



## **The Starlight Fortress**

*Fiona Rawsontile , Caroline Kim (Editor)*

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When an agricultural country tries to survive a modern war, a powerful woman finds herself in a hopeless situation. People do not count on Queen Geneva to protect them from Emperor Pompey, the wicked gamer who's always one step ahead.

Things begin to change after the completion of the Starlight Fortress, a giant space structure that may be turned into their best weapon, if only Pompey would sit back and watch it happen. As the war evolves into a competition between old wisdom and advanced technology, Geneva can no longer tell friend from foe. Life itself is a battle, in which mistakes can be fatal and victories do not bring happiness.

## **The Starlight Fortress Details**

Date : Published August 29th 2013 by Fiona Rawsontile

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Author : Fiona Rawsontile , Caroline Kim (Editor)

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Genre : Science Fiction

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## From Reader Review The Starlight Fortress for online ebook

### Alan Hardy says

This novel creates a totally believable setting of inter-planetary warfare while at the same time painting a riveting picture of individual rivalries, relationships and romances. After recent battle successes, Sterling Presley is appointed military assistant to the teenage Queen, Geneva, both soon to be embroiled in a titanic struggle with their Thypholian enemies, led by Emperor Pompey. This alternative universe is described in great, authentic detail, from consideration of battle-fleets and weapons of war to a host of well-drawn protagonists with idiosyncrasies of character and facial shape. There are a succession of battles and Machiavellian twists and turns--as well as the erratic course of the affair between Sterling and Queen Geneva--to keep the reader fully engrossed. Check it out. You won't be disappointed.

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### John Bell says

Despite a somewhat slow build up, I thoroughly enjoyed THE STARLIGHT FORTRESS. I am a big fan of Sci-fi, and really the detailed world-building. There wasn't a lot of that here. Instead the reader is plunged right into the story and the characters and essentially asked to keep up. And because the characters and the overall plot was so engaging, I was COMPLETELY ok with that! Ms. Rawsontile is an incredibly skilled writer, and her ability to breathe life into the story she has created is exceptional. Queen Geneva (the story's main protagonist) is wonderfully three-dimensional and very accessible. More writers should take their cue from Ms. Rawsontile when they want to create appealing, yet realistic heroines. She isn't the prettiest, she doesn't always have the right answer, but you cannot help but root for her. Same goes for the eclectic cast of characters that surround her.

Overall I was very impressed and would certainly be up for reading a sequel, if one is in the works. Next time I would be okay with a bit more of that detailed world-building, especially because the characters are now so firmly established. But as far as THE STARLIGHT FORTRESS is concerned, I was very pleased!

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### Pat says

The Starlight Fortress has a promising premise, that of coming of age as a ruler during an interplanetary war. The plot itself had plenty of action, intrigue, and surprises. The characters themselves never quite came alive for me. Many of the military characters were of the same type and I found it hard to distinguish among them. The central character, Queen Geneva, was too shallow for my liking, and in the end I found her annoying. At least Ms. Rawsontile's writing style makes for easy reading, although it was a bit unpolished. All in all, a good first effort of a book, but not a memorable one.

I received a complimentary copy of this book in order to review it.

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### Rebecca Gransden says

The Starlight Fortress starts as a romp through interstellar space and continues in this vein to its conclusion. We encounter Geneva, our infuriating Queen, and are taken with her on an inter-relational, planetary and political trip through a minefield, mostly of her own making. Her interplay with those in her life gets as much focus as the war raging in the depths of space. The Starlight Fortress is almost a character in itself; foreboding and mysterious, menacing and compelling. I would like to have seen more of it.

The plot weaves its way through several characters, sometimes so many it's hard to keep track, and propels itself along with some spiky dialogue and bum-clenchingly unfathomable moments. This is written in technicolor, emotions ramped up to 11 and decisions which seemingly come out of nowhere. I have to admit being slightly baffled by this, but it's also funny at the same time (I hope knowingly so). I was reminded frequently of Japanese anime and it's more quirky take on human relations.

I think that The Starlight Express would be enjoyed mostly by a young adult audience. The pace is frenetic, the emotions high and the sense of place starkly realised. The conclusion, however, I found unsatisfying. It seemed a little rushed and by the end my sympathy for the characters had waned and I cared little for their fates. I still cannot put my finger on exactly why.

Essentially this is a bit of fun: the sci-fi equivalent of a summer beach read. It does a good job of this if you expect nothing more. Indeed, it is interesting to see this attempted in a genre that can take itself a little seriously. This is fast, frolicking, space fluff. If you think that could be your thing, give it a try.

I received this book through a giveaway by Goodreads First Reads but all opinions are my own

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### **Chanticleer Reviews says**

Courage, love, and loyalty are counterpoised with intrigue, hatred, and betrayal—in settings ranging from intimate dinners to royal banquets, seaside walks to interplanetary voyages and galactic space battles in this highly entertaining and fast moving debut novel by Fiona Rawsonstile: *The Starlight Fortress*.

After reluctantly turning the last page of this mesmerizing and unpredictable tale of love, life, and war," I looked out my window to see the solid shape of a bright quarter moon and the twinkle of the "Evening Star" that is Venus against a deep azure sky. I wished I could see further into the galaxy and find the Renaisun solar systems, with their widely differing planets, countries, and cities—but of course they don't exist (yet?) except in the pages of *The Starlight Fortress*.

Spectacular battles in the Stony Band of asteroids, the interstellar pathways, and even on-the-ground maneuvers provide plenty of fast-paced military action, conducted with imaginative space-age techniques, weapons, and ships of all shapes and sizes—the most spectacular being the RA allied forces' enormous five-armed Starlight Fortress, coveted by Emperor Pompey. Artfully interwoven with the military battles are the interpersonal relations among the royals, the military officers, and ordinary citizens.

Despite their future sci-fi existence in the universe, Rawsonstile's characters and their language, lifestyles (with a few tweaks), hopes, and desires—as well as their darker natures of envy, jealousy, hate, prejudice, and war—will resonate with readers. The young Queen Geneva of Sunsphere, the primary country on the RA-4 planet of the Renaisun A system, is unlike any queen one, past or present, on Earth. Elevated to her post after the untimely death of her father, she would rather go shopping on one of the moon malls with her friends than rule the country, but duty calls and the stakes are high.

Geneva may be queen, but her elders question her judgment when she selects as her military assistant not an

experienced officer, but Commander Sterling Presley, on the basis of a speech he delivered at his graduation from Sunphere's Space Force Academy just four years earlier. However, they are betting that age isn't everything when it comes to creating new battle strategies.

Sometimes singly, and sometimes together, Geneva, with her chubby cheeks, and Sterling, resembling a junior college professor, face some hard work if they are to earn the respect of Sunphere's citizens and Space Force—not to mention that of their allies of Renaisun A, as well as their enemy Emperor Pompey with his colonial forces of Renaisun B.

Joining Geneva and Sterling is a full cast of colorful, multifaceted characters—Sir Lloyd, Geneva's uncle and Secretary of Defense; the handsome, aristocratic, young officer Charlie Swinburne of Rainprus; Prince Edwards of the neutral Renaisun C, who could be a good ally; military diamond-in-the-rough; and more, all artfully crafted by Rawsontile.

Dangerous, sticky, and amorous situations intensify as hostilities mount and battle fleets are amassed. Be sure to strap in, hang on tightly, and enjoy Rawsontile's exhilarating ride into the future. This reviewer really didn't want the story to end. Please, Fiona, give us a sequel to *The Starlight Fortress*!

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### **Fiona Rawsontile says**

\*Review source: San Francisco Book Reviews\*

Taking place far in the future, long after the earth has been destroyed, *The Starlight Fortress* focuses on an ongoing war between planets. Our protagonists are the queen of Sunphere, Geneva, and her newly appointed military assistant, Sterling Presley. Both are considered too young for their jobs, and both are about to prove that age has nothing to do with talent.

As the war with the greedy, rapacious Pompey intensifies, so does the relationship between Geneva and Sterling. Dramatic, edge-of-your-seat space battles are intermixed with quiet scenes involving flirtation, jealousy, and growing attachment. These scenes play nicely off each other. There is never too much fighting or too much time without it; there is a beautiful balance here. Also, we get to see the queen in her official role as statesman and then contrast that with her private self, raising interesting questions about power and the responsibilities that come with it.

Mostly, though, this book is just fun. The first chapter has a massive space battle. The discussions of military tactics introduce brilliant plans of attack. The queen is so darn likable, with her insecurities and her love of food. My only complaint is that things happen a little too quickly. There isn't any downtime between plot events, and the rapid pace with which things happen feels a little overwhelming. The book could benefit from additional descriptive passages, more narration, or something else that would simply slow down the story just a bit. This would make the characters, and thus their struggles, seem more real and more meaningful.

While this isn't a book that's likely to inspire deep emotional connection with the characters or extended musings on life, that's ok. In fact, that's wonderful! *The Starlight Fortress* is a fast, entertaining read that feels a bit like a roller coaster, pulling you along at breakneck speed through twists and turns that you never saw coming. In the end, you are a bit disoriented and fully exhilarated. This is Space Mountain in book form, and it's fantastic.

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## Tina says

For more reviews visit the Book Landers

Rating: 3 1/2 stars

Title: The Starlight Fortress

Author: Fiona Rawsontile

Genre: Sci-Fi

Review:

The Starlight Fortress, written by Fiona Rawsontile, screams “sci-fi!” The plot takes place all over the galaxy—from planets to stellar pathways to fortresses stationed in space. With several warring countries (or planets), Rawsontile takes readers through the journey of a young queen trying to lead her country in an intergalactic war against a devious enemy—Emperor Pompey.

Geneva is the newly appointed queen and sole leader of the Sunphereans. When she’s not busy dealing with the complicated web of politics with other nations/planets, she’s busy trying to earn the respect of her own people. Geneva is smart—but she has to prove that if she wants her people’s loyalty. With a million eyes judging her every action, Geneva finds herself under great pressure as she tries her best to appoint appropriate officers to her military forces, negotiate treaties and dabble a bit in her love life. What made Geneva really stand out from all other heroine I’ve read about is that she’s not conventionally “pretty.” Probably 99% of the books out there feature heroines who are what society would describe as “beautiful”, so it’s nice for a change to meet a character who admits she’s probably not eye candy but takes it all in stride.

Sterling is the other main character featured in The Starlight Fortress. Although he looks “bookish”, one should never underestimate him in battle. So it shouldn’t be a great surprise when he gets a promotion soon after working in the field—but what is surprising is that he gets promoted to the Queen’s personal military assistant so soon out of the academy. But Sterling has a knack for strategic warfare, which is exactly what Geneva needs to win this war. However, his abrupt appointment to the Queen’s assistant may or may not have stirred up some jealousy among older officers. Before anyone knows it, rumors start to fly and Sterling finds himself somewhat attracted to Geneva.

I personally find the idea of different, alien planets and pathways through the solar system to be pretty cool. However, I would’ve liked some more solid world building in the novel. I don’t like it when authors describe every single detail about the setting; on the other hand, I do like some background information about the setting, especially if the book is fantasy or sci-fi themed as the setting are very different from our world. This is kind of what happened with The Starlight Fortress. Readers are plopped into an unknown world with virtually no information. I got confused about the political relations between the different planets and it took me a while to figure out who was siding with who. Also, I feel like the most description given about the setting was describing the space ships/planes used in battle--and even that description was pretty minimum.

?The action definitely moved along at a steady pace--several years fly by in the matter of 264 pages. However, I felt that the author might have "skimmed" over some scenes that I would have loved to read about instead of fast forwarding it. For example, there was one chapter in which Geneva is trying to escape from Pompey's spaceships and she sees one approaching her. The anticipation keeps on building up as she attempts to hide from her enemy's ship. Just as I flip the page waiting for the climax, the chapter ends. The next chapter begins with her on Pompey's ship...and me wondering where the action went. Where's the description about her capture? Her feelings? Her actions?

With all that said, there are also good parts to this book. One of the fortress featured in this book had looked like a starfish, hence its name, the Starfish. I found it cool how it's arms were moveable to deflect missels launched at it. Like I said before, there was no slow parts in the book (though there weren't many action packed scenes either.) If you're looking for some light sci-fi reading, I would recommend ?The Starlight Fortress.

Likes:

- \*Geneva and Sterling
- \*no dragging parts in the plot

Dislikes:

- \*would like more background/world building
- ? \*would like some more action instead of a summary of what had happened

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### **Steven Atwood says**

#### **I think YA would like it a lot.**

the story line was pretty good, but I just couldn't get into the story. This may have more to do with my age, than the writing itself. The military language, attitudes, and personalities were wonderfully portrayed. I would recommend to YA readers.

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