the ending rushed and as I thought Lowell was setting the stage for the next book in the series only to find that the matter was resolved with a wink and a nod. Overall, disappointing.

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## **Lucie LeBlanc says**

### **Glorious continuity to a beloved series**

With each new book of the Solar Clipper series, we renew our friendship with characters we have learnt to love over the years.

This new iteration continues on the same path and gives us more mysteries to chew on than any of the other books. We are, at the same time, rocked by the familiar routines and procedures guiding the life of the crew, and yanked from it by the unexpected events and plots thrown at it.

Well done, Sar.

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## **John S Roth says**

### **Great Things Come To Those That Wait**

It's been a while. However, getting into this story was like getting back with old friends. Nathan Lowell writing gift is to transport the reader into his world, with incredibly relatable characters, great action and wonderful storyline. I waited a while for this book and wasn't the least disappointed! While the book easily stands on its own merits, I highly recommend the entire series! Thank you Nathan Lowell, and don't stay away too long!!!

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## **AR says**

### **What happened to the ending???**

I was really enjoying this book and then all of a sudden: It's almost 2 months later, a couple questions get vaguely answered, and then the book ends. What?!?

When I read a book, I've come to expect a certain level of resolution / satisfaction at the end of it. The ending of To Fire Called completely failed to live up to this standard, leaving me unhappy and frustrated with it. Not recommended.

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## **Gwendolyn Patton says**

I always like Nathan's books. I've listened to all of them that have audiobooks. Don't tell the guys who did his Audible books, but I have copies of the podcasts squirrelled away. The Audible books are excellent -- I even spotted where some wordings got edited, and for the better -- but frankly, I thought Nathan's reading sounded more like Ishmael, and I will never forgive the Audible guys for changing how to pronounce "Roubaille". Sure, their pronunciation sounded believable for the spelling, but it's not how NATHAN

pronounces it, and that matters. It probably needed an accent acute on the last e (é), and that would have forced the "-ay" ending. It's like listening to Grover Gardner reading his first Vorkosigan book ("Memory", for the trivia fans), and getting all the names wrong. He fixed it in "Komarr", but still...that recording should have been redone, they were so off. But I digress...

Like "In Ashes Born", this book isn't so much a solid story in and of itself, but a series of "...whatever happened to..." pastiches regarding all the old characters we knew and loved from the first series. There's nothing particularly wrong with that, but when you spend your time stitching together a dozen character pastiches, there's a tendency to rush to the next pastiche, rather than pay attention to the plot development. You can't do a short story for each character development, but only a drabble for the plot. It's unbalanced, and makes for a thin story. It's still entertaining, because we like those characters a whole lot, but the thin story is like thin air. We might like what we're doing way up there, but if we pass out from anoxia, we're no longer **READING**. Characters and setting may be meat and milk, but plot is the air we breathe between meals, and this is pretty rarefied. We like the taste, and it slakes our thirst, but it gives us a headache at the end.

And so this did for me. I was reading, reading, reading, enjoying it so much, then "suddenly, he woke up". For Nathan, that had to be the most abrupt ending of any of his books I've ever read. It built up and up, and while we had a nice conflict, there was no climax. It just dove directly into the steepest denouement I've ever seen, and I'm a Heinlein fan (RAH couldn't write endings for the life of him). That's as close as I can get to a decent review without actually spoiling the plot.

I can tell there's some dovetailing with Milk Run, so I'm going to finish that next and see if there's any caulk for the gaps and maybe even a shot of oxygen for those rarefactions. And I will be waiting for the **NEXT** book in the Seeker's Tale to see if any of the stuff Nathan left **OUT** gets told there.

I enjoyed this book. It had some really fun moments. But next time, Nathan, fix your plot holes **BEFORE** you move on. You almost left one large enough to throw a dog through. Let me point it out. Space is not *cold*. Space is *NOTHING*. You did manage to squeak out of that one, barely, but it was pretty whiffy there for a moment. Don't do that again, please. But that ending...sir, it gave me the distinct impression that you had run out of time before deadline and needed to slap a stamp on it and hope it arrived at the address. You only get **ONE** of those. I suggest you ask your publisher to give you an extension clause, so if you are running tight on deadline but still have story in your teeth, you can ask for the time to floss properly. Who was it who clipped their nails for luck and trimmed his nose hair? Attention to detail is important. Take the time to get the **WHOLE** story out...or find a way to shove a piece to the next book **WITHOUT** giving us such an express elevator to the egress quite so quickly.

Again, don't think I didn't like the book. I gave it four stars, so I liked it a lot. But I should have been able to give you **FIVE** stars, like the rest of your books I've read. This one...I simply couldn't give that ending the fifth star, and I really wish I could have.

If you missed the climax that badly in bed, you'd be lucky if your partner let you try again. But she might if she really liked you a lot, so you might get away with it. But it'd take a real good sport to let you get away with it *TWICE*.

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## **Betsy says**

This is Book 2 of the Seeker's Tale Series and it was something of a disappointment. Throughout most of the book, I felt that I didn't quite understand what was happening, or that nothing seemed to be happening. To be fair, that may have been the intention of the author, because obviously Ishmael felt the same way. He felt that he was somehow being used, maybe scammed, but he didn't know how. There was a little bit of excitement at the end, but it didn't last long, then was too easily resolved, and the book finished with another conundrum.

Another thing that was frustrating, there were a number of references to people from previous series, not just the last book, that were not explained to any extent. Granted, some of that may be explained by my less than perfect memory, but I have read each of those previous books at least twice. Most authors are able to include some minimal explanation of back references, enough to trigger the reader's memory. At least enough to enable us to know whether the references are important to the plot. But not here. It pissed me off.

I will probably read the next book in the series, but I will be skittish about it.

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## **Scott Guthrie says**

At the end of the day, this was a great read, like all the Ishmael Wang books!

The story was relatively quickly paced, (perhaps sometimes too quick!), but it managed to bring a ton of new material from the Solar Clipper universe into the story without feeling like a data dump. All in all, while each of the previous Ishmael Wang book felt pretty self-contained, To Fire Called seemed a bit more like a "middle book". It had definite and firm linkages to the previous book, and seemed to be setting Ishmael and crew up for the next book. This is nowhere better seen than the end of the book, when much is revealed, but the story ends essentially abruptly, leaving the reader begging for another chapter or 100!

Like all the other Solar Clipper novels, this one begs to be re-read. I keep the Solar Clipper books on my Kindle at all times, and they remind me a bit of those tattered, dog-eared paperbacks I read so many times that the spine was broken...except they are just as unblemished after 5 reads as they were when my Kindle downloaded them. Mr. Lowell has the gift of writing stories that are engaging and fun, presenting them in a universe that just maybe "could be". I can't think of any better praise than that for a Science Fiction novel....the Solar Clippers "Could be".

Scott

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## **Shane Lawrence says**

### **Great Characters and concept but....**

Great characters and concept building in his earlier series but this is almost a kafkaesque satire....imagine a book called the battle of X, you spend 98% of the book talking about getting ready for the battle, logistics, ground conditions etc ...then you get to the battle site , get ready and then next page discussed where you are having Tea now that the battle is over. Crazy and that made me want to give it 2 stars

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## **Marcel says**

The story isn't perfect. The pacing felt off from other novels, the characters also seemed different from other books in the series.

I know that Ishmael has never sailed through the Deep Dark before, but he felt a bit more clueless than I expected.

Also, Pip seemed very different. He always was crafty with the truth, but in this book it seems he's taking a lot more liberty with the truth than in other novels. As if he totally didn't trust his best friend. If I had been in Ishmael's shoes, I'd have flushed him out the nearest airlock a lot sooner. You don't play with the lives of that many people while leaving them in the dark as to the stakes.

The buildup in the story is long and the 'chase scene' (if you can call it that) near the end takes its time while the pay-off feels rather anticlimactic.

To be honest, what really happened at that system is still somewhat of a mystery to me. That could've used a bit more exposition, but my guess is that Ishmael didn't have any role to play in that.

Another mystery is what happened at a certain gallery. Why was it important that Ishmael got gassed there?

The story left me with questions that I'm pretty sure the next book won't answer and that's slightly frustrating to me.

But in all, it is another fun ride with Ishmael. But one that's not without issues. It's a toss-up between 3 and 4 stars. Giving it 4 for old time's sake.

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## **Angus says**

This is the first one of Lowell's books that I didn't love. It was still okay, but it felt unfocused and rather random, as if the author didn't really know where it was going for most of the book.

Nathan Lowell is superb at writing stories in which not very much happens—but which are, nevertheless, utterly engrossing. But in this one, I feel he's taken a rare misstep.

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## **Dan says**

Yet another good installment in the ongoing life of Ishmael Horatio Wang. These stories are gems, the day to day life of interstellar traders made realistic.

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**Steve says**

**Nathan lowell rules**

I think I have read almost everything NL has written. Really terrific reads, all!

I'm about to the point to start again and reread them all!

If you haven't read NL you really need to

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