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Fields Of Fire (Frontlines Book 5)



Synopsis

The time has come to take the fight to the Lankies. Mars has been under Lanky control for more than a year. Since then, the depleted forces of Earth's alliances have rebuilt their fleets, staffing old warships with freshly trained troops. Torn between the need to beat the Lankies to the punch and taking enough time to put together an effective fighting force, command has decided to strike now. Once again, seasoned veterans Andrew and Halley find themselves in charge of green troops and at the sharp tip of the spear as the combined military might of Earth goes up against the Lankies. But if there's one constant in war, it's that no battle plan survives first contact with the enemy—and the Lankies want to hold on to Mars as badly as humanity wants to reclaim it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The fifth installation delivers. I've reviewed every entry into this series, and Kloos gets better at every milepost. This series has been largely plot driven, and feels fresh for a pew-pew military SF series. In this entry, Kloos shows his character chops as for the first time I'm flipping through pages sweating about who is going to make it. Fields of Fire is the campaign to retake Mars, and I

would have been happy with a routine "turning of the tide" novel, which I fully expected. But he even manages to shake that up a bit and take it in a direction I didn't expect. Well played. When I reviewed "Terms of Enlistment" I advised that you should scoop it up before he wasn't selling novels at Indy prices any more. Here's my advice now - scoop up the series before his numbers dictate new novels at 15 bucks.

I thought quite highly of Marko Kloos "Frontlines" series, calling it the best of ground-based mil sci-fi. Somehow, the fifth book in the series raised the bar even further! It's Earth against the Lankies in Greenland and on Mars, so for setting alone it is worth reading. But it is not a homogenous "Terran" force but one made up of Americans like Lt. Grayson and his wife Halley and also Russians and a variety of Europeans; Chinese are fighting the Lankies, too, but out of our sight. Their equipment is advanced but understandable, and Mr. Kloos stays very true to the limitations of the soldiers' arms and armor. The gigantic Lankies are some of the best and most "alien" foes in the genre. We never truly understand them, though the range of their capabilities become a bit more evident in this book. They have taken Mars, trapping our settlers in a number of large bunkers while the Lanky version of terraforming is done. Clearly, a Lanky presence there cannot be allowed to remain, so the stakes are never in doubt. The drop ships and SI troopers are needed, but the task is one that may be too much. Finally, the writing is first rate and some of it, particularly at home in Liberty Falls, rises above the genre. A pleasure to read!

In the fifth of the "Frontlines" series, Lt. Grayson and his wife learn they are going to be heading to Mars with a counterattack against the Lanky invasion, hopefully to rescuer the remaining colonists who were overrun, but are surviving in isolated shelters. Will the tides of battle be turned? Will the earth forces be able to take out the dozen or so seed ships protecting Lanky forces on the ground? If they can't, the counterattack will fail before it's even begun. Kloos has woven a realistic and gripping story of our battle for survival against a species that has every physical advantage over us. Mankind has to find a way to counter the advantages the Lankies have, or become extinct. In this book, there is non-stop action throughout, but if I reveal much more, I will be giving away a lot of the story. If you like realistic SciFi, this is the series for you.

As I've stated in my earlier reviews I suckered myself into this series and I'm still impressed with Mr. Kloos's writing. If I have anything I wish with the series it's that I wish he'd deal more with the social/economics of the world because he does have some interesting insights. Having said/wished

that we're now watching Andrew invade Mars to save Earth and humankind. Something that I like in this one is we're finally seeing the Lankey's use more than just "brute" bulk. Having said that I'm not impressed by the lack of intelligence by humankind. Given the growth of UAVs in our time period I'd expect human's to have had better control of the air and the intel capability there. I'd also expect the humans to have figured out clean methods to have cleared the Lankey minefields out to insert their own satellites and that $1/2mv^2$ is the way to kill Lankey's (please, a simple formula that works great. I'd expect great reliance on mechanized vehicles since they have the ability to carry weapons that are guaranteed Lankey killers be it in the form of rapid fire 76mm, 90mm, or 105mm or even 120mm guns). Having said that and seen the limited use of armor in this novel and the lack of intel (past what Andrew learns and brings forward) makes me wonder about humankind. Having said that I do enjoy reading about Andrew and have to say this was a good "first attempt" at Mars, looking forward to the next in the series. I'm also hoping that Mr. Kloos has humankind doing research on the Lankey bodies to determine the proper ammunition to bring to the party next time.

The Skinny: events take place a little over a month after the 4th novel. Earth's forces are gearing up for a major offensive against the Lankies controlling Mars. The fate of Earth depends upon success. The problem, the once seemingly dumb Lankies are now acting very tactical. **The Good:** Kloos keeps the pace of the story cranking. It's an action story. He delivers, and even does so with some even writing. **The Bad:** Throughout four books I've been thinking "this is a spacefaring race, yes they are 'alien', but they act without strategy and tactics". Finally, the question is being answered, but a bit too slowly. The action is good, but the story doesn't go forward as it meets a stalemate. Book 6 needs to provide more answers. Book 4 started some character development, but book 5 lacks. **The Ugly:** Lots of "F" bombs. **Thoughts:** This is an easy to read series; however, I never got excited about this volume. Usually, I tear through these in less than a week, this one didn't inspire me to turn pages. Kloos needs to develop his Bad Guy Aliens beyond that. Now, they are the easy to hate aliens. He toys, a little bit, with his characters seeing them as less alien, and more human, but not enough. I'm ready for Lt Grayson to develop beyond just a good soldier.

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