



EVE: The Empyrean Age

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The first novel based on the wildly popular role playing game EVE Online, *EVE: The Empyrean Age* brings this compelling science fiction environment to life.

A clone with no name or past awakens to a cruel existence, hunted mercilessly for crimes he may never know; yet he stands close to the pinnacle of power in New Eden.

A disgraced ambassador is confronted by a mysterious woman who knows everything about him, and of the sinister plot against his government; his actions will one day unleash the vengeful wrath of an entire civilization.

And among the downtrodden masses of a corporation-owned world, a man named Tibus Heth is about to launch a revolution that will change the course of history.

The confluence of these dark events will lead humanity towards a tragic destiny. The transcendence of man to the dream of immortality has bred a quest for power like none before it; empires spanning across thousands of stars will clash in the depths of space and on the worlds within. Those who stand before the tides of war, willingly or not, must face the fundamental choices that have been with man for tens of thousands of years, unchanged since the memory of Earth was lost.

This is EVE, The Empyrean Age. A test of our convictions and the will to survive.

EVE: The Empyrean Age Details

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Author : Tony Gonzales

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From Reader Review EVE: The Empyrean Age for online ebook

Elizabeth Hunter says

Being sufficiently out of the loop, I had never heard of EVE Online, an apparently popular online game. So I'm not sure how the novel--by the company's director of intellectual property--relates to the game. On its own merits, it's a well-realized world with nicely complex politics. The characters were distinctively drawn, although sometimes their backstories were pretty sketchy and occasionally their actions felt entirely subservient to plot, rather than character. Overall, a ripping space opera yarn.

Fred Hughes says

Tony Gonzales continues the story of EVE. The portal that transported humanity to another galaxy and then closed to strand them there.

At once a political thriller as much as a space opera this is the story of the ongoing power struggle between the various tribes of humanity. Co existance is fragile between them and although everyone is in their place everyone is not happy.

Fighting amongst the various civilizations is led by immortals, a crazed trillionaire, a resurrected goddess, the founders who represent the original seven tribes and a down on his luck terrorist who attains vast power quickly.

To those not happy with their lot in life all the factors of unhappiness are about to collide led by their respective representative.

Mixed in with the political machinations is a religious over tone and zealotry.

This is a rousing adventure painted on a large canvas with bigger than life evil and goodness.

Recommended

Jorgen Schäfer says

Game fiction is often not exactly at the top of the list of quality books, but this one sets new records in terms of horridness. Please note that I am an avid EVE player and love the game. The following was written for an EVE community site, so might take some knowledge about the game for granted, but it should be accessible to others just as well.

Writing Style

To get it out front: Based on writing style, the book was the worst book I have ever read, and I read quite a few, including other game fiction. It's one of the very few books I did not manage to finish. The only other book I have conscious memory about not being able to finish was a nice philosophy book called

"Metaphysics Today". For me, the book was atrociously bad.

Having said that, I'll try to refrain from using too much "horrible", "abysmal", "terrible" and similar adjectives in the following.

Also, please keep in mind that I only read until page 127, where part II of the book starts. It's quite possible that the quality improves immensely after that. Having had that hope for about three fourths of the 127 pages, I gave up on the hope, though.

Character Charicatures

The characters are overstyled to underline the impression the reader should get about them.

Jamyl Sarum is described as a graceful woman, almost fragile, up to the point where she lifts her aide from the ground, holds her up, shakes her, and then throws her to the floor. A worthy Bud Spencer scene - for the Empress? And it is merely done to underline that she's an "important character," a protagonist. A few pages later, Tibus Heth does exactly the same. He's limping with one lame leg through the factory he just helped take over, he's tired, exhausted. Someone upsets him - he suddenly loses all the tiredness, the lame leg, everything, he lifts the guy up, shakes him in the air, and throws him to the floor. Sound familiar? Yes. He's a protagonist, he apparently needs to be superhuman strong.

On the other hand, characters you are supposed to dislike are similarly "explicit". Some corporation CEO is hiring Gallente prostitutes to "prove" to himself that he's "good", and he tries repeatedly to satisfy all three of them. That also includes one of the probably most awkward sex scenes I know of, where I have no idea why it was included in the detail it was - not enough to count as "porn" and restrict the book to a mature audience, but detailed enough to not need any fantasy for the event. Compare The Burning Life, where sex scenes also happen, but use "fade to black" to leave the details to the reader.

This goes on. You get a diplomat who behaves completely undiplomatically, a Karin Midular who behaves as if she never saw politics before, ... cardboard characters everywhere with the only features being a few hints to underline what the reader is supposed to think of them.

Deus Ex Machina

One of my biggest issues with the story of the book is the permanent reliance on deus ex machina to solve most plot issues. There is at least one DEM event in almost every chapter I read - something happens, the resolution is difficult, out of nowhere and completely unmotivated, the grand savior appears and solves the issue.

This is best described by the first appearance of The Broker (the personified Deus Ex Machina - it does not confuse me that he's pretty much "the" character of the novel). I tremendously enjoyed the chapters in which Tibus Heth takes over the factory. Those are mostly well-written, logical, and tell a good story.

Tibus Heth rises up with his workers, take over the factory, and at the end, they finally achieve their dream: The factory is theirs! Yay! And then they realize that they don't know what to do next. Now they have what they wanted, but don't know what to do with it. They have the corporation police incoming, a large fleet outside ... they have a problem. They never planned this far. They didn't even believe they'd get this far. *That* is a great story. It's awesome. I loved it.

But I didn't count on TonyG. Out of nowhere, The Broker shows up, solves all the issues, makes Tibus the boss of the corporation and a few others. And to kick the reader in the teeth about having completely screwed up a really nice plot, he does a spiderman/terminator mix and completely needlessly jumps into molden steel with the seemingly only reason being a somewhat shortened travel time.

A scene I can only assume is there because "woah, that's COOL". No, it's not. It's ridiculous.

This then just goes on. A completely undiplomatic diplomat gets taken by some Mysterious Person that comes out of nowhere to the Elders who came out of nowhere (Elder ex Machina), the Empress who comes out of nowhere, etc. etc. etc.

Story Type

The other problem I have with the book is the story it tells. It's not an EVE story. I stopped reading the book as an EVE book after a few dozen pages, and read it as a sci fi book. To me, it's absolutely inappropriate to the EVE world.

Epic Heroes

The book tells an epic tale of universe-shattering magnitude about great heroes.

But what I like about EVE is that there are no epic heroes. I like the dark world where no one is in power, where no one is really in control - everyone is a victim of impersonal forces, has constraints and necessities they just can't circumvent, and even the people with the best intentions are driven to do cruel things, just by following the best intentions.

Even capsuleers, the immortals, the highest beings in the world, are just cogs in the machine, victims of impersonal powers greater than themselves.

Empyrean Age (and Theodicy) does the exact opposite of this kind of story. It's full of epic heroes who are better than anyone else, who are not subject to bad restrictions. Like The Broker who knows everything and can control everything.

Shades of Grey

Next, I love the EVE story because there is no clearcut good and evil. At best, you have only evil. But really, it's shades of grey. The Amarr clearly aren't "the nice guys", but neither are the Minmatar. Minmatar are tribals with quite cruel rituals and treatment of each other. A lot of slaves live a good life, but in the Republic, they often starve.

The Gallente, the shining beacons of democracy, are cruel bastards of public games and mob control. I loved the chronicle about the execution of a traitor, because that's just what I want Gallente to be: Not the good guys, but people who are differently bad.

There is no "right" in this universe, there are only different kinds of "wrong."

Not so in Empyrean Age (and Theodicy), even though he tries. The Amarr are really evil. Tibus Heth is the really good guy - he tries to somewhat make him a dictator, but at least in the first 127 pages, he's the paragon of the caring leader, rescuing his people out of bad situations, risking his life to save some irrelevant

worker... (I hope this gets better later)

But this is typical for TonyG if you look at Theodicy. It's the only story in EVE that introduces "the dark jovians" who are behind everything. That's a *boring* plot. The big conspiracy behind every negative thing is *boring* to me.

Prime Fiction, Prime Schmiction

Like Theodicy, Empyrean Age runs havoc over existing prime fiction. The ideas about cloning in the book have been discussed in this forum already. There are a number of such occurrences. CCP PF is by far not consistent and contradiction-free, but few people created so many contradictions as TonyG - all in the name of writing a "good story", failing at it, and all of them introduced completely needlessly.

Needless Plots

Like with the Deus ex Machina, TonyG has a tendency to pull completely exaggerated plots out of the sleeve for no reason whatsoever.

As a good example of needless stories, take the Elders and Jamyl.

The Republic has been diverting funds to build a fleet against the Empire. That's a great plotline. Whether it's Midular who has been doing this in secret and hiding it with her appeasement politics, or whether it had been Shakor who did it in secret using Midular as a puppet doesn't matter. You can build great plots of political intrigue, of coup d'etat, or half a dozen other possibilities just with this.

But that's not enough for TonyG. He has to bring up "the Elders", mystical beings who are somehow larger than life, totally forgotten, and suddenly coming back. No one believes that THE ELDERS! have returned, but everyone knows them (except for all the player Minmatar, who suddenly, during DT, "remember" them). There has been no mention of Elders before in PF, they were created just for this. And I don't see why.

Jamyl comes back from the dead. I actually liked this, as it picks up an old PF plot of the succession trials. But instead of making a really nice story about the Empire having a strong controversy on Jamyl having done clear heresy, she whips out Doomsday Ex Machina, safes the Empire from the otherwise unstoppable Elder fleet with a single shot, and everyone loves her all of a sudden.

There was no reason to invent the doomsday device there, either. To use the ancient terran superweapon, TonyG not only had to come up with the weapon in the first place and a reason as to why no one so far has found and used it, but also why no one will use it in the future - because this weapon clearly is infinitely more powerful than anything other nations have.

The story could have been told easily without any of this. The Minmatar could have created this fleet without any mystical Elders, and the Amarr could have fought them back without the need for a superweapon. So why does he have to come up with these? No reason other than "but it's a great story" - and no, it isn't.

The Burning Life

Some words on TBL, just to show the contrast here.

Contrary to EA, I enjoyed TBL a lot. But not because the writing style is tremendously good. The style is

actually not that impressive for a book. The characters have some awesome ideas (<3 the psychic wreck of an agent because they send people to kill thousands every day), but they stick to the few good ideas - I sometimes miss the coherent whole. And the overall plot of the book is pretty bad. Also, roughly half through the book, you notice that the author was running out of time. The story sounds hastened, as if he needed to get done with it. The difference between the beginning and the last third is pretty strong.

All in all, it's quite obviously an attempt to show every other faction in the universe, and it does a good job at that, but it's not a good book as far as books go.

Still, I enjoyed it a lot. It has really nice ideas, and it excels at conveying the atmosphere I enjoy so much about the EVE.

Empyrean Age is a bad book, and it doesn't even convey the nice atmosphere I enjoy in EVE so much.

Abhinav says

You can read the full review over at my blog:

<http://sonsofcorax.wordpress.com/2014...>

I've long wanted to play EVE Online, a game that many friends over the years have recommended to me on various levels, but I've never been able to get around to it. The expansive scope of the game, the concept, the visuals, the mechanics, everything is very intriguing and compelling, and any time I come across something to do with EVE Online, I get a hankering to play the game. But sadly, no time for a game requiring as much investment in time and effort as EVE. That's actually one of the reasons I stopped playing World of Warcraft a few years back, to my continuing regret since I still have a great amount of nostalgia for that game, which I try to get around by reading the books that are published, which is where EVE: The Empyrean Age comes in.

From a bit of googling I did a while back, EVE: The Empyrean Age by Tony Gonzales is a tie-in to the EVE Online expansion The Empyrean Age. In it, the writer covers the rise of the Caldari Providence Directorate, the return of the Minmitari Elders, the return of Jamyl Sarum to the Amarr Empire, the fall of CONCORD (in a way), and several other things besides. Since I know very little of the world of EVE Online, I was initially wrong-footed by the novel, but as the pages went by, I discovered a riveting tale of interstellar politics and wars and economics that really drew me in and instilled in me a fascination for all sorts of EVE lore, making it one of the best novels I've read this year, even though it wasn't published in 2014.

One of the basic concepts behind the narrative of EVE: The Empyrean Age is that of the empyreans, or capsuleers. These are people who have chosen immortality through cloning and genetic engineering, so that they live on long past the moment of their death. In the world of EVE, many of the highest-ranking officials, whether in the various governments or the militaries or private individuals, have gone for this technology, which allows them to wake up inside their CRU chambers a few moments after their death, with all their memories and personalities intact in their body. As a character remarks in the final pages of the novel, the current age is that of the empyreans, for they shall hold sway over all of New Eden.

Initially, I was confused by a lot of things that are happening, since we are kind of dropped in the middle of it all as a capsuleer named Falek Grange, a high-ranking noble of the Amarr Empire, is systematically

murdered about a military vessel, alongwith all the different copies of his... clones elsewhere in New Eden. This sets in motion some really big events, as we begin to see how the web of politics all across New Eden begins to fracture. Falek Grange's death is the first of these cracks as, on the other side of the known space, labour riots on a Caldari manufacturing world lead to massive changes in the government of the Caldari Republic and as in another corner the Minmitari Republic itself begins to fracture.

Suffice to say that Tony Gonzales has one hell of a task here, to cover all the different power-players of New Eden, whether individuals or institutions alike, and he does an admirable job in the end, stringing it all together towards an awesome and exciting conclusion that really has you on the edge of your seat. His pacing can be pretty brutal at times, but that is just as well since it reflects the events happening in New Eden, each of which segues into the other in a long chain of events that mark a major shift in the status quo of the known space.

Jerod Dunn says

I really enjoyed reading this book and playing the game. Tony Gonzales does a great job of drawing you into the EVE Online world and making you feel like you are adventuring just as you imagined when you were in the game blasting pirates and trading goods. He captures the corporation and race struggle brilliantly. Five stars.

Arthur Gibson says

Well written. Well crafted world. Interesting. Good politics and characters. But something about it turned me off. It was almost on edgy in your face book just to be that way. Violent to be violent. Harsh to show harshness. Not anything that advanced the plot. Not sure if I will continue with the series.

Eric says

I've been playing Eve Online for a while now. When you log in there is generally fiction regarding the goings on of the universe intermixed with news of player created events. That and some of the character creation background info is as much attention as I payed to the mythology of the game. This book is written by the guy who helped create that mythology. It was very neat reading about ships, places, and even some characters I've encountered while playing. It was also nice to get a bigger picture of the mythology of the game. Was a good fast read as well.

Jukka says

I liked the book a lot, I also play the game EVE Online MMORPG, the world/setting which the stories takes place in. I also think one needs to read up a bit on the world and its canon to really understand the whole story properly. Playing the actual game makes it a bit more easy as well.

While I enjoyed the book a lot, there were moments when the writing wasn't really up to par and bits that

seemed somehow unrelated. Unrelated things made more sense later on, when the events in the book connected with events in the game (this was well AFTER the book was released, during and after the "Empyrean Age" expansion of the game).

The big achievement here, for me, was tying the book and the game canon together, so that they coincided with the big events within the world. You saw the news and read of the cataclysmic events within the game world, then realized you had read what happened behind the scenes in the book. Adding several layers of depth into the world and giving the stories in the book new meanings.

Some free online reading, related to the world and canon of New Eden/EVE Online:

- Backstory: EVE - Exodus
- EVE Chronicles
- Short Stories

One should also see the website Navi/Menu on the left, EVE ONLINE -> BACKSTORY -> "Races" and "Organizations" for even more information.

Jakub says

Most important thing to get it out of the way as soon as possible: this is a book based on a MMO game, Eve Online.

Having said that, I must also mention that it's not half bad, unlike some other, um, book-like products out there in the market :) Yes, it helps a lot to know the basic facts about Eve Online, Yes, the wording is sometimes coarse and hard on the eyes. Despite that, I think the novel captures nicely the day-to-day events of Eve universum - wars are made, plots are being schemed, unexpected happens with surprising punctuality :D I enjoyed that book - gave me a lot of new information on how things work behind the scenes in Eve. And as a book on its own, it's not horrible either. The plotline is kind of cut at the end (no definitive resolution) but I believe it's deliberate - after all, it's seldom in world full of politics that things end up for good.

John Skidmore says

Eve-Online Canon.

If you play Eve-Online then you'll like this book. It fills in a lot of the story lines between the news articles and the chronicles. Explains the rise of Tibus Heth, Empress Jamyl Sarum, the Minmatar Tribes and the cause of the current state of war in New Eden.

Paul says

First off - if you're reading this to get a better idea of the EVE universe (which is based on an MMORPG), then this book is not a bad start. I'd suggest that you get familiar with the basic backstory of EVE first (wormhole, the collapse of the EVE gate, etc.), before fully diving in.

As for the book itself - very well written. Clean, sharp, and precise (in my opinion). While it didn't get into

all of the "meatiness" of EVE that I would prefer, that's a sharp bias I have because I play the actual game, and don't we all want to see things that we can personally identify with?

I give it four stars instead of five because while the plot, character, and elements were all good, there were certain parts that felt underserved. The Gallente side of the story is one such example. There also wasn't enough, in my opinion, enough exploration of some of the major movers in the EVE universe, such as the Empress Jamyl, or Tibus Heth. While I enjoyed seeing Otro Gariushi in action again, I feel he was the most developed character there but again, that's a bias because I play the game and I've read all the EVE Chronicles on the website.

Another issue that they didn't go into, which I wish they had and they had a great opportunity to do so, were the issues around which some of the major EVE conflicts revolve around: racial discrimination, slavery, prejudice, the ethics of being a capsuleer, the trials of being a ruler... so many issues that could have been looked at in more depth.

While I appreciate that this book is supposed to be science fiction, it is set in a realm that has so much more to offer. To see what I mean, check out some of the Chronicles on the website - some of them are simply amazing reads, and they have almost nothing to do with the science-fiction nature of the setting. I just hope that the next book, written by CCP Abraxas (an employee of the company that makes/runs the game), can delve more into such issues.

The greatest science fiction is really writing about solid issues wrapped in a veneer of science, technology, and conflict (Heinlein, Herbert, Dick, et al.).

Daryl says

A tough one to get through. Way too much political intricacy confusion. I have no knowledge of the game "Eve", and didn't know it even existed until reading a review after completing this book. Had I known this was an attempt to relate to a game world I would never have begun the disappointing journey of getting to the end.

Mike Jordan says

This book is the ultimate space-opera. Gonzales succeeded in not only weaving an impossible-to-put-down tale spawned from the EVE universe, but also providing us with unforgettable, painfully human characters. Unimaginable calamities and hardships befall them seemingly at every turn, but the book never seems contrived, and Gonzales is a master at making these characters come to life. Despite the non-stop action, I kept reading because I truly cared about what happened to these people. Be prepared: the ending is emotional and this isn't a feel-good book. As for structure, it can be compared to a Clancy novel in the way that it spawns multiple, seemingly unrelated plots and somehow ties them all together in the end. Gonzales has what it takes and more. Highly recommended!

John Ibarzabal says

Great book, entertaining, and I am not saying this only because it is on the same universe of this PC game that I play.

Very well done story, great conspiracy, great fight scenes

Carol says

I couldn't bring myself to finish this book or even skip to the end to see what happened.
