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Zachary Night has been waiting his whole life for this moment. Like his family before him, he's finally headed to Indigo 8, a top secret training center where future Starbounders learn the skills to protect the galaxy. But being a Starbounder is no walk on the moon. No sooner has Zachary mastered the warp glove basics than a mission into space goes wrong and puts him and his new friends right in the line of fire. And when a plot to destroy Indigo 8 comes to light, Zachary will have to get back to Earth on his own and fast—before there's no Earth left to go back to.

Starbounders Details

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From Reader Review Starbounders for online ebook

Liam says

I remember reading and enjoying the Familiars books for their focus on character and tight plot amidst an interesting world. This keeps the tight plot and interesting world, but lets the characters fall just slightly. They're still there, don't get me wrong—they just took a backseat. It was an entertaining book for the short time it lasted, and it was a creative take on a familiar idea. Unfortunately, not as good as it could have been.

Mary (BookHounds) says

MY THOUGHTS

ABSOLUTELY LOVED IT

Imagine that there is a secret "outerverse" beyond our own universe, a place in space that is hidden from even the most astute astronomer. Now imagine that preteens are trained to work in said space with aliens from other planets! Yes, in Starbounders, teens are trained to be "kids in black"! Zachary comes from a family of fighters that are sworn to protect the universe from evil. As Zachary moves into his new school to continue his education after eighth grade. There he meets up with Kaylee, another human and Ryic, an alien but still very human-like. Parts of this book really reminded me of a Jumanji - Star Wars mixed with a bit of Star Trek and throw in some Hitchhikers Guide, the younger years, and you will understand what I am talking about.

This story should really appeal to middle grade boys, that really hard to please class that enjoy bathroom humor along with some spacey ideas. The story really becomes exciting when the group takes off on their first mission. I can see that this series will be an exciting adventure. This story would also be a great book to read out loud for younger kids, although I can imagine that it would turn into one of those books that the parents will also want to stay up just an extra chapter as well. The dialogue is just wonderful and I really enjoyed all of the alien descriptions.

P.M. says

Zachary Night is eager to get started in the family business - becoming a Starbounder. During his first week at school, he makes friends with bunkmate Ryic, a very elastic alien, and Kaylee Swanson, who is very competitive. When they are punished for being on the starchery range without supervision, they are sentenced to one week janitorial duties on a dreadnought and no chance for their first space safari. When the ship is hijacked by Skold and his minions, epic adventures and life and death drama await the three trainees. The book was OK. I did like Ryic and Kaylee's pet vreek, Sputnik. This is another series but I don't think I will bother with the others.

Amy says

My son and I rate this one 4 stars. We just finished it as a read-a-loud tonight. Unfortunately, we started our read-a-loud tradition with Winn Dixie and Percy Jackson, and is been hard to top those! STARBOUNDERS was a mix of Percy Jackson and Star Wars, only not as good. It was missing the "voice" that Percy/Rick Riordan does so well, and it wasn't nearly as epic as Star Wars. But it was fun, full of adventure and imagination, and made for a great reading experience for my son and me.

Hazel says

I, personally, wasn't extremely fond of this book, being a 13 year old female. I loved reading Ender's Game and I was hoping for a similar experience what with the Indigo 8 training academy for space fighting, etc. Of course, I also read Ender's Game in 3rd grade and I was expecting a more YA-aimed book. This book strikes me as very much middle grade, more specifically for boys in middle grade, I would suppose, though Kaylee provides a very present character for female readers. I think one of the main things for me as an 'older' mind rather than the more intended middle grade audience was that the beginning of the book felt rather like a collection of tied-together drabbles, almost, if you are familiar with the term. In the first chapter or so we just had - boom, page where the warp glove comes in and - boom, another single page and he's talking with Danielle and - boom, this one page of him in the training simulator under the garage. Despite how we had several moments tied together, presumably to help give us a taste of the world and what is to come, it felt rather slow to me. Later, the action definitely picks up, though I really think the closest comparison of how I see this book is like how I see the new little kid shows on TV. Being 13, I really see how all of these things in the TV shows just don't quite work or shouldn't be so - the kids not knowing graphs or how much a dime is worth even though they are 12 years old in the show. For me, this came through in how new characters gave up information or trusted the main characters so easily and how, miraculously, the three other alien felons accompanying Skold, Zachary, Kaylee, and Ryic all ended up dead before any of the three trainees did - and why would Skold keep all three of them along when he only needed one of the three as a hostage/leverage/warp glove access?

However, the book was well written I think that any middle grade reader would have very much enjoyed this book - I'm simply not the right audience for it. On the other hand, I feel anyone reading above middle grade would not be so enraptured by it. If you are looking for a similar, more adult/YA intended novel, I would recommend Ender's Game. This book almost seems like a younger-aimed version of Ender's Game to me, and could even have the basic plot be translated into a Star Trek episode. So, I would have to say well done and well written to the authors, but I feel that once a person passes middle grade, this book will not be so popular with them.

Bari says

I am not rating this book because I have mixed feelings. This book may appeal to middle school boys who are Star Wars fans. The description on the back says it is a mixture of Percy Jackson and Star Wars. I understand the Star Wars comparison but did not see any similarities with the Percy Jackson books. To be honest, I am not sure where the publishers got that comparison from.

In my opinion the first 70 pages were slow. I am not sure if they kids reading it will hang in until the action starts. The pace did pick up after that and I did continue to read up until page 177 out of 318.

I am not a middle school boy, but like to hope I have a good eye for what kids like.

This book is not terrible and as I said, Star Wars fans might enjoy it. I just am not sure if it will be a best seller. The authors of this series/book also wrote the successful middle grade novels: The Familiars - which might be made into a movie. I have not read this series yet and have not heard of it before reading Starbounders.

Harper Collins who publishes this book offers this description it "Starbounders is about a boy who leaves his quiet suburban home to train at a secret academy called Indigo 8, which produces "starfighters."

Emily Leathers says

[I didn't completely understand the motivation of the primary villan, it seemed...unlikely. Likewise the tactics the villian used were a little strange. But given most of the story was the adventure, those weaknesses were both basically fine. (hide spoiler)]

Becky B says

Zachary Night just started at Indigo-8, a top secret Starbounders' academy, training the next wave of beings who will protect the universe. Zachary comes from a long line of famous Nights who have distinguished themselves for bravery in defending the universe from planet crushers and unfriendly races. He's got big expectations to fill. Of course, Zachary can't resist a good challenge from fellow Starbounder Kalley and roommate Ryic, even if it does mean breaking a few rules. The trio soon regrets their rule breaking though, when they get pulled off of the intergalactic field trip and put on space janitor duty scrubbing lunar mold instead. Their punishment goes just a smidgeon awry when prisoners on board hijack the ship and the kids find themselves hostages. It is soon evident that the kidnappers aren't the biggest problems though, someone is messing with Cerebella, the main computer that controls all of the Indigo bases, and has put out a hit on the three Starbounders. Who would want them dead and why? It'll take quite a trip across the universe to figure out the answer and try to save the day.

A very fun middle grade sci-fi adventure that reads like a mixture of a less-serious *Ender's Game* and Star Trek. There are moments when scientific reality just gets tossed out the window for exciting action and ta-da events (like puncturing a space ship to propel it and everyone makes it ok...). For the most part though, it's a very exciting and imaginative adventure that goes all over the universe. Even though the book has the feeling of some classic sci-fi stories, the authors have created enough unique tech and aliens so it is its own imaginary world. And it was fun to explore that world with Zachary, Kalley, and Ryic.

Notes on content: No language issues. No sexual content. There are realistically serious space battles that do result in several wounds and fatalities. For the most part though, very minimal description of fatal wounds or blood or gore.

Ms. Yingling says

Zachary is thrilled to finally be able to attend the Starbounders academy, and is quick to make friends, but

also quick to get into trouble. When he, Kaylee, and alien Ryic run afoul of Loren, they find themselves on clean up duty while their classmates go on their first field trip. Things get worse when they are inadvertently kidnapped by Skold, an alien in a humanoid carapace who sells space ships, most of which he has stolen. Skold's not a completely bad guy, and helps the kids when they uncover a plot to destroy Indigo 8-- after all, that would negatively impact his business! It turns out that someone was assigned to kill the three friends, and also a hacker names Quee, whom the children locate in order to try to figure out why. They uncover a bigger plot than they could ever imagine, but do manage to save the day.

Strengths: This is the kind of science fiction I like. Space travel, evil aliens, and adventure, rather than futuristic dystopias. I especially liked that life on Earth was still like it is currently, and that most people didn't know about all the intergalactic intrigue. There were fun gadgets and tools, interesting alien life forms, and, of course, children saving the day. The writing was funny and clever as well. Good stuff, and I wouldn't be surprised if there is a series.

Weaknesses: I was leery of reading this, since I was not a fan of *The Familiars* by these authors. Of course, that had talking animals in it, which I hardly ever like! This was a huge improvement.

Doe says

I received this book free through Goodreads First Reads.

I was hoping that the 'Star Wars meets Percy Jackson' blurb was not true. -Thankfully it was not true. When I read about the book, I thought of *Tenchi (Muyo!)*. Sure enough, this book was more of a Jonny, Hadji, and Jessie (the Quest kids) thrown into a Galaxy Police setting like *Tenchi*.

It was a fast read, and an enjoyable adventure. The kids are likable and entertaining. Enough so, that another *Starbounders* story would be something to look forward to.

Judy says

Starbounders is a fun book for children who enjoy "Star Wars," "Star Trek," and other science fiction space series. Authors Adam Jay Epstein and Andrew Jacobson did a good job creating a realistic world in which Zachary Night follows in his family's footsteps at Indigo 8, a secret training center for *Starbounders* who work to keep our planet and the rest of the galaxy safe. Set on proving that he belongs in the program and that he can live up to his family's success, Zachary soon finds himself in trouble and in danger. The story plays out in a believable outer-space setting. I really enjoyed reading this and would be interested in another semester at Indigo 8.

M. says

Zachary has been waiting his whole life to get to Indigo 8, an elite secret training school for kids whose futures will be in fighting off alien beings who want to take over the Earth. The problem becomes very real, though, when the camp itself is invaded and it's up to Zachary and his friends to figure out how to identify and oust the villains and bring peace back to his world.

Lots of action, sometimes more than might logically flow but kids aren't going to notice. Zachary and his

friends do have to fight, but they also have to think and plan and analyze and solve problems.

Middle school, but a good 4th grade reader with an interest in science fiction would enjoy this.

Wilks says

This book knows its audience and delivers. There is a lot of action, including violence, treachery and murders.

You have to suspend disbelief as you often have to in other material written for this age group such as Harry Potter or Percy Jackson (Why does saving the world fall to students - particularly a girl, a male main character and a sidekick?). If you don't question too much and go along with the story, you will find there are enough ups and downs and mystery to keep you entertained to the end.

Brenda says

Zachary Night is one of the new Starbounder recruits at Indigo 8 (a super top secret earthbound base for the Inter Planetary Defense League, or IPDL.) Zachary hopes he will be able to follow in his families footsteps by training to protect the galaxy against "outerverse threats." Yet, things go wrong during a mission and Zachary, Kaylee and Ryic end up kidnapped by thugs armed with voltage slingshots and sonic crossbows. To make matters worse they also stumble onto a plot to destroy Indigo 8 itself. Zachary and his friends will need to figure out who is behind the attack and stop it in time.

Starbounders appears to be the first in a new series of books for authors Adam Epstein and Andrew Jacobson of The Familiars series. I certainly saw some elements that will appeal to boys, intergalactic gadgets, battle scenes and alien life forms. Just look at that cover and you can see a warp glove on Zachary's hand. There is also plenty of adventure and action to go around. I would probably recommend this for an eight to twelve year old who enjoys reading science fiction. I certainly had fun delving back into science fiction, it had been awhile.

Rachel says

Great! Mixes space and magic, and lots of adventure and laughs :)
