



Uncommon Purpose

P.J. Strebtor

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Following the bloody war between the Athenian Republic and the Pruessen Empire, an uneasy peace has settled over the region of space known as The Tunguska Fault.

The Telford family's independent trading vessel, the Belinda is captured by Pruessen slavers and the crew forced into a life of brutal servitude. Their desperate bid for freedom succeeds but a tragic price is paid.

Years pass and Nathan Telford, fighting the nightmares of his past and yearning for revenge, joins the Athenian Navy. His first posting is aboard the warship Truculent, patrolling the northern quarantine zone beyond which lurks the Empire.

Answering a distress call from a beleaguered freighter, the routine mission becomes a desperate fight for survival. The Pruessans are once again testing the defenses of the Republic and this time they have technology far in advance of the last war.

It is left to Nathan, three untried middies and a disgruntled petty officer to try and avert a looming disaster.

With their high tech weapons rendered useless and facing overwhelming odds, Nathan risks everything on a brave, hastily conceived gamble.

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Uncommon Purpose Details

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Author : P.J. Strebor

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From Reader Review Uncommon Purpose for online ebook

Ted Harris says

A good start for a series

A pretty good start. The hero is a little one dimensional. But good action plot and looking to the sequel.

William Kulhanek says

Excellent

Extremely well written, highly enjoyable, a little hokey at times but that's OK, I would recommend this book to anybody science-fiction fan or not

J.L. Dobias says

Uncommon Purpose (The Hope Island Chronicles Book 1) by P.J. Strebor

Uncommon Purpose is a great science fiction that blends a sort of political and military setting readers are familiar with in such novels as David Weber's Honor Harrington series. Development of characters recalled for this reader the feel of many of his favorite Heinlein characters. P.J. Strebor brings to the table his own blend of elements such as family honor, redemption and revenge along with his own twist on a few tropes.

It starts in a universe with an uneasy peace, after a great Franco Pruessen war that led to the Pruessen's unleashing a terrible bio-weapon that was designed to save them, only to have it backfire in a devastating way; leaving the League little choice but to quarantine one whole area of space; all leading to the formation of the Prussen Empire; and the present situation where Prussen headhunters make occasional raids across the quarantine borders to obtain slave labor from the League worlds.

The story seems to start slow, but that's because there are the equivalent of fifty pages that encompass world building and introduction of the main character: Nathan Telford. The first five chapters could easily read as a short story that introduces us to the universe of Nathan Telford and acts as a means of showing the tragic beginning of the main character of the story; while pacing of conflict and tension make this stand well alone. The Telford ship Bellinda is overtaken by Pruessen headhunters and despite the best laid plans, the self destruct meant to save them all from slavery is disrupted. We have the quick thinking of Jasper to thank. I say that because without his actions there'd be no story for us; but I'll leave it there for the next reader find. It's the story of how they endure and escape.

The real story begins in chapter 6 when the Navy Monitor boat Impudent detects a crashed ship on a plague ridden world that has been quarantined for several years due to the terminal nature of the Pruessen plague. Further examination proves that there is one life sign and that the ship is Belinda, which now has been missing for over six years. We meet the brave and possibly foolhardy Ensign Ellen Gabreski for a small time and I do hope we see more of her down the road, but this isn't her story. Nathan is only 14 years old at this

time and will have to learn a lot before he might begin the path to revenge. The reader will eventually find out everything that happened to Nathan in those six years. Yet we learn only a small amount about Nathan beyond the scant amount already seen in the first fifty pages; and in part I think this is because Nathan harbors a deep and dreadful secret about his life after escape from the Pruessen's and the reader will have to wait for a majority of the book to learn what that is.

One important thing we do learn is that Nathan has an odd talent he calls Prep; which he seems to have acquired while on the plague world of Delos.

Before getting on with his life, Nathan will have to deal with a forced gag order to tell no one about what's happened to him. There are good reasons, but those take us too close to spoiler area.

When Nathan finally arrives on Kastoria to live with the Penkovskys the reader begins to find out more about him. Most of this is done quite well from other character's point of view, with less focus from Nathan's point of view and I think that's again because of his secret and getting too close to his thoughts might reveal too much too early.

The novel dips deep into a trope area at this point, but P.J. Strebler uses it well. We have the typical male, Nathan; and his female friend, Moe, who decides to turn him into her project. As can be expected; if there is ever anything more than friendship desired here, it is doomed to tragedy. More importantly there's the thread about the agreements between parties to keep the past a secret that predictably leads to danger for everyone close to Nathan.

This quickly becomes a novel about Nathan balancing his training toward the proper way to wage war and his desire for immediate revenge for his family and the inevitable mess caused by his need to keep his past a secret.

I recommend this to all fans of the Military-Procedural-Political Science Fiction. It has a well rounded science base that lends well to the suspension of disbelief. For me: *Uncommon Purpose* stands as a superbly well done first novel from an author with a lot of promise.

J.L. Dobias

Terry Bremer says

therese anne merigan says

Really good read

Liked this book a lot and will be getting the next one as soon as possible... really a great story

Stan Slaughter says

Great coming of age military SF novel

Great coming of age military SF novel reminiscent of early David Weber. Strong characters with strong motivations for acting the way they do.

T.I.M. James says

Are you ready for a rip-roaring space adventure?

Then this book is going to deliver. It is action packed, full of edge of the seat set pieces, and perhaps above all it is fun.

Nathan Telford is a young member of a family operated spacecraft, but for him life does not work out the way it is expected and he finds himself living with foster parents on a backwater but homely world.

Nathan, it seems, is pretty much a science fiction hero, clean cut, borderline genius, excellent in the field, with an unusual and as yet unexplained tick – his ‘prep’ that warns him of danger, he survives in hostile environments that no-one can live in and gets the girl of his dreams.

This could be the start of being someone who is too good to be true, but Strebor manages to deflect away from this by giving Nathan a few little character flaws that might not balance things out, but certainly add a little tarnish to the lustre. Amongst these are a need for vengeance, a temper that might be a little too hard to control, a willingness to kill, not talking about the past and perhaps being a little too clever for his own good.

All of this works well, and when it is thrown together with the other characters and the adventure that unfolds around them. As this is the first book in the series it is hard to say what the greater schemes the author may have, but what was refreshing here was the fact that it was not really an epic tale of empires clashing and the reordering of civilisation. Rather it is the story of people living and working in a functioning reality, doing jobs, that coincide with the life they are leading, or as they enter the military.

There is the feeling of the mission being of the mundane – not in the sense of boring, but in the sense that it is common place and that there are many such missions taking place across space, with a multitude of

different powers working together with a few independent criminal factions and opposing political powers. When there are clashes on borders, that is where the fun begins.

The characters are, as a whole, well drawn, and interact well together. They are good enough to like or to start to understand, even when some are not a major part of the story. Strebtor has taken the time to invest them with character, and this can only help the novels flow. Any book that introduces a character you want to punch is a good one.

With all this being said, there were a few things that grated from me – but I need to emphasise it I just me, and I can see a logical reason for what I am about to say being so. The whole set up of the political powers and Strebtor's universe as a whole seem to be a little to heavily drawn on the modern world. The different powers all draw their names from modern countries or cities, and the setup could well be on similar to the Cold War.

Furthermore, the descriptions and types of spacecraft spring to mind different types of naval vessels or commercial boats, from submarines to tugs. With this taken into account it would work just as well as a war novel. Probably not as much fun though.

Finally, and not necessarily a bad thing, was the way initial setup grated. Over the course of the first few chapters we went from a family owned and operated ship (interesting idea and would have been nice to see more of); Prisoners/slaves of a rather vicious and brutal – borderline psychopathic – regime (I would have been quite happy to read a novel based around this); Escape from said regime, pursuit and final 'getaway' (Could have been a really tense and dramatic novel); and survivors on a plague world and the ultimate payoff of one of them being naturally immune – (Could have been a great and harrowing, bleak story of survival.) All this and not mention the rescue and the investigation into how he survived.

For me, the opening part of the novel was too fast, there was the potential of a lot more there and it seemed as though I was getting into the setup for something only to have it snatched away and another setup beginning and then repeat. Even after this, Nathan's story seems to jump a lot, the reader being jumped through his life until he starts his service.

There are a few other things that are not resolved, undoubtedly in some of the later books and any of the above could be important things to be looked at in flashback later.

In summation it was an excellent read, and I will quite happily look up some more by Strebtor. When the book pile shrinks.

David P. Duffy says

Not Silly YA, Just Juvenile Writing and British "Tar" Fan Fiction

"Uncommon Purpose (The Hope Island Chronicles Book 1)," authored by P.J. Strebtor, is not a silly "Young Adult" (YA) novel. It's a seriously flawed version of SciFi British "Tar" fan fiction, that is so juvenile in its writing, that a reader might in fact, believe it to be YA.

Far future, in an inaccessible part of the galaxy, various euro-centric entities-Prussians, British, Athenians, Franco-are st odds, following a couple of Franco-Prussian Wars, involving the other league nations, against

the Prussians. Facing defeat, the Prussians used a deadly bio weapon pathogen, which has no known antidote and mandated a DMZ “quarantine zone.” A young boy, Nathan, along with his extended family, crew an Athenian freighter, which is attacked and captured by a Prussian commerce raider, many are killed, others brutalized by assaults and rape, with the survivors becoming slaves. Nathan, along with some of his family escape years later. All succumb to the plague, excepting Nathan, who as the sole survivor, becomes a enigma, and enters the Fleet Academy.

The author childishly barely changes the spelling of some of the euro-centric entities, portrays the brutal Prussians as Nazis, the Francos as cowardly, and the Athenians as haughty high brows. Nathan is a savant, extremely intelligent, unceasingly brave, possessing a prescient ability post-plague exposure, and enters the Fleet Academy, bent on revenge against the Prussians. The Fleet is a thinly veiled “Master and Commander” style homage to the British navy from the Age of Sail. There are middies, set upon by sadistic upper officers, tots of rum as rewards for successful actions, porridge for meals, lots of snorting, sneering, and endless smirks. There are boarding actions involving swords and battle axes. The only things absent, are flogging and sodomy. It is all so very, very bad. The writing is awkward, amateurish, and mainly childish.

“Uncommon Purpose,” is not recommended and was fully read via Kindle Unlimited.

M Hamed says

he somehow thinks that nostalgia of his days in the service and technical know how of military procedures could merit a book
instead you got .a stupid ,unimaginative dull book

Jesse Deleon says

Had fun reading this first in series!

I really enjoyed reading this excellent first book in a series that is recommend by me to you. A new fan!

AudioBookReviewer says

My original Uncommon Purpose audiobook review and many others can be found at Audiobook Reviewer.

Uncommon Purpose by PJ Streb is the first in a series called The Hope Island Chronicles. It follows Nate Telford from the time that he is six years old into his early twenties. In a world where the Preussen Empire and Athenian empires hold an uneasy peace across planets, Preussen slavers are able to capture an independent trading vessel, a vessel owned by the Telford clan. Ultimately after escaping, Nate begins a life on his own. He learns how to let down his walls, make friends, and joins the Athenian Navy to help him get revenge against those who enslaved his family. As he works to become a great soldier in the Navy, he must learn to manage his memories of the past, without losing his head and his emotions in a fight.

This novel is really a coming of age story about a traumatized young boy. The story follows him as he grows up on a colony planet with a new family and friends, goes to school, and then goes to the military academy. At times it feels wandering. There is not a true quest but just views into this boy's life as he turns into a man, which is wonderful in its own way. I found the beginning to be difficult to get into, but once the story takes off, it moves along well at a good pace and captures the attention. It's possible to just soak in Nathan's world and how it changes. There is plenty of action throughout the story as well as friendships and insights from different characters. But ultimately, the characters outside of Nathan's immediate sphere end up feeling flat. And there are so many that it can be hard to keep track of them. However, Nathan's friendship with his childhood friend is perfectly captured. The story has a good, positive, end, but you are already caught up in Nathan's life. It's easy to look forward to the next novel.

The narration by Keith Michaelson was well done. A large number of characters all seemed to have their own voice and personality, which is difficult to achieve. Also, the slimy bad guys have voices that reflected that. The production quality was good as well. I would recommend anyone who likes coming of age novels set in an environment containing space battles.

Audiobook was provided for review by the publisher.

Barbara says

I stopped reading when Nathan started senior school and met Oliva. It's not bad, it was just that there was nothing particular about the main character or the story that really grabbed my interest. I've read many stories like this before.

Gary Weinman says

I really liked this book. I've been keeping my eye on it for a really long time. It was finally available on Barnes and Noble as a free ebook. Well the author can rest assured, I will be buying the sequel. The book is a little formulaic, but if it is a formula I like I'm OK with it. One thing that kind of messed me up in the early parts of the book was the chapters kept on spanning multiple years. It wasn't until the middle of the book that the actual story started to take shape. The book kind of reminded me of *Midshipman's Hope* and that is a good thing. If it is still free, you have no excuse for not giving it a shot. You will not be disappointed.

Marcus says

I voluntarily reviewed an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review

This is a very very good start to what seems to be a very engaging series. The story grabs you from page one and doesn't let go until the end. There was intense action, suspense, death, war, military tactics and procedures, intrigue, and even a romantic angle. The characters were well written with several different levels existing for them all where they actually played off of each other with hardly any discrepancies. A very very good book

Susan says

Uncommon Purpose is the first book in The Hope Island Chronicles series. This can be read as a standalone, though it ends in a soft cliffhanger for the next book. There is a lot of violence...this is a science fiction war book afterall. I wasn't sure about this book at the beginning, but really came to relate to the characters and the storyline. Definitely want to read more about it.
