



Orphan's Alliance

Robert Buettner

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Humans have been discovered on the Outworlds. And the Army decides to send emissaries. Emissaries like Jason Wander.

As intraplanetary conflicts rage around him, and the personal stakes get ever higher, Jason finds that playing planet-hopping politician can be harder than commanding armies.

When united mankind squares off to battle the Slugs for a precious interstellar crossroad, Jason will discover that the most dangerous enemy may be the one he least expects.

Orphan's Alliance Details

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Nick Cato says

Jason Wander has come a long way since earth was attacked by skyscraper-sized projectiles back in ORPHANAGE, the 1st book of this series. We've seen him go from a typical teenager to the commander of the military; he's fought (and conquered) countless Slugs and has dealt with politics that would make the Bush administration blush.

Now, in Buettner's 4th installment, Earth's Army joins forces with humans from two other planets in an attempt to stop another slug-invasion, this time on a barren rock-planet, code-named 'Mousetrap.' By figuring out how to jump through black-hole-like folds in space, the humans are finally able to (nearly) keep up with the quick travel tactics of the Slugs. And the possession of Mousetrap is crucial in deciding how far the Slug war will go.

As with the first 3 books, ORPHAN'S ALLIANCE features exciting battles, awesome technology (wait 'till you get a load of the new fighter ships known as 'Scorpions,') and plenty of political hi-jinks, this time with Jason Wander actively involved. Mimi, Munchkin, and Wander's godson Jude are all back, although Jude seems to be taking a turn that wouldn't have been approved by his late father. Wander's spider-like robot Jeeb has also been recharged and ready to get back to work.

While a couple of slow scenes keeps this out of the non-stop realm of ORPHAN'S JOURNEY (Book #3), ALLIANCE is still a satisfying episode, and further establishes Jason Wander as a future military commander men like General Patton would've been proud of (in fact, Wander's musings throughout the novel act like nifty little history lessons).

This is testosterone-fueled military scifi full of cool creatures, tech-savvy combat, and an ending centered around an impossible-rescue that'll keep you hungry for ORPHAN'S TRIUMPH, the next in the series.

Bryan457 says

Jason Wander, Ord, Jude, and Howard are once again in the thick of things. A system is discovered that has a large number of jump points very close to earth. A base called mousetrap is built to defend it from the slugs.

These books are focusing on the experiences of the military personnel. The larger story feels very light compared to something like the Honor Harrington books.

In this one there are about 200 pages of politics and lead up then it speeds up into the climactic space battle in the last 100 pages.

Per Gunnar says

This book series started off real well with the first book which was pretty much great but then it just nosedived into endless political nonsense. Humanity fighting internal wars, political squabbling and nit-

picking about government spending when humanity is most surely targeted for extermination. That's just plain nonsense and not fun reading.

Jaqueline says

I enjoyed this instalment of General Wander and his fight against the Slugs. I did find it a trifle rushed - especially with regards to the whole Mousetrap plot, but I can't get enough of this style of Science Fiction. Buettner does a great job in his descriptions of the Military and the way things are dealt with by the Logisticians.

Can't wait to get my hands on the final instalment!!!

James Cox says

Very good read. Great world building. I loved the sci fi and the battles.

Jim says

Outstanding military science-fiction. The entire 5-book series was well written and I'm sad that it's over. That's my measure of a well written book and series.

Yes, it's kind of far-fetched to have a 3-Star General running around a galaxy saving human kind from evil slugs. But, I guess it takes a 3-star General to save both humanity and the evil slugs who turn out not to be really evil after all. I would have killed them all in a heartbeat.

Start with the first book in the series and go with the main character a long way. You love every step of the journey.

aaron says

another great book! in this one Jason and friends need to work together to form an alliance between the outerworlds that Earth has recently found and helped save from the slug invaders. Once an alliance is formed they need to work on a "fortress" at an area called the Mousetrap. Once it is created they will then need to protect it from the slugs. More tragedy and triumph occurs in this fourth installment of the Wander series. Read and enjoy!

Trent says

I believe this shall be my sci-fi summer... I discovered this 5 bk military sci-fi series last year. I rarely stick with any one genre for more than a week or two, thus it's taken me a year to finish the first 4 books. With

that said, I've immediately started on book 5 and don't see me stopping my current sci-fi lust for the foreseeable future. Once I sate my appetite on hyper drives, alien enemies and starship dog-fights I might go back to a less frowned upon genre. But right now I'm reliving those awkward teen years. I haven't yet decided if I'll hide the covers of these book when I'm in public. I guess there's an advantage to your e-readers...

Keith says

It's rare I'll get this far into a series without cleansing the palate with something different between installments, but 4 books in and still gripped.

A large chunk of Alliance deals with the shady side of space war politics, and political drama tends to leave me pretty cold. It's some welcome world building though, and just when things are starting to feel a tad dry things escalate into the best outer space Galactica-style action adventure since that great climax to the second book. Straight onto the fifth and final book!

Dale (Aus) says

Great finish to this series. I really enjoyed the books as they developed. I found the first hard to get into, but once past the normal bootcamp part of the book, the story kept me interested until the final book and the final pages.

Soho_Black says

Chris Bunch was the first to make the sci-fi space army genre his own, but Robert Buettner is certainly following close behind. Whilst I've always preferred Bunch's work over Buettner's, that by no means makes Buettner a bad writer and his work has always been enjoyable. Once again, Buettner has included much of what makes his work so much fun to read.

In "Orphan's Alliance", the fourth in the series, Jason Wander has finally had enough of trolling around the galaxy fighting mankind's old enemy, the Slugs. Having watched and helped the Tressen army win a war against the Iridians on one of Earth's new outposts, he's decided he wants to spend some more time on Earth with his godson, Jude. His superior officers have other plans, however, and whilst he gets the chance to be together with Jude, he has to do it out in deep space as they undertake the next mission together.

In theory, it's a simple enough mission. They need to sort out the arguing that's going on between races on both Tressel and Bren. Both planets have been through wars, but they aren't finding peace much more peaceful. Bren is particularly important thanks to its production of Cavorite, which is vital as ship fuel and to help build the Mousetrap, a point of huge strategic importance for travelling between the galaxies Earth now controls.

Of course, nothing is ever as simple as it seems. Jude decides he likes the almost communist policies of the new Tressen leadership and stays behind, undoing all Jason's hopes that they would get to know each other better. Even more serious is when the excavation of Mousetrap unearths an ancient Slug homing beacon and

Jason is once more at war with the Slugs.

"Orphan's Alliance" is a lot slower paced than others I've read in the Jason Wander series. At a point in his "Last Legion" series, Chris Bunch dipped into more political fighting than actual fighting and I felt that the action quotient of his writing suffered when this happened. The same is true here, as politics naturally moves at a slower pace than war and that made "Orphan's Alliance" a far slower read than some of the other books.

Fortunately, this isn't true of the whole book and there are some very exciting scenes. When Wander is involved with the wars on Tressen and Mousetrap, we get to see the best that Buettner has to offer. He writes incredibly vividly and you can almost see and hear the explosions of battle. Whilst the war on Tressen plays more to his strengths, being a war on the ground of the type he's used to putting Wander in the middle of, he writes the debris of war even more effectively in the air war around Mousetrap.

The one thing that has improved over the series is Wander's dealings with his colleagues. I criticised "Orphanage", the first in the series, for not showing us enough of the rare down time that Wander got to have. Here, there is much more of that and we get to share his enjoyment of catching up with old colleagues, who are now involved in other jobs rather than just the fighting. After all the political parts and the emotional family side of things, this acted as a welcome change of pace, allowing for some humour to sneak in and lighten the tone. I particularly enjoyed the image conjured by the thought of a pilot being able to parallel park a huge spaceship.

The one exception to this side of things was the romantic sub-plot between Wander and Rear Admiral Mimi Ozawa. It wasn't badly written and it seemed quite reasonable in terms of the character development, but it felt a little as if it had been used to fill in a couple of parts. This part of the story wasn't quite so well developed as the other parts of the story and it felt as if it was simply bits and pieces of a story rather than a sub-plot in its own right. The only time this part of the story really came to the fore was right at the end of the book and I felt it gave an overly saccharine end to the book which wasn't really in keeping with the tone of what had gone before and was the most disappointing aspect of this book for me.

"Orphans' Alliance" is another decent read and it was good to see a familiar character put into slightly unfamiliar territory and it was good to see him as a person more than a soldier. Unfortunately, in doing so, Buettner has had to sacrifice some of the more exciting aspects of his stories to make room for this and I think the balance wasn't quite as even as it could have been, or as I would have liked. This is certainly isn't the best book to be starting the series on as it's the weakest in the series I've read so far, but Buettner's eye for an idea and a story is such that even at his worst, you still get a fairly decent read, even if you would only read it the once.

This review may also appear, in whole or in part, under my name at any or all of www.ciao.co.uk, www.thebookbag.co.uk, www.goodreads.com, www.amazon.co.uk and www.dooyoo.co.uk

Zachary Wagoner says

A fairly good read. Don't often see books in the first-person which is pretty interesting. I have read the previous books so I always enjoy seeing characters continuing from one adventure to the next. The main character does cry a little too much for me, but I already knew that from the previous books. Enjoy the enemy in these stories though, very interesting take of the "bad-guy aliens."

J.C. says

The Price of War; The Price of Humanity

After establishing an uneasy alliance with other human colonies on earth like wars in the previous installment (ORPHAN'S JOURNEY), Jason Wander finds himself playing the role of diplomat and warrior, a balance the Wander has had difficulty (and great success) doing in the past. Using interstellar travel methods similar to wormholes, Wander planet hops to build strengthen Earth's alliance against the never ending confrontation with the Slug armada that always seems to be knocking at the doorstep, leading to a beautifully thought out and wonderfully executed battle.

Robert Buettner has created a world that is believable and has explored a new aspect of humanity in each installment of the Jason Wander series. In ORPHAN'S ALLIANCE he tackles the price of war and the alliances of humans with personal interests with a war that hinges loosely on one more battle.

Buettner brings the cast of characters back that readers have grown fond of including Ord, Jude, Munchkin, and Howard. ORPHAN'S ALLIANCE brings a whole new element to his series with some true feeling, hard hitting emotions to the characters and their actions. As in every war, death strikes close to home and the emotional responses are touching to say the least. There are few books that I have had a true emotional response to, and Buettner achieved this with me not once, but twice toward the end of the book. Negating the rest of the other profound achievements in this book, these two moments alone are worth the time invested in reading this book.

Highly recommended.

Good reading,

Plants and Books

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Christopher says

4th book in a generally strong military sci-fi series about a human/'slug' war where the protagonist is a 20-something Jason Wander who is promoted so quickly mostly due to everybody else's bad luck. The first three books were well-paced, while this one was just a bit clunky. Themes, characters, and plotlines weren't sufficiently developed and there a bit too much reliance on internal universe jargon where the author doesn't do a good job refreshing the reader about what the heck all these terms/characters are. Don't beat me over the head with it, but also don't expect I JUST put down the previous book.

Nathan says

Probably the best book in the series so far. Jason plays less the hero and more the diplomatic general. You've got to throw some of your hardcore military "it would never work that way", but that's pretty much par for the course.

It's a lot of fun to read, a good page turner, and was worth going through the three previous books to get to. If you're into military sci-fi, this one is for you.
