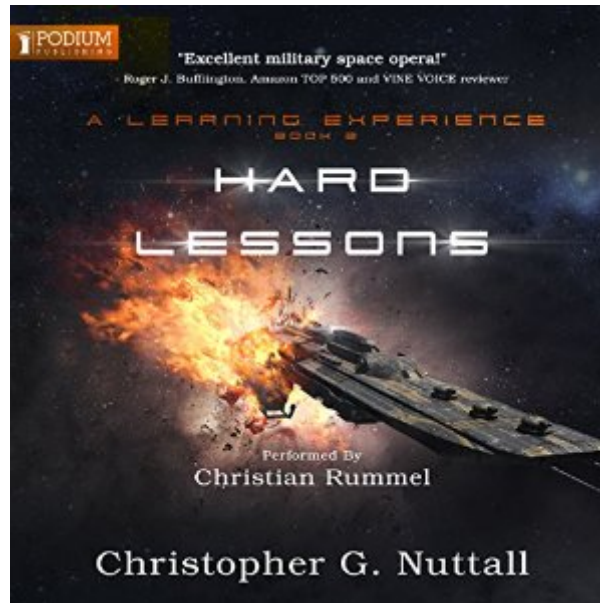


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Hard Lessons: A Learning Experience, Book 2



Synopsis

Fifty years after Steve Stuart and his friends captured an alien starship, the Solar Union is a thriving interstellar power while Earth is increasingly backward and falling into barbarism. For two youngsters from Earth, the Solar Union offers the only chance they will ever have to make something of their lives. But humanity's involvement in Galactic affairs has not gone unnoticed. The enigmatic masters of the universe have put together a fleet to crush the upstart humans before they can threaten the precarious balance of power. Pushed to the limits, the Solar Union must fight to defend its freedom - and the existence of the human race.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Pros: Story moves along pretty quickly, between a small number of protagonists. You don't get lost like in some novels, requiring a compendium to keep up. It has a nice story arc that makes it a complete story, but with connection to the next. I like the compartmentalization that was lacking in other series stories (e.g., Star Wars - The Empire Strikes Back was one that really did not neatly tell a single chapter, and had too many strings attached to the Return of the Jedi). **Cons:** It's the author's pulpit, and his right, to write up the failings in his views of society, and the expected long-term effects of life on Earth. Every chapter starts with a fake news story developed to make a point of how liberalness is a bad word. Occasionally, the pendulum swings toward extreme conservative governments, but rarely is there any middle ground. It smells very strongly of a lecture, the entire book. Some of the side story lines, don't really jibe well with the overall arc of the story, but give

some background on the philosophy the author is purporting (spoiler alert: the entire judicial sequence felt out of place, and was almost immediately forgotten, and only mentioned in context later on). Thoughts: I hold many of the same views as the author, truth be told, and felt the story was not meant to be balanced, but a little more balance would have been nice. My favorite dilemma of the first book in this series, was the revelation that the ideals the protagonist had were difficult to achieve when real life stepped in. Trying to live a Libertarian lifestyle is difficult when you realize you need secrecy and taxation, along with rule of law and enforcement.

I write this with a heavy heart. I actually liked Christopher Nuttall's earlier works. Back before he had a fanbase and his political soapbox. I used to tell people the best thing about science fiction and fantasy is that you can actually teach people a lot more about the state of our world without them even realizing it. See, the thing about fiction is the illusion that it is all false. NONE of it is false. It is all a story from the author, a story designed to wrap you up with characters, morals, and potential. Nuttall has failed us all. I come to you today to beg you readers, accept this trash no more. This political tirade of his, this dirge of anger and resentment ... it must stop. He starts a new series every year, sometimes more than one... yet he hasn't finished a single series to any sense of completion. There is NO satisfaction, nothing to be learned, nothing to be gained. You will over the course of reading his work get the sense that Nuttall himself has no idea where he wants to go, because all he has are questions and no answers. I'm okay with that to a certain degree, but when it's obvious that the author is so wrapped up in his own perspective that his bias figuratively DRIPS onto every page with venom it becomes tiresome. We get the same ideological every-man 'army' man every book. He stands up against authoritarianism, dictatorship, liberalism, conservatism. Or we get his counter-part brother, who sees everything in shades of grey and therefore allows himself to do whatever he needs to do to see the end. This dichotomy and contradiction plays itself through every book, and series. Sometimes within the same character. You would think this gives his work a sense of depth but it doesn't.

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