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Fool's War



Synopsis

A New York Times Notable Book from the author of *Reclamation*: A young woman must face off against an alien force within her starship's computer. Katmer Al Shei has done well with the starship Pasadena, cutting corners where necessary to keep her crew paid and her journeys profitable. But there are two things she will never skimp on: her crew and her fool. For a long space journey, a certified Fool's Guild clown is essential to amuse, excite, and otherwise distract the crew from the drudgeries of interstellar flight. Her newest fool, Evelyn Dobbs, is a talented jester. But does she have enough wit to save mankind? In the computers of the Pasadena, something is emerging. The highly sophisticated software that makes interstellar travel practical is playing host to a new form of artificial intelligence, a living entity. And it will do whatever it takes to survive. Displaying the influence of Asimov's robot stories and C. J. Cherryh's elaborate, sophisticated spaceship adventures, this is a science fiction masterpiece that asks the thought-provoking question, "What if the next great life-form with which we must contend isn't from the stars but from our hard drives?" (Publishers Weekly)

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Customer Reviews

I wish that did not require star ratings. This is one of those reviews that is ill served by stars, because in one sense I want to rate this novel with five stars, and in another sense one star. Let me explain. The story is extremely clever and imaginative. The concept, and much of the execution is wonderful. Unfortunately, the editor did a huge disservice to the author by not forcing her to cut, cut, cut. A famous author once advised writers to, after completing their novel, eliminate the first 100 pages, because the real novel begins there. This work is a perfect example of the wisdom of this advice. Several times in the first ten percent or so of the novel I almost gave up in dismay. Virtually nothing happened for page after page after page. It was mostly massive, tedious backstory. We had to learn about the (boring) history of faster-than-light drive. The (boring) history of ethnic wars on Earth. The (boring) history of... er... I forget. It was so incredibly boring I don't remember. All of that pointless introductory material should have been chopped out. Even once the story got going (in a vague sense), it kept stopping dead so the author could fill in the reader on some historical background that had nothing to do with the actual plot. An exciting scene (what precious few there were) would just get going, and I would actually be interested in how it would play out, when suddenly, in the midst of high tension, the author would freeze the plot to relate something that happened to the characters years ago. Frustrating!!!! must emphasize that I blame the editor for this, not the author. Seriously, this would have been a fabulous book at about 1/3 its length. It plodded.

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