



Andromeda's Fall

William C. Dietz

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The roots of the Legion of the Damned lie deep within the mythology of the future. But now, national bestselling author William C. Dietz goes back to the Legion's early days with the story of one recruit's rebirth and redemption...

Hundreds of years in the future, much has changed. Advances in medicine, technology, and science abound. Humanity has gone to the stars, found alien life, and established an empire.

But some things never change...

All her life, Lady Catherine Carletto (called Cat) has lived for nothing but the next party, the next lover, the next expensive toy. Until, in a bloodthirsty power grab, Imperial Princess Ophelia and her cadre of synth assassins murder her brother the emperor, and go on to purge the galaxy of his friends and supporters—including Cat's family. The Carlettos are known to be staunch supporters of the Emperor and Carletto Industries has been in the forefront of his pet project—developing cybernetic technology for use by the masses.

Now Cat, one of the last surviving Carlettos, is on the run. And, like countless others before her, she finds her sanctuary among the most dangerous of society's misfits.

Welcome to the Legion.

Cat Carletto vanishes, and in her place stands Legion recruit Andromeda McKee. A woman with a mission—to bring down Empress Ophelia—or die trying.

Andromeda's Fall Details

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Author : William C. Dietz

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From Reader Review Andromeda's Fall for online ebook

Veronica says

Superficial military science fiction with a sizable cast of characters, most of whom come and go so quickly they fail to leave an impression. Even the main character is a one dimensional type who failed to absorb me in her journey. Add in the fact that I was distracted from this book twice, managing to start and finish two other books, means that this story never fully held my interest. Therefore I can't, in all honesty, rate it higher than two stars.

Mitchell says

A military sf series that I read only for the Endeavour Award. War on every page (okay almost every page). Definitely Starship Troopers inspired with a direct borrowing of the French Foreign Legion. Not exactly bad just really not impressive in any way. And I'm tired of the training, rising through the ranks Mary Sue.

Jo (Mixed Book Bag) says

In Andromeda's Fall William Dietz has written is a classic Military Science Fiction novel. He has gone back to his Legion of the Dammed universe, in fact he has gone way back to the beginning of that universe to start what looks like a new series of stories. This time the main character is a member of the ruling family that is marked for death when the Emperor is killed by his sister. Cat's uncle warns her allowing her to escape and join the Legion. From there expect a plot filled with non-stop action, many unexpected twists, and great characters. Cat or McKee as she becomes find she has strength's she did not know she possesses. She is one of those people who thrive in adversity making her a great fit for the Legion. As Andromeda's Fall ends there is a lot of room for future stories. I am looking forward to seeing more of Cat and more stories set in this part of the Legion of the Dammed Universe.

I want to add to this by saying a big thank you to the publisher and the cover artist. Finally, finally, finally a female military science fiction main character who does not appear on the cover wearing a tank top and holding a big gun. Cat does have a big gun but she is dressed in body armor looking like she could survive a battle without losing a lot of skin, This is how a military character should look.

Tamahome says

I read an hour of it. It was diverting enough. Both the villain and the hero are women. I was annoyed by yet another appearance of kings, queens, etc in sf. But then it was mentioned that they tried democracy and couldn't get anything done. And I was like 'Oh, that makes sense'.

Jay says

First off, this review is going to cover the first two books in the new series by William C. Dietz. I read them one right after the other and I have pretty much the same thing to say about both of them, so separate reviews is just a waste of kilobytes. The first book of the series is *Andromeda's Fall* and the second is *Andromeda's Choice*.

I have been a long-time fan of Dietz' work and have a high opinion of him as a person and writer also. One reason is that he is also a former Navy Corpsman as I am, and there is a certain brotherhood that goes along with that shared history. The other reason is that many years ago while I was working on my first book, I wrote Dietz a letter about my aspirations as an author. This was a real letter, you know, on paper. He took the time to write me back and did so promptly. I was so excited to get a letter from him and equally impressed that he took the time to respond to a fan and offer words of encouragement and even advice on becoming an author. I have only received a few emails from fans of my first book, and I replied to those the same day, and I will always strive to do so in the future. But before the digital age took hold, I think it's more impressive that someone would take the time and effort to grab some paper, throw it into a typewriter, compose a letter, address an envelope, pay for a stamp, walk to the end of their driveway, and mail that letter off. So Kudos to Mr. Dietz for being a loyal author.

I have read all of the books in the *Legion of the Damned* series and I was excited to see the start of a new series with a new character. Though I must admit, I will miss Santana if that character is never written about again. In this new series, we go back to a time when the human government is in upheaval and was in fact a monarchy. Princess Ophelia overthrows her brother in the first chapter of the first book, becoming Empress Ophelia. Lady Catherine Carletto's parents and family, along with thousands of other influential people, are a threat to Ophelia's new reign and must be wiped out.

On the night of the initial purge, Catherine is tipped off to the oncoming attack and she escapes, barely, to live and fight another day. Her only choice to escape the planet she is on is to join the Legion under a false name. But Catherine is a dolled-up socialite who has never had to care about or want for anything. Will she make it in the ranks of the Legion?

Well of course she will! Otherwise there wouldn't be a story now would there? The first two books in this new series are a great addition to the *Legion of the Damned*. I've always liked the series but these books depart a little from the others in that they are more about the people and the situation rather than the fighting and the machines. The other Legion series have a very large story arc that spans the series with smaller story arcs that are more or less finished within each book. The *Andromeda* books have their share of combat moments as well but it isn't the dominating factor in the story.

To me, when Catherine turns into *Andromeda*, it seems more like Catherine had always really been *Andromeda* and just needed to shed her Catherine skin. The character really comes into her own in the stories but in a believable way. She is not an instant bad-ass that wins every fight and is superb in everything she does. In fact, she gets her ass kicked on several occasions and sees it coming; her talent lies in her ability to see the ass kicking coming and take actions to mitigate how bad the outcome will be. In short, she's a very plausible character.

I gave the book only 4-Stars because I have just a couple of nitpicky things about the story.

First off, in every single Legion book, Dietz tells the story of Cameron. It is a famous and real battle from the

history of the French Foreign Legion from 1863 when they fought against the Mexican army. It is a defining moment for the Legion and it became their famous battle cry "CAMERON!". He has gone from his first books of taking a page to discuss the battle, and now can sum it up in a paragraph, but I'm honestly tired of reading it after so many books in the series. I understand that not all of his books will be read by every reader so someone could pick up a book in the middle series and not know about Cameron. However, there has to be a better way to deal with this. Please find a better way.

****WARNING: POSSIBLE SPOILER IN THE NEXT PARAGRAPH****

Secondly, there is one piece of tech in the story that seems to not work the way it should and it is a major plot device, at least in my opinion. And I think this piece of tech will be used at some point in the series to unravel Andromeda's identity and then, POOF, the tech will work the way it's supposed to. You see, there are these forensic droids that are described as looking much like the interrogator droid from Star Wars. They can match DNA in seconds from their almost unlimited database. They are masters of facial recognition. They are every CSI show put together and then to the tenth power of that. So why in the hell can they not see that Andromeda is Catherine?! I know that she was given a huge and deep scar across her face early on in the first book as a plot device to fool these scanners later in the book, however, even current facial recognition software wouldn't be fooled by the scar. The software measures static points on a person's face such as from the corners of the eyes to the corner of the nose or ears. Lips to the nose or ears. A scar across the face would not mess up every data point in the software. And when a droid comes up with a close match, another droid does a brief interrogation of her and is easily swayed from continuing the questioning. And I think that when the story finishes it's Ophelia arc, one of these droids is going to have an "ah-ha" moment and recognize Andromeda and then the fight will be on. But they should have done that by now in my opinion. Anyway...

*****SPOILERS NO MORE*****

Even with the two things I didn't like about the books, I would definitely recommend them to anyone who enjoys military science fiction stories, or even just plain old action stories. Dietz' books are mostly science fiction but the Legion books aren't like Star Trek science fiction which are dependent on high tech gadgets and wiz-bang explanations. There are futuristic concepts that put these books in the SF genre, but they are more story driven rather than SF driven. Take a look at them, you won't be disappointed.

Brian Turner says

Princess Ophelia makes herself Queen by killing the current ruler.
She then starts a purge of anyone who may still be loyal to her recently departed brother.

Catherine "Cat" Carletto is one of those on the hit-list. Being a wealthy party girl, she's forced on the run as one of the purges is taking place.

She finds herself at a recruiting station for the Legion - a combination of human and robotised troopers. An updated French Foreign Legion, they take people with no questions asked and allow them to choose any name they want.

The story is part of Dietz' Legion of the Damned series, but you don't need to have read them to get into this book.

There's plenty of action both before and after Cat joins up, plus the new Queen sets up a special unit to track

down anyone still on her list of undesirables.

The characters are well written, and there are plenty of tense moments from boot camp, being tracked and having to fight in an ongoing war.

Simone says

First of all, I really enjoyed this book and finished reading it in about three days. That said, there are a couple of things that are wrong with it which in my opinion take away for the story and the believability of the characters. Sometimes, these are minor things, sometimes major.

At the beginning of the story we're introduced to some minor characters before our actual main character is introduced. These characters are interesting, but barely used again for the entire book. The first before Cat's uncle, and the storyline that was never continued. However, these are minor points and the story quickly continues to Cat and her fight for survival.

I enjoyed the way that she got things together quickly and escaped, but I did not think that it would be realistic to think that the way that she escaped could work. For starters, there is an assumption made about the placement of a wound, there is no way that I can see that assumption being made as easily without any evidence, because there are a variety of places that the wound could have been. Then there is the introduction of the Legion, a rather interesting group, who in my opinion were far too lax in their recruiting for a military group. I can understand it, but I don't see why it would have happened that easily, without any kind of test at the actual recruitment station.

The pacing for the book was interesting, slow in sections and then quick in others, in a way that made the story flow quite well, but again annoyed the realist in me. There's no way that she would advance the way that she did through the ranks, or be required to do the tasks that she did. It worked for the story, but it is in no way actually believable. The first promotion was fine, but the ones after, were too quick. I believe that the author forgot that she was a new recruit at the beginning of the book and preferred to make her into an experienced soldier. She isn't and couldn't be.

The action of the book was interesting and engaging. I found the descriptions to be understandable and captivating. I think that the characters and the world has a lot of potential, if only the pacing and growth would keep to a more realistic timeline. I'll certainly be reading the next book to find out what happens.

Nicci says

As the prequel to William C. Dietz's, *Legion of the Damned*, I get the feeling the reader should know something about this book's universe before reading *Andromeda's Fall*. The narrative refers to TI and Synth as advance technology. The TIs (Cyborgs,) in particular, remind me of the toasters in TV series, *Caprica*, the prequel to *Battlestar Galactica*. In the series, we see how the soul fused with the iron body of the toaster. I suspect something similar in *Andromeda's Fall* but we won't know unless we read the series from the beginning, starting with Dietz's "*The Legion of the Damned*".

Andromeda's Fall opening sequence starts with the assassination of Emperor Ordanus by his sister Imperial Princess Ophelia. Ophelia performs a deep coup d'état by attempting to murder all of the Emperor's family

members, friends, associates, and supporters of which the Carletto family becomes part of the purge. It's the Carletto's industries that build the Cyborgs (TIs) and the Synths. The irony is the Synths are part of Ophelia's assassination squad. The Synth's physical description have me think of the robots in "I, Robot" film.

This military science fiction story is about Cat Carletto, one of the last surviving members of the Carletto family. How she survives is just this side of remarkable. She is quick of mind, stone cold tough, and her survival instinct is ratchet up to 150 degrees of self-preservation. Cat/Andromeda vows to avenge the death of her family. Princess Ophelia is the end target. But Cat must embrace her own journey to transformation before attacking the larger issue of revenge.

It fascinates me this wealthy elitist female of a privilege background will end up groveling in the dirt, being scarred that mars her natural beauty, and she will suffer pain, hurt and hunger. Andromeda undergoes one hell of a transformation. As different aspects of her personality rise to the surface, who knew this former party girl is fair minded, considerate, traits that will get her in trouble with fellow legionnaires.

On the basic level, Andromeda's Fall is about exactly what the title suggests. Once Cat/Andromeda escapes into the invisible walls of the Legion, the officers will subject her and the other candidates with various tests on following orders, shooting guns, physical and mental strength. What the readers learn is that Cat is more than just a privileged party girl. She actually has a brain under the blond hair. She knows how to use her female physical strength for protection and in service of the military.

I love her resourcefulness, intelligence, and her kickass ooh-rah. There is no romance, sex, or overly display of emotionalism. The story therefore stays within the confines of a military science fiction. As the story moves along the events, tension rises as she struggle with keeping her true identity secret, avoiding people, hiding away from synth assassins that continue to look for her and other associates, while unwittingly letting her natural ability to lead shine.

Other books I'm looking forward to reading in the prequel universe are in order: Andromeda's Choice, and Andromeda's War.

I would highly recommend Andromeda's Fall as it is a most enjoyable read in an action oriented military science fiction story.

Familiar with Battlestar Galactica, version 2.0? Who does the girl on the cover image remind you of?

This review is an original post at TWLIB Reviews.

Jasper says

originally posted at I have read quite a few science fiction book last year from Titan and I was very pleased with the level of it. When I saw that they were publishing Andromeda's Fall, I got quite eager and luckily I got a review copy! New York Times Bestselling author William C. Dietz is perhaps best know for his science fiction series Legion , a nine book series published between 1993 and 2011. Legion has been widely well received and in 2012 a new book was released in this series but rather than following up the ninth book, William C. Dietz made it an prequel to the original series of Legion of the Damned, the second prequel story

Andromeda's Choice, was released just last week and besides bringing the prequel to the UK, Titan is also set on publishing the original Legion series in the UK later this year. I have heard of the Legion of the Damned series but hadn't had the chance to read them. yet.. Andromeda's Fall proofed to be the perfect start! (I won't be able to relate any events told in Andromeda's Fall with the earlier published books so don't pin it down on me).

Andromeda's Fall opens in not your typical way or at least I thought it wasn't. It does kick off with a lot of action to say the least and throws you right in the midst of it all. The story starts with an military coup staged by the Imperial Princess Ophelia and is aided in this by an army of synth's, synthetic people/robots. The initial focus isn't on Catherine just yet but first you see how Ophelia eliminates all other threats or at least does her best. After you have read of how Ophelia has done her deal the focus switches to the protagonist of the book, Lady Catherine Carletto, who is currently and has been living quite the life of luxury never having a care for anything. But this all is about to change soon, as Catherine is confronted with the coupe staged by Ophelia. Her life is forfeit and she flees to save her own life. Now stranded without resources, her life has changed to full 180 degrees and then some more. Catherine only want revenge for all that Ophelia has done to her and her family, and only sees one way out of it all. Joining the Legion. I initially thought that the Legion would just be another military division but it soon became clear to me that there is more behind the this idea. It's based on the French Foreign Legion the *Légion étrangère*. I really liked this idea, I haven't encountered this in military fiction yet and especially when you see that its just as it was in the past, they accept anyone not depended on rank or past, criminals and the like or people looking to start anew. But back to Catherine. Her story is just about to start when she signs up.

If you look at most military science fiction you often have a male lead, I have to admit that they do make an easy protagonist, but recently I read the first book of Confederation by Tanya Huff and was pleasantly surprised by how she showed her female lead. William C. Dietz's protagonist Catherine, turned Andromeda McKee (as soon as she enlists in the Legion) is just amazing. I have to be honest and thought her to be a spoiled brat to begin with but this soon changed when she starts to realize than when you are on your own life is hard. Andromeda only gets stronger as the story progresses, in the Legion the majority is male and this makes her life only that much more harder, but she does has her mind set on one goal revenge, and she is going to get it, no matter the cost! I can go on just how much I liked such a strong voice all throughout the book, with Andromeda, William C. Dietz managed to pull me into his book and didn't let me go, only sadly when the last page was done. I have very high hopes to see how Andromeda's story will unfold in the sequel. There are some other secondary characters that you are introduced to and they all play a nice supporting role to Andromeda, for example there is Larkin who first makes her life pretty sour but Andromeda isn't one to take this for granted, later on there is nice development between them and they both realize that they are fighting for the same goal, so working against each other will only make their cause more difficult... I am very pleased with the way the characterization was shown in Andromeda's Fall, yes I like it when you have the tech-y side of military fiction but great characterization is a must to create a great story.

As for the story in Andromeda's Fall, for some part it's outlined in above but that is only the beginning, when you delve deeper into the book, the story transforms and the first introduced societies are abandoned and the focus lies with the training of Andromeda and the new recruits of the Legion. Here again, William C. Dietz does a nice job in clearly building up story. From recruitment to training to last but not least fighting. I must say that when I read the training I had some reservations as to the main plot of the story. Yes there is a lot of rapid fire action surround our female heroine and you get the ins and outs of the training regime of the Legion and it's harsh and tough to say the least. But I thought in the beginning that with such a heavy focus

on the Legion itself that it might start to overshadow the goal that Andromeda had in her mind for Ophelia, but luckily this isn't the case, sometimes it is pushed to the background of the story but that is more in the spur of the moment. Andromeda never loses sight of her goal and even when she realizes that with the Legion she actually fights for Ophelia... it's like the saying keep your friends close but your enemies even closer. I have some thoughts as to how the story might go down in Andromeda's Choice.

And what would military fiction be without any rapid fire action? William C. Dietz's background must have helped in pulling this off. His descriptions of the action that takes place, the small fights - bullying between the Legion recruits down to fighting of aliens is all written in a clear and crisp way that brings you right to the edge of your seat and leaves you wanting more. What struck me most pleasantly while reading was that there is definitely a great focus once the battles take down where a lot of tactics are shown combined with several heavy artillery weapons, but this doesn't take over the storyline completely. You aren't thrown in the depths of military lingo at all, hereby the storyline is much more readily approachable by not only military science fiction fans but also for your average science fiction fans. And most importantly, with all this you get perhaps a much greater well rounded story, combining a strong female lead, great supporting cast, world building spanning an entire universe and edge of your seat action. Top stuff right here.

I can only highly recommend Andromeda's Fall to everyone. If you are looking for a great science fiction story, get it. If you are looking for military fiction, get it. If you are looking for great characters, get it. If you are looking for a more than cool story, GET IT. I think you are catching my drift. William C. Dietz definitely knows how to write his stories in an engaging way that leaves you wanting more and more. I cannot yet relate the prequel events to the original Legion series but I hope I will be able to do so soon. Andromeda's Fall will get anyone eager to devour the rest of the series asap.

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Fantasy Literature says

3.5 stars

Andromeda's Fall is the start of a new prequel trilogy related to William C. Dietz's LEGION OF THE DAMNED and it's a fine place for someone to enter this good military science fiction series.

Catherine Carletto is Empire nobility. Her family is incredibly powerful and wealthy and Catherine is on a sort of debutante tour after finishing college. She's pretty, she's rich and so everyone on the planets she visits wants to meet her. In the midst of a social event she is attacked by a Synth, a sort of highly advanced robot. Cat manages to evade the Synth, but in the process many people are killed and she gets wounded as well. Fortunately for Cat, her family and education have not left her without skills to survive.

After running for her life through a strange city, Cat realizes that serious resources have been set to exterminate her. Read More: <http://www.fantasyliterature.com/revi...>

Christine says

This book read so poorly that I'm amazed by the reviews. The writing was TERRIBLE. I've read Dietz before, I grew up on stuff like Legion of the Damned, and either I didn't realize how bad it was then, or he's entered some sort of decline where he throws stuff out and see what sticks.

I couldn't finish because it was so choppy and juvenile. Boring, predictable, eye-rolling dialogue and exasperatingly flat.

Carl V. says

Author William C. Dietz takes readers back to the early days of his bestselling Legion of the Damned series to present one woman's great fall and the hero's journey she embarks upon to rise again and exact her revenge. When Princess Ophelia Ordanus decides to murder her brother, Earth's ruling Emperor, her plans include the elimination of all of the Emperor's close allies. This includes the Carletto family whose company has been instrumental in the field of cybernetics. Catherine "Cat" Carletto is a smart, beautiful young woman with her own education in the family business who has chosen a more vapid existence as a party-going socialite. Her life of privileged disaffection comes crashing down around her as she is informed of her parents' demise and her own very imminent death. When synthetic assassins arrive at the site of the latest upper crust gathering, she realizes she must use her wits and do the unexpected in order to stay alive. It just so happens the Legion recruiting office is open and with no where else to turn, Cat Carletto dies and

Legionnaire Andromeda McKee is born.

Artist Christian McGrath created the cover image that drew me to this book time and again upon frequent visits to the local brick and mortar bookstore. And time and again I put the book back down for one and only one reason; the jacket flap description that emphasized what I thought would be a long, drawn-out introduction establishing Cat as a rich, spoiled brat. I should have trusted that a bestselling author with his own personal military experience (Navy and Marine Corps) would know where the emphasis of a military science fiction book needed to be. After an opening in which he establishes Princess Ophelia will be a formidable villain, Dietz takes the reader on an adrenaline-fueled ride that transforms Catherine Carletto to Andromeda McKee.

The first third of this novel has an immediacy reflecting Dietz's experience in television. McKee navigates from crisis to crisis in the same manner that a television show may attempt to gain a following by debuting several early episodes that contain a great deal of movement with minimal lulls in the action. The more introspective character moments come later once the audience is engaged. The up side of this is that it is apparent early on the author knows where he wants Andromeda McKee to be—on the battlefield—and he is willing to utilize an economy of words to get her there. The down side is that it necessitates a few “lucky breaks” or incredible coincidences to propel the protagonist to the next stage of the journey.

Those familiar with military fiction will recognize the archetypal character templates introduced early on, particularly in the basic training sequence. There is a willingness to use those archetypes as a foundation upon which to build interesting characters. Make no mistake, the focus here lies squarely on Andromeda McKee. With the exception of a brief cut-away now and then to peer in on the enemy's camp, it is McKee who the reader is meant to identify with and her character growth throughout the novel overshadows that of any of those she comes into contact with. Andromeda McKee is a female protagonist who exhibits the strength one would expect in military science fiction without having her conform to the “men with boobs” mold. McKee's desire is to learn to kill, but in the process she is going to literally and figuratively get her ass kicked with a great deal of plausibility.

Once McKee is through basic training, the focus tightens and the reader is gifted with a short conflict and then a much longer one in which much about who Lady Catherine Carletto was, and who Andromeda McKee wants to be, is examined. The battles are intense and the scenes occurring between the fighting carry an authenticity one would expect from military life. In addition to what might be considered ‘standard tropes’, Dietz weaves in a story about artificial intelligence and the way in which his future society has embraced A.I. and yet continues to fear the repercussions of this level of technological advancement. A.I. is what gives the soldiers their edge while at the same time Princess Ophelia is utilizing a very deadly form of artificial intelligence to track down and murder those who may oppose her. This added story element ratchets up the tension nicely.

The measure of a good book is when you feel compelled to finish the story, even forgoing sleep to get it done. *Andromeda's Fall* is such a book.

Conal says

This was an fun read by William C. Dietz that details a future edition of the French Foreign Legion. This is prequel to other novels he has written n this universe but I have not tried any of those so this was my first entry into this story. Enjoyable characters and lots of action so i will be continuing with this trilogy.

Recommended for any fans of military science fiction. 4 Stars.

Amber Dunten says

2016 vreading challenge: a book and its prequel (with Legion of the Damned)

Our heroine: Andromeda McKee, born Cat Carletto, and known to all as “The Steel Bitch.” Once a wealthy dilettante, then a fugitive, then a soldier of the famed Legion.

Although Andromeda's Fall is futuristic military science fiction, it's based on an ancient coming-of-age epic storyline: a sheltered young person is suddenly and brutally forced out into the world and must undertake a difficult and dangerous quest, where the quest represents the transition from childhood to adulthood. In this case, Cat Carletto's transformation is quite literal – she must abandon her birthright and adopt a completely new identity to survive. And her quest is to seek vengeance for her murdered family.

Andromeda's flight quickly takes her to the doors of the Imperial Legion, the fictional descendant of the real-life French Foreign Legion. The Legion is known for its willingness to accept recruits who have nowhere else to go, and its fierce protection of its own. So it's a nearly-ideal place for a fugitive to hide and make a new life. In this first part of Andromeda's story, she begins to learn the skills she'll need to get revenge, and work her way up the ranks of the Legion.

The history of the Legion as recounted in the book is quite real. The Battle of Camaron, which took place in Mexico in 1863, is an actual defining moment in the history of the French Foreign Legion - right down to the detail of Captain Danjou's wooden hand, which is still the Legion's most venerated relic today. The real Legion still celebrates Camaron Day every April 30. It helped cement the Legion's reputation as a bunch of crazy bastards who will go down fighting rather than surrender. In Dietz's imagined future, that fearsome reputation has only grown. And the use of the Legion in the story as an Imperial pacification force is true to the history of the real Foreign Legion as well.

No, the writing is not great. It was repetitious and clunky, and I thought I would scream if anyone's heart was beating “like a triphammer” ONE. MORE. TIME. I was also bothered by the description of an alien as having “froglike ears.” Errmmmm, frogs don't have external ears, so that means.... what? I have to think it means the alien had NO visible ears, but then it seems really odd to describe its non-existent ears at all.

Andromeda's Fall is hardly high literature, but it's a fun ride. I'm going to do Dietz, who spent actual time in the military, a favor and acknowledge that he knows the realities of military life a damn sight better than I do, and assume his depiction is reasonably realistic... aside from, you know, the spaceships, cyborgs, and aliens. Andromeda's advancement through the ranks seemed a bit rapid to me, considering she got two promotions in the space of her first real tour of duty in the field, but the text seemed to acknowledge that she herself was shocked by it and thought herself far too inexperienced to be a sergeant. The only other thing that really bugged me was Larkin – I had a hard time believing a guy like that (view spoiler) Again, Dietz has been there, and I haven't.

I liked Dietz's portrayal of Andromeda in particular, and women in general. Andromeda is obviously exceptional, and maybe her exceptionalism is a bit over the top, but would you rather vread a story about someone who's NOT tough enough to survive the rapid transition from socialite to fugitive to recruit to soldier, and just gets killed in the third chapter? Exceptionalism aside, she's written like a person. She's got a

good head on her shoulders, but also a lot of realistic flaws and doubts and fears to go with her innate toughness and determination. She's driven to succeed by a burning desire for revenge, and until your whole family has been murdered, you can't really say you know what that will do to a person. She's basically a good person, but she's not perfect. She's honest when she can be, but when her life is on the line, she does things out of self-interest that aren't totally on the level and then lies about it to save her skin. And she does ill-advised things like get romantically involved with her CO. But let's be honest – we'd like her less if she really was enough of a steel bitch to totally shut off her need for human connection. Dietz fell prey to the beauty myth by feeling he had to point out that she was beautiful, at least before she got her face slashed and her nose broken, but I ain't mad. The beauty myth gets us all at times, and her looks were far from being her defining characteristic.

Does it pass the Bechdel test? Yes. Although there are no other major characters who are women, a number of the minor characters are women, ranging from one of Andromeda's early COs to some of the techs and other soldiers under her own command later in the story.

I've shelved it as "best audios," not because the audio narration is really that special, but because narrator Isabelle Gordon is something a bit uncommon - a female narrator who does voices and does male dialog well. She doesn't necessarily sound "like a man" any more than a male narrator sounds "like a woman" when doing women's dialog, but she gives different characters, including the men, distinctive voices that sound natural and comfortable and aren't jarring. Too often, narrators of both sexes struggle to realistically portray characters of the opposite sex, but as a matter of pure physics, it seems to be easier for men to go higher than it is for women to go lower.

Lauren Simmons says

3 out of 5 stars

This is the first book I've read by this author. I was told by a friend that this was a prequel to his other series, so my experience with this book and world is completely fresh. That might or might not have made a difference in the opinion that follows.

The Good: I was content with the level of writing and the style of it. There was always something new happening but not so much you were confused. MOST of what happened in the book flowed flawlessly though there was a couple of times where I was confused about the motivation behind the events or characters. The world building was average. I loved the T1s and the Droï.

Mckee wasn't the stereotypical female character. She was intelligent and focused on her goal, for the most part. She thought on her feet and put her rich pride aside so she could survive. Now I'm not sure if someone who grew up with money and completely took advantage of her parents' cash would actually react the way that Cat did, but it was nice to see her do it. She kept herself moving forward even when she felt like she wasn't strong. She made mistakes and rather than telling the truth she fucking lied her way out of everything because in this book, she wasn't the exception. She was just a grunt and she knew she would have her ass handed to her. It was refreshing to see a rather strong female character fuck up, work her way around it and continue on while occasionally looking over her shoulder because someone else didn't take care of it for her.

The Bad:

The second thing that bothered me was the romance that sparks between Mckee and another character (for

those who are trying to figure out if they want to read the story I won't spoil it). I don't mind that it happened but it happened so suddenly it was almost as if the author decided to add it towards the end of writing it and didn't want to go back into the story to add any sort of hints for the readers that it might happen.

Conclusion: I didn't hate nor love this book. It was just a book that I happened to read on a friend's recommendation. Am I going to read the rest of the series? Probably not. Would I check out the other series that the author wrote? No. Would I recommend people read it? Yes. You might like a character who doesn't express all that much emotion. My friend really liked Mckee because of that. I didn't and that's the main reason I gave it a 3. Most everything else about the book was well done though and was enjoyable.

So I say give this book a try. If you don't like the way that Mckee acts and works within the first 50-100 pages though you probably won't enjoy the rest of it.
