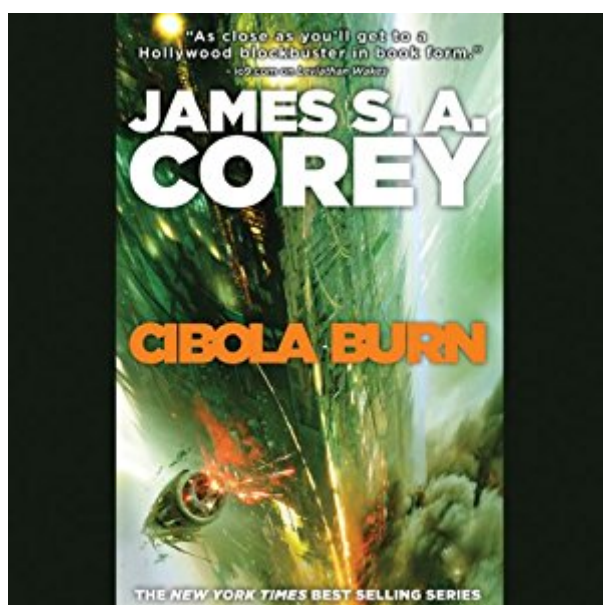


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Cibola Burn: The Expanse, Book 4



Synopsis

Enter a new frontier. An empty apartment, a missing family, that's creepy. But this is like finding a military base with no one on it. Fighters and tanks idling on the runway with no drivers. This is bad juju. Something wrong happened here. What you should do is tell everyone to leave. The gates have opened the way to a thousand new worlds and the rush to colonize has begun. Settlers looking for a new life stream out from humanity's home planets. Ilus, the first human colony on this vast new frontier, is being born in blood and fire. Independent settlers stand against the overwhelming power of a corporate colony ship with only their determination, courage, and the skills learned in the long wars of home. Innocent scientists are slaughtered as they try to survey a new and alien world. The struggle on Ilus threatens to spread all the way back to Earth. James Holden and the crew of his one small ship are sent to make peace in the midst of war and sense in the midst of chaos. But the more he looks at it, the more Holden thinks the mission was meant to fail. And the whispers of a dead man remind him that the great galactic civilization that once stood on this land is gone. And that something killed it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I find myself agreeing heartily with other reviewers. I was instantly converted into a fan of The Expanse series, but this book left me with a poor experience. The first thing that took me out was the premise and the plot. The opening idea is that, as soon as we are faced with the ability to jointly colonize thousands of worlds, a single ship made a run for one of them and started squatting there.

This is asinine. First of all, I don't understand how a mom-and-pop ship of motley Ganymede outcasts would beat the UN, the OPA, and Mars to probing the new worlds, let alone just flying right past Fred Johnson and the OPA's Medina Station to go and squat, and everyone just allowed them to. Previous books in the series have always been about the power-struggle between these forces, and how they never give an inch, but an independent vessel shooting through the ring (which is the one and only ship who got this idea in the whole of the Sol system, apparently) just glides on through. So if we suspend our disbelief enough to allow for this, we can now have a plot contrived around the idea of the Wild West, and who can claim land and who makes the laws. If you didn't catch on to that initially, it will be mentioned repeatedly during the struggle between Holden and his obstinate, cartoonish antagonist. Which brings me to the antagonist (and his equally obstinate right-hand man). They are simply self-destructive, unrealistic hazards that somehow ingratiated themselves into the upper echelon of a massive corporation that we are repeatedly sold to the notion are one half of a morally grey tapestry, and are reminded constantly that they're not the bad guys, they're just here to claim what has been given them by the various governments of Sol.

This book was the clunker to end all clunkers. The dud to end all duds. The turd in your soup, if you will. In other words, it was a bad book. First of all, the book can't figure out its own plot. Twenty pages in and the book thinks it's going to be about immigration, evil corporations and land rights. Oh, but then it's not. Halfway in and the book thinks it's going to be about natural disasters. But then it's about killer slugs and orbital decay?...neither of which was interesting. At the end, the book thinks it's going to be about the big, mysterious alien race and object. But just kidding there because nothing is revealed about them in their completely forgettable and awkward scenes. So, after having finished the book, I'm hard pressed to tell you what it was actually about because none of the plots mattered. The immigration section had no bearing on the later portion of the book. The natural disaster had no bearing on the book. And the final encounter with the aliens was shoehorned in and didn't matter one whit. Lots of stuff happened but nothing actually happened. Nor did the plot create any tension or fear. I was never nervous that the bad guy would win or that a main character would get hurt. Nothing. No emotion. No connection. Just irritation that I was five hundred pages in and nothing of consequence had happened. Strike one. The novel's characters were equally crap. Holden, our hero, should have been the most interesting, what with Miller floating around in his head, but he spends the majority of his time mediating (without actually mediating) and killing killer slugs. And never has killing space slugs been so boring.

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