



The Heart of Matter

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After an epic maiden voyage that introduced Earth to a larger universe—and a cosmos full of terrifying new enemies—Captain Eric Weston and the crew of the NAC spacecraft *Odyssey* have spent months cooling their heels under their admiral’s watchful eye. But when Earth’s newest ally, the Priminae, strike a defense deal with the North American Confederacy, the *Odyssey* finally receives her orders: return to Ranquil, the Priminae’s war-ravaged homeworld, and lend badly needed support against the invading Drasin.

Weston and his crew are hungry for action, yet once back on Ranquil, they realize not all is as it seems. Yes, the Drasin are a formidable foe, but Weston suspects a powerful unseen force is waging the war that could alter forever the face of the universe. Determined to unmask the mysterious puppet masters, Weston and his motley crew defy NAC protocol and venture into deep space...where they will discover an enemy unlike any they have ever faced.

The Heart of Matter Details

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From Reader Review The Heart of Matter for online ebook

Tony Hisgett says

I enjoyed the first book *Odyssey One* and unlike many space operas which end in a big battle, most of the original characters were still alive, so I was looking forward to see how they would develop. The problem is they didn't really develop at all and unfortunately I began to see some of the weaknesses in this author's story telling.

It didn't help that the story seemed to be constantly jumping from one person or location to another, this became quite irritating, especially when it was in the middle of a conversation. For example, when Captain Weston was talking to *Central* the author kept jumping around for no apparent reason. I was also surprised that during this meeting he turned Captain Weston into a petulant adolescent.

The first third of the book seemed to be filled with tedious practise ground manoeuvres. However as the space battles began I thought things might improve, but the descriptions of the battle didn't always make sense and the constant bouncing around between '*everybody and their dog*' was very annoying. It didn't help that in the middle of firing a weapon, the author decided to give us an in depth description of how the weapon was invented, tested and installed. In fact the flow of the story is often interrupted as nearly every command is explained in great detail.

The last half of the book was mainly a ground battle to save Ranquil from the invading Drasin. This turned out to be very disjointed and difficult to follow. I think the author was trying to convey the chaos dealing with the insurgents, but all he did, was create a chaotic read. It doesn't help that the author wants to explain everything, every technical detail about every piece of equipment, every reason behind every decision; it's just too much.

The book needed some serious editing and if the author had concentrated on telling the story it would have been a couple of hundred pages shorter.

Katy says

As an Amazon Vine book, I cannot post my full review here, since selling links are not exclusively with Amazon. You can see my review on my blog, by following this link:
<http://katysozaeva.blogspot.com/2012/...>

Steven Brandt (Audiobook-Heaven) says

In *Into the Black: Odyssey One*, the first book of Evan Currie's epic space saga, the Earth's very first faster-than-light spaceship took her maiden voyage to a far distant galaxy. Unfortunately, the NAC ship *Odyssey* landed right in the middle of a local war between two species, the Priminae and the Drasin. Captain Eric Weston, going a bit beyond the boundaries of his authority, decided to join the battle on the side of the Priminae, who were not faring so well. The *Odyssey*, newest and most advanced ship in Earth's fleet, and

her crew, proved their worth as the enemy was pushed back.

The second book in the series, *The Heart of Matter: Odyssey One*, picks up more or less where the first book left off. The Odyssey and her crew are back in Earth space, cooling their heels while the governing council decides what to do with them. Captain Weston's decision to join the battle seemed like the right thing to do, but now Earth has been plunged into a war with a devastatingly powerful enemy. The Drasin are bug-like creatures that literally devour worlds. Once on a planet they can double their numbers every three days until there is simply nothing left. Also, they can survive in outer space with no protection. Wicked tough creatures they are. So the council deliberates while the Odyssey's crew grows restless.

It is finally decided that Captain Weston has become much too popular to be disciplined, so the council chooses the only real option left to them: send Weston and the Odyssey right back out to the war. His orders are clear: join up with the Priminae forces at the home planet Ranquil and defend it from the Drasin. But upon engaging the Drasin in battle, Captain Weston once again begins to feel that the Drasin are not the true enemy, that there is some controlling force behind them. In an attempt to get to the bottom of the mystery, he disobeys orders once again and follows a Drasin ship, hoping to find out where it came from. As it turns out, Weston gets a lot more than he bargained for. The sheer numbers of the Drasin forces could not have been guess it, and their origin is not merely a planet, but so much more. Realizing his mistake too late, Weston finds his ship drifting right through the center of the Drasin system. If he powers up to flee, he will only alert the Drasin to his presence. His only choice, and not much of a choice really, is to drift on through hoping to remain unnoticed.

In my younger days, I was a huge fan of science fiction. But as I've dabbled in some of the more recent "sci-fi" works, I've often been left with a longing in my heart for the old days. Then I came across the *Odyssey One* series by Evan C Currie. This is shaping up to be one epic thrill-ride. Earth's very first FTL spaceship leaving our galaxy on a mission of exploration. I love it! Earth's most advanced ship landing in the middle of an intergalactic war, and showing those alien scum a thing or two. I love it! Okay, okay, I got carried away there. Weston and his crew did manage to push the Drasin back, but there is still that underlying feeling that someone is behind the Drasin. As terrifying and deadly as the Drasin are, there is something even more terrible controlling them like puppets. What kind of creatures would create the planet devouring Drasin and unleash them on the universe? Well, that's the big question isn't it. Currie has hinted around it, and in *The Heart of Matter* we get a slightly closer look at them, but the mystery is still there. I can't wait to read the next book just to find out more about the Drasin!

Narrator Benjamin L Darcie is doing a great job with the *Odyssey One* series. I just like the way he reads. His pacing is good, picking up the tempo a bit during the exciting moments. His character voices aren't the best, but they're good enough. I think he was a good pick for these books.

Good old-fashioned science fiction at its best. If that's what you're looking for, then you've found it. And incidentally, if this is the kind of thing you like, I also highly recommend Ryk Brown's *Frontiers Saga*.

Steven Brandt @ Audiobook-Heaven

Bradley says

I had to really focus on enjoying a lot of war, both strategic and tactical, which is fine, but alas, there was a lot less characterization than I actually prefer.

But I let it slide because I had just read the first book and all the characters were still rather fresh for me. I'm not sure I would have enjoyed it quite as much, otherwise.

BUT, the actual war story was rather awesome, with very interesting and difficult aliens to work against. Sure, any race that could turn other races into suicide bombers or create Dyson clouds (a poor man's version of a Sphere), has got a lot of scariness built right in. :)

And then there's also the "good" aliens with such strange weaknesses and awesome strengths. It makes this novel more into a chess game than I might have otherwise expected. This is pretty damn good Space-Opera, even now. :) On to the next book!

Fred Hughes says

A great military sci-fi book in the Odyssey One series.

Currie writes in a style similar to Ben Bova in that chapters are mostly short and right to the point. The flow is there and you get to see battles for various aspects.

The Drasin are very powerful however they don't really grasp real time strategy when fighting. So if you don't get wiped out by their superior fire power you can outsmart them.

A Dyson cloud is discovered that seems to be their base of operation, however there are 3 other types of ships within the cloud and it now appears as if a higher intelligence is guiding the Drasin.

Who are they, why are they doing this, can they be defeated ?

Onto the next book in the series

Jessica says

I love the very star trek of this book!

Jim says

If you like military science fiction, you have to read this series. It is just about the most exciting set of books I have read in a long while. The author does a good job of story telling and will get you hooked into this second book within minutes. Of course you should start with the first book in the series but this one would probably stand on its own although you might be missing some key information as you read through it.

I am really amazed at the science thought that has gone into these books. I mean, I don't have a clue if any of it is scientifically sound but it sure does sound good in print. I've read about Dyson constructs before and they are amazing. The addition of this finding in this book kind of changes things. It's also good to see that a once pacifist civilization has started to attempt to defend themselves. There are a great many battle fought both on the ground and in space. I've been a sailor at sea and some of the things that you can and do with a

starship are similar with the operations of a surface vessel or a submarine. Probably more like a sub since you have to think in three dimensions. Capt Weston has to be a genius with some of the stuff he pulls off. It appears that he's doing a lot of strategic and tactical thinking in his head and the computers are along just to execute what he wants to do. He certainly doesn't ask the computers to find him a solution out of his current predicament.

Again, this is great military science fiction that I am having a blast reading. I am also losing a lot of sleep because I can't seem to put down these books at a reasonable time at night. The action is so continuous that there's hardly a good time to stop and take a breath although there are periods on the starship where engagements are clearly taking days to happen.

If you find you need something to read, read these books. Even if you're reading something else, stop and read these books. They are just that good. Thanks to the author and I hope he keeps them coming. You're doing a great job.

Mike Franklin says

In this second book in Currie's *Odyssey One* series Captain Eric Stanton and his crew return to the Priminae world of Ranquil just in time to save the day again. This is good rip-roaring military SF that neatly combines both ground action with space action. It is also pretty good hard SF, apart from a few bits of handwavium like FTL travel and counter mass. The pacing is great (I'm writing this somewhat bleary eyed after a couple of night reading far too late) apart from a couple of flaws mentioned below and the writing is mostly fluid and easily readable, although I did get thrown from time to time by expressions that were almost how I'd say them but not quite; maybe editing errors or maybe just a different Canadian way of saying them. For example "He'd been hoping to see them up a little closer..."; I'd have said either "see them up close" or "see them a little closer." But this was only occasional and didn't detract from the book as a whole.

I did have two major complaints however which did detract for me; both associated with the pacing. Currie writes his action scenes well; they are very detailed, quite long, but keep me turning the pages throughout. However he periodically breaks off from the action to give overly detailed info dumps on some piece of military technology. They are certainly relevant to what is happening but the level of detail and history of the development of the technology kills the momentum both abruptly and very frustratingly. One could be forgiven for wondering whether he is a David Weber fan; these digressions are not dissimilar to Weber's excessively detailed discussions of missiles and missile flights.

In a similar vein Currie also has a tendency to labour some points. For example, the alien enemy – the Drasin – breed very very quickly and in one section of ground action I lost count of how many times (at least half a dozen) he compares them in both narrative and dialogue with rabbits. He does this sort of thing time and time again as if he is worried we may have missed the point already made just a couple of pages previously.

These two complaints were certainly annoying but not deal breakers. For the most part Currie writes excellent page turning action scenes that move along at a cracking pace. His characters are generally likeable if, perhaps, a little two dimensional although all the main protagonists do each have their own distinct characters.

This series provides good, well written, shoot 'em up, hard, military SF. They may not be greatest pieces of literature ever penned but they are a lot of fun and I will be returning to this series.

Mike (the Paladin) says

The story continues here with new discoveries, new problems and the hints of conspiracy continue.

I went with 5 stars on the first one of this series and I still like it. I plan to follow it up/stay with the series. Still there's a bit of "flagging" here as it seems we leaded a little more on the action (and believe me I love a good action read) than we did in the first book. It smacked of stretching the plot out just a little as when we end we're in the middle of some new "sticky wickets" that can change a lot of what's happening/going to happen.

So, okay...bottom line. This is a good read and I think hard science fiction buffs will find enough here to argue about along with some interesting ideas to ponder. I think military fiction buffs will find some good action with some interesting ideas on tactics vs. strategy. Space opera fans will find fleet action along with daring-do. All in all good read.

Recommended, enjoy.

Lena says

Captain Weston's *Odyssey* returns to Ranquil to help the Priminae build an army to defend themselves against the Drasin. The North American Confederation is eager to establish relations with the Priminae in exchange for medical and power generation technology. The NAC also tasks Weston with finding out more about Central, the computer system that seems to play a role in the aliens' government. As Priminae Admiral Tanner has no objection, Weston is brought along when Tanner goes to Central to file a request for military land use. Weston is shocked when Central speaks directly into his mind! Central is an entity over 20,000 years old that can read the minds of everyone on Ranquil, it's more gestalt than computer as we know it. Their conversation is short but Weston is left reeling and angered because Central believes Terrans maybe as bad for the Priminae as the Drasin.

The Others, the Oath Breakers comment Milla Chans made in the first book is explained by Tanner as part legend, part morality tale, part religion. Ninety five percent of the Priminae are adherents to the Old Ways, to an oath that is in essence "Do No Harm" and the Others were a faction that broke away because they didn't believe in that oath. This is troubling to Captain Weston because he knows this will make it harder to integrate a military into Priminae society. *"A soldier fought better when he knew that he was not only needed, but appreciated back home. There were few things as degrading to man than to come home to the people you served, only to be shunned and reviled by them."* All of this also foreshadows who maybe behind the Drasin.

Like the first book there are plenty of long, detailed, battle engagements but this time the Priminae are more involved with the Terrans in Ranquil's defense. Also hard sci-fi concepts like Dyson clouds, gestalt computers, and diamond weaponry are explored which for me makes it a better book! Enjoyed the narration free on Kindle Unlimited. ★★★★½

Jo (Mixed Book Bag) says

The Heart of Matter: Odyssey One is a book I received from Amazon Vine. It is the second in the series and while it can be read as a stand alone I recommend reading Into The Black: Odyssey One first. The Heart of Matter lingered on my TBR shelf for a while, not because I did not want to see what happened next but because of the size of the book. This is a trade paperback that is over 600 pages long. A book of this size is just uncomfortable to hold and read. Once I started I did not want to put it down but still wished it were not as bulky to hold. If you have an ereader it might be the way to get around that problem and make it easier to read.

The story is very good however I do think it could have been edited down a little. Evan Currie wants his readers to know how everything works and that is where some of the explanations could have been shortened or edited out without damaging the story.

Here is the story from Amazon:

After an epic maiden voyage that introduced Earth to a larger universe—and a cosmos full of terrifying new enemies—Captain Eric Weston and the crew of the NAC spacecraft Odyssey have spent months cooling their heels under their admiral’s watchful eye. But when Earth’s newest ally, the Priminae, strike a defense deal with the North American Confederacy, the Odyssey finally receives her orders: return to Ranquil, the Priminae’s war-ravaged homeworld, and lend badly needed support against the invading Drasin.

Weston and his crew are hungry for action, yet once back on Ranquil, they realize not all is as it seems. Yes, the Drasin are a formidable foe, but Weston suspects a powerful unseen force is waging the war that could alter forever the face of the universe. Determined to unmask the mysterious puppet masters, Weston and his motley crew defy NAC protocol and venture into deep space...where they will discover an enemy unlike any they have ever faced. The long-awaited follow-up to the spectacular Into the Black: Odyssey One combines old-school space opera with modern storytelling to create an exhilarating new sci-fi adventure.

This is an action driven more than a character driven story and the Odyssey is again in the heart of the action. The first part of the book sets the stage for the action in the last half. Look for action, drama, surprises and lots of tension. Like any good Space Opera just as you think all is lost something happens to save the day. Don't look for the action to solve the problem. In fact the Odyssey discovers new elements that change the landscape and leave a cliffhanger for the next book.

Evan Currie writes a good fast moving story. The story reminds me of many of the classic science fiction stories. The Heart of Matter has a strong hero, a great supporting cast, aliens that we can identify with and a enemy that is wants to destroy everything. Behind all of that is a mystery that needs to be solved. While the story is classic there are new elements that keep the plot new and fresh.

Gabriel Clarke says

See my review for *Odyssey One* (*Odyssey One*, #1). Seriously, the same review will do perfectly well here.

Mike (the Paladin) says

The story continues here with new discoveries, new problems and the hints of conspiracy continue.

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Recommended, enjoy.

Diane says

I can't believe I'm saying this, but there was WAY too much space battle going on in this one. In separate places, with new characters being introduced. I was of course familiar with the crew of the *Odyssey*, but the others that were left behind on Ranquil, or the Ranquil leaders. It was just too much. I skimmed to get the overall picture.

I really LOVED the first book. It was exactly what military sci fi should be IMO, but this one bored me with too much detail and no character development. That being said. I'm currently reading book 3. Earth is about to be attacked. I'm hoping the clean precision of book 1 comes back into play, if not I'll probably write this series off.

Jennifer Lanak says

[Even as the last Drasin ship retreats, it hurls Drasin drones hiding behind a comet toward the planet. When they hit, the Drasin multiply and the Terran and Priminae have their hands full eliminating the enemy. Meanwhile, Weston pu
