



The Second Ship

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For sixty years, the National Laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico, has been investigating the powerful technologies of a damaged alien ship, an effort dubbed the Rho Project. Now, the American government is ready to share the Rho Project discoveries with the world. But as the world scrambles to adopt the alien technologies, three high schoolers make another shocking discovery: hidden inside a cave in the New Mexico wilderness lies another alien ship. As the friends explore the second ship, they begin to unravel a decades-long secret involving an extraterrestrial war, government cover-ups, and secret experimentation using alien technology on humans. A battle has begun, and the secrets of the second ship may be the key to humanity's last chance for survival.

The Second Ship Details

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Author : Richard Phillips

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From Reader Review The Second Ship for online ebook

Jim says

Sometimes I confuse high visibility of a book for quality. This series kept popping up on Amazon and blogs which inspired me to purchase the whole series when they went on sale. The basic premise sounded intriguing and I was ready for another science fiction series. Where to begin with the problems in this book. Trite, obvious, and tired dialog that seemed to lack any sense of originality and showcases a very weak command of storytelling. Often it read like a pre-teen book from the 80s and nothing about the teenagers in the book felt authentic. I'm a completist (masochist?) and feel compelled to finish a book or series when I start it. I just can't see how I'm going to be able to pick up the second book.

Brett Dunst says

The dialog felt like something out of an 80s after-school special.

People in 2012 don't talk like they do in this book, and I found that to be a huge distraction.

So it's sort of this innocent "kids find a space ship" story, but then there's lots of secret agent-types moving around, people talking all old-tymey...and then, out of nowhere, rape scene!

Then we're back to teenagers talking about basketball games and backyard BBQs in this weird throwback dialog.

It's just totally bizarre and it made me wish there weren't two other books in the series, because now I need to plow through them both to get some resolution. This first book was a relatively quick read though, so I can probably put my reservations aside for a few nights to make it happen.

Stuart Love says

Couldn't get into this book for one glaring reason that somehow everyone else has missed the main antagonist is called Donald r Stephenson!!! If I was Stephen r Donaldson I would be trying to find this Richard Phillips bloke and pimp slap him all over the floor. My guess is Phillips read the gap series (best sci-fi ever!) and saw this as some kind of misguided homage to a far superior author. The writing is childish, the characters one dimensional.... Amazon I want my three bucks back!

David says

The Second Ship is a bizarre pastiche of "Golden Age"-style science fiction writing (think 1950's b-movie dialog and equally hollow characterizations), pulp-novel action heroes (think Don Pendleton), and semi-modern science (think semi-modern science). It reads like Young Adult fiction until you hit the occasional rape or beheading.

Still, how bad could it be if I got through it and decided to purchase the sequel to see what would happen next? I lost count of the number of times I thought to myself, "this is really stupid, but it sure is entertaining."

Like many before me, I read this book because it was very cheap on the Amazon Kindle. I'd like to caution others that the sequel is also cheap, but not as cheap. This book has no real ending, so once you start this book, you'll pretty much have to keep buying them (or borrowing them from the library) until Phillips decides to finish the series. As I write this review, the third book has not yet been published.

Dean says

This book reads like Encyclopedia Brown meets Nancy Drew times two.

The technology is fascinating and well-fleshed out. The concepts are fantastic (though some we have seen before) Where this novel loses so many points is in the actual writing.

Trite and cliché, the book plods along with the feeling that the reader is reading a high-tech novel for teens. They aren't going to get the tech, but the dialogue panders to the lowest common denominator.

I do not think this was the intent, but I also do not think Mr. Phillips is a very good writer.

Our protagonists explain every last thing they are doing, going to do or might do. There are some spots that will make you wince they are so awkwardly written.

Also of note; There are obvious placements of various characters/vehicles simply for the purpose of describing something going on elsewhere in the novel. These "threats" to the characters are built up throughout and then, when convenient...dispatched within a few short pages as if they never existed. I am being intentionally vague so as not to spoil, but this, having been done several times in this book, was a hard pill to swallow.

For pure science this novel gets high marks and there is enough intrigue that I will read the next book, but much like some of Dan Brown's novels, while the subject matter is interesting the writing is stilted and contrived.

I am hoping the author finds his stride in book two, "Immune."

2.5 stars.

Virginia says

Gah. The book was fairly hard for me to get into until the last 30 or so pages. Then I couldn't tear through it fast enough. Alas, the rest is awaiting in two sequels.

One major thing I enjoyed: the incredible intelligence of the two girls and boy. Love computer science and math genius girls!

Montzalee Wittmann says

The Second Ship

The Rho Agenda, Book 1

By: Richard Phillips

Narrated by: MacLeod Andrews

This book has everything a good sci-fi book needs. A space ship, teens that find it and keep it a secret, evil

powers that be, powers enhance those exposed to the ship (the teens), and suspense never ends!!! There are so many side things going on that are also involved, all suspenseful too. This is one nail biter book!!! The narration is perfect for this book! Not once did I stop to think that I was listening to a book, I felt I was watching a movie. Great job.

Laura says

I have a new favorite author. Not only did Richard Phillips come up with an engaging plot, he used a wide range of different points of view that did not sound forced, even when switching from a middle aged NSA agent to a teenage girl to a crazy man in the dessert. The main characters of the story were teenagers, and they acted like it, but not in an annoying way.

What really sold me was the science. I love science fiction novels, but I get fed up with poorly described science or "scientific theories" that are completely implausible. It is obvious that he comes from a scientific background. He manages to provide enough detail to prevent it from essentially being magic but doesn't provide so much that the story gets bogged down, or it becomes obvious that the technology could not exist.

It started out a little slow, and actually took me a while to figure out who the main characters were and why we should care about the ships, but once it got there, I was hooked. I am glad I was listening to it on audiobook, because I did not want to put it down, so I listened all day while doing lab work.

This novel was one of the rare books my entire family could enjoy, from my parents who are in their 50s to my sister in her 20s to my brother who is only 14. It is rare to find a story like that, and I look forward to reading more of Richard Phillips' books.

Robert Turner says

3 stars might be a bit generous but I can't say that I got no pleasure from this book. it moved along okay no stuttering and stalling although at times the juvenile nature of it made me unsure if I was reading a book about kids for kids or something aimed at a different audience. The goody goody wholesome Waltons style family thing didn't bother me at all, I presume people like this still exist even though to a lot of readers it appears to be a bigger fiction than the actual subject matter. Anyway in for a penny.....second book downloaded.

A. R. says

Writing is not for everyone. In recent years, I've abandoned my snobbish tastes in reading to read more thrillers as often that's about all I have the available concentration for during the brief time I have to read before falling asleep. I keep running again and again into these thrillers that have fairly interesting premises with terrible execution (either poorly plotted or overly simplistic). Given the author's bio, I would expect much more than what you end up with. I just wish some of these authors could work with someone who actually has some decent writing ability to create some work that is more satisfying.

To be specific, at times as I read this I wondered if I had picked up a YA title based on the writing. But then

the books moves into some sex-fiend's dungeon and I realized, no this was intended for adults. I'd say again and again this was a real weakness in the book. It's written like something aimed at teens and by that I mean the focus is mostly on the younger characters, the character development is not explored very deeply, thoughts are expressed in a very simplistic manner, decisions are made quite impulsively, and overall the approach lacks the depth I'd expect for something written for an adult audience. I also feel it's worth mentioning there are many WTF elements at play as well--like what is the deal with the bath obsession? And the random facts about New Mexico?

Per the usual with this genre, the sex scenes were groan worthy. Between cheesy lines and tired cliches, it was embarrassing. I really wish authors who can't handle those scenes would just skip them.

As far as the science involved, everything seem fairly plausible if greatly simplified. You have the deus ex machina of alien tech that can explain some of that away, but it's a bit lazy at times.

I will say that Phillips writes combat scenes pretty well. I think that was a real strength of the book. Another is the premise is a pretty good one as far as thrillers go. I just wished we had gotten a deeper version of the story--it could have been a lot better.

Having said all of that, I had already purchased the other 2 books in this series as part of a limited time deal so I'll see if the books improve.

Adam says

A slightly clumsy, but ultimately interesting SciFi entry. There were several times when I was screaming to myself, "Where is this author's editor, and why was this not edited?????" when the text showed weird phrases being used repeatedly or when there was a really long, awkward metaphor going on that should have been pared down or cut out entirely.

Also, there was way too much "Nerd vs. Jock" stuff going on, which shows the age of the author and how he doesn't understand that there has been a paradigm shift in high schools nowadays where that whole dynamic no longer exists. Especially not in the weird homoerotic prank stuff that happened to Mark.

Those nitpicks aside, the story itself was fun, though clearly incomplete. I really wished that all the basketball junk and awkward romance was streamlined or deleted altogether. That would have given Phillips more space to expand on the actual interesting story of the technologies of the two ships and what they meant for the kids and the adults involved. It almost seemed like the series started off as one standalone book, and then was later split into a "trilogy" and therefore a lot of padding needed to be added to this one to make it actual novel length.

In the end, I want to know what happens with the kids and the ships, so I will read the next book in the series to see what happens. However, if it turns out to be too padded and awkward, too, then I may have to abandon it and look for a full plot summary online somewhere to see what happens without having to read about Mark and Heather's ridiculously clearly telegraphed feelings for each other.

Grace says

I'm bailing on this. I feel like I'm in Pleasantville - these kids do not act like kids. They don't talk like kids, they don't interact like kids, they are just 1950s paper dolls doing wholesome things. And no matter how good the science supposedly is later in the book, I CANNOT deal with really horrible characterization. You know those kids in school who were so weirdly Mayberry that you actually avoided them because they kind of weirded you out a bit? Yeah. I don't want to spend a book (never mind a series) with a bunch of kids who are just acting out someone's bizarre fantasy of how teenagers SHOULD behave, rather than how they actually do.

If it were just the teenagers, that would be fine, but it's not. There's a scene in an abandoned lab where a woman scientist acts so completely against ANY instinct she would have had as a scientist, woman, underling or human, it actually made me groan in disgust. Her boss is referred to by all as a horrible person, she thinks he's got shark eyes, she flat-out tells him she's about to end his career, and then when he claims that there's just one more thing to see, she trots along after him. Are you kidding me? The best evil characters are great because they're deceptive in their horribleness - like Mrs Coulter, or President Snow, or in some ways Colonel Graff. It is no fun at all to have a guy basically don a black hat and cape and muahaha his way around the story. Also, it makes your characters look like dense idiots. Which, to be fair, they are in this book.

And I'm pissed off at Orson Scott Card, because he recommended this book. He writes GREAT, realistic kid characters, kids with complex motivations and believable interactions. At least he once did - maybe this endorsement is just another sign that he's gone totally round the bend, like when he reimagined Hamlet as a gay pedophile revenge tale? Not to mention he'd probably love throwback 1950s kids.

Ugh. Look, I like science. I like OSC and Stephenson, for god's sake! But there need to be believable people, not just plausible science. I so rarely do this, but I'm quitting. 13% is enough time to prove yourself. No go.

aPriL does feral sometimes says

To Readers who adored this book: I apologize for rating this book so low and disliking it.

I'm the wrong audience even though I frequently read teen and YA books. I'm a retired old lady, so don't mind me. Move along.

As for the rest of the readers who attempted this book and who also rated it low, this is why I disliked it:

This is the most boring book I've picked up to this year of my life since college 20 years ago. I haven't experienced writing so blankly functional since I was learning to read. The jokes that had main characters Jennifer, Heather and Mark laughing their heads off were like descriptions of cement to me. The plot couldn't be more dull, similar to the one in the 1953 movie 'Robot Monster', except even more colorless.

The dialogue is wooden, and the plot is as unembellished and unsurprising as original yogurt - except for

strange violent/sexual scenes inserted here and there. Maybe the surprise ultraviolence/sex is for titillating the older elementary school kids or middle-school readers this book seems to be aiming for mostly, but who also accidentally on purpose watch the channels on TV their parents forbid them from tuning in, but they did anyway? I think I am correct in criticizing the story as wavering around for which age group it's aiming for. It is generally an extremely PG book, and then startlingly without warning it's suddenly PG-15 in some scenes. Whatever. The plot is generally all vanilla ice cream and 10:00 pm curfew, with a general atmosphere like a very tame Hardy Boys novel, until exceptions pop up which suddenly place it as a 20th-century YA read. However, generally the word/concept difficulty is at an age 12-and-under level, and the plot primarily suitable for a Saturday movie matinee, although it does several terrific passes at mathematical/science inclusion to make parents happy - as long as they miss the more scandalous bits.

As a further guideline on whether, gentle reader, you should read this novel, I am employing an earlier prejudice of American culture in the 1950's which I am sure is no longer valid in these more sophisticated times: there were books for future FBI agents (who were stereotyped as conventional straight-arrow types), and books for future CIA employees (who were stereotyped as twisty-minded, diabolical and unconventional). This book is for the folks who would have been FBI junior recruits in the earlier more clean-minded but red-blooded man era of 1956 - or those who look fondly at that era - with a little T-and-A cheesecake added to affirm a reader's anachronistic red-blooded American masculinity. Ah, those old-fashioned values! This novel sure brings it all back.

Betty says

Exceptional first book in the Rho Agenda series! I was grabbed in the Prologue and wasn't let go. Great reading for young people, sci-fi buffs and UFO fans, amazing yet made plausible, some perhaps even probable, BUT you do not have to be a fan of sci-fi to thoroughly enjoy this book, it covers so many genres. Richard Phillips is an author to be reckoned with, absolutely incredible. He knows exactly what he is saying and knows how to say it.

For those readers who are UFOnauts, it all begins in Groom Lake, Nevada, site of the infamous Area 51. Book One of the Rho Agenda, takes place in and around Los Alamos, New Mexico. I am old enough to recall hearing of the "Roswell Incident" when it happened, so the book is of particular interest to me. However, don't be led astray by that personal fact, this is not about Roswell. This is The Second Ship. A model plane is the method through which this ship will be discovered; not just a model plane but one carrying a camera as an experiment. This model plane just happens to crash in some difficult terrain and must be retrieved.

Three high school students, while retrieving their plane, have stumbled across a cave which hides the back entrance, or rather entry point, where an alien ship buried itself when crashing. A highly sophisticated camouflaging device almost thwarts them, but no, they can actually walk right through it, disappearing as they go in and completely out of sight once they are in. As they turn around, they see the back of the ship which they feel must have been able to generate the cloaking devise at the mouth of the cave. There is a gaping hole where it appears the ship was shot down, perhaps by the Rho ship.

The Rho ship crashed in the next year after the Roswell event, and has been undergoing tests in either another cavern or another part of the same cave. This ship was also damaged but whether from the crash or a collision or shot down is unknown. The authorities, from several different areas of security, presumably only know of the Rho ship, a cigar-shaped monster. This second ship the teens have just discovered is round, has

a mind of its own and is only too ready to give portions of it to the newcomers. The problem with being a high school student though, is that there are certain restrictions on your free time, which makes it difficult for them to spend much time with the ship, but when they do, miraculous things happen.

Each student already excels in specific areas: Heather in mathematics, her next-door neighbours the twins Jennifer, excelling in technology, and Mark, into sports. Now, having investigated a number of areas in the ship and done some tests, they have found these skills amplified by multiples. They must now play down their skills so they won't draw attention to themselves and raise suspicion. Soon, Heather realizes that she is being 'stalked' by a skinny tattered man who appears homeless and possibly dangerous. Somehow he knows that they have been to the Second Ship.

This book has it all; humour, terror, alien ships, corruption, love, kidnapping, good, evil, secret agents, exciting, conspiracy, greed, thrills and chills, intrigue, deep dark secrets, action, adventure, and great cliff-hangers, especially the last one. The writing style keeps the reader in a constant race against time, running several parts of the story in chapters of their own. This is not as difficult as it sounds, I found it easier to keep track of the parts that make up the whole this way. Other styles would have left me floundering. The book is extremely readable, technical terms seem easy to grasp for the novice, and the action never stops, very fast paced. "The Second Ship" leads into a "must have" feeling for the second book of the series, "Immune". This series definitely promises to carry on like lightning.

Eumachia says

No one talks like this. It reads like it was written by a child with a thesaurus. Maybe it was, I don't know. Or possibly by a machine using some kind of algorithm. If either was true I'd give it more stars, but I can only assume this was written by a human adult person, in which case, Nope.
