



# The Black Ship

*Gerry William*

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Enid Blue Starbreaks is a Repletian who survives a mass killing of her people on the Pegasus. She is later adopted and raised by an Amphorian family. With the recent attention given to the 60s scoop of Indigenous people in Canada, the parallels in the novel are quite striking. Despite the attempt to erase Enid's memory, and despite being integrated into the Amphorian society, the older, lingering memories of who she was shadow her, but also at the same time light a path for her across the stars. Despite the racism she experiences, she rises up the ranks of the Amphorian navy, and eventually becomes an admiral of the fourth fleet. Eventually, her uncle Leon Three Starbreaks connects with her, and her circle back to her people is complete although somewhat fractured.

## **The Black Ship Details**

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Author : Gerry William

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# From Reader Review *The Black Ship* for online ebook

## Lorrie says

I received this book as a free Goodreads giveaway.

Only 100 pages in and I'm contemplating putting it back on the shelf unfinished. (EDIT: I'm now almost 200 pages in, and still having a rough go with this book. I had hoped it would get better the further in I got...) Here's why...

One of the hallmarks of science fiction, even bad science fiction, is the science... and unfortunately not a chapter had gone by so far where the science isn't bad. Not just 'okaaaaay, maybe they've figured new stuff out in the future so what we now know is obsolete' bad, but just flat out BAD SCIENCE. Numbers don't add up; dimensions are just too unbelievable (or in most cases didn't do the most basic research to find out just how BIG/SMALL said measurement actually is); there is just too much disparity where there shouldn't be. This is a fatal flaw for me because it shows that the author didn't put in the work, or talk to the right people, or didn't have the right people read the manuscript before submitting it for publication. If you don't know the science, you need to make it seem like it's plausible, and the BEST way to do this is to not give quantifiers that are absolutes but generalizations. This way it doesn't make the reader stop and think 'what the f\*\*\*' when something comes up that is vastly different from today's reality.

[Here's a great example: About halfway through the book we are given a flashback of how the president won her position -- hand to hand combat in which she faced an Admiral who wielded a 5 foot long sword that weighed (wait for it) 15 lbs. Here's the okaaaaay moment. AN HISTORICALLY ACCURATE weapon matching the length of the sword in question would be a medieval greatsword. These babies came in between 5 and 6 feet in length, and as far as swords go, pretty much as big as they come. BUT, they only weighed 5-6 lbs. Keep in mind as well that swords like this were used in a time where lightweight materials DID NOT EXIST, so they were made of steel and iron, which is heavy to begin with. So moving almost 1000 years into the future to when this book takes place, you're telling me that they haven't come up with a material that doesn't weigh 3 times as much as the materials that medieval swords of the same type were made of? \*scratches head in confusion\* Now think again about how a sword is used in combat. LOTS of motion, lots of energy expended to swing the damn thing not just to attack, but to defend. Now lets change the sword to something that people might be more familiar with as far as weight goes - 15lbs is a good sized christmas turkey. Could you imagine having to swing something that weighs that much more than once or twice without your arms falling off? I didn't think so... Hell, I'm feeling tired just THINKING about having to pick up that darn thing let alone swing it a couple times. Thumbs up for not doing proper research. (oh and guess what? It took me 30 seconds COMBINED to find out how long and how heavy a greatsword was with 2 google searches... so it's got to be laziness and not a time issue on finding shit like this out.)]

There are also just too many things that make zero sense in context of the plot (what little there is). Who in their right mind would have protocols on place to detain a high ranking officer JUST BECAUSE an incident happened and they had no part in it? Wouldn't it be better for them to be the one investigating the issue rather than lower ranked people? SHE chose him, he wasn't assigned to her and then force her to promote someone who was assigned to her rather than someone she chose. It's seriously moronic, not to mention completely flies in the face of the protocol is attached to -- why would you put someone in that position of power who isn't trusted and jail the person who is yet had no hand in the events that caused his imprisonment? You cannot write something like this into the story just because it makes how you want the plot to go work for you. You cannot expect the reader to accept it just because you say it's so. You cannot treat your reader like

they are willing to accept this absurdity without completely justifying it and making us believe that it's a viable option.

There are whole chapters of stuff that have zero bearing on the plot, but are just thrown in for flavor. If the writing were enjoyable to read, I may not have minded so much. But almost everything in the story is tell tell instead of show -- and this is the cardinal rule for writers, to show not tell.

The dialog is painfully stilted. Nobody talks the way it's written, and certainly nobody in a military setting would speak the way it's presented.

And, finally, my biggest beef is with the main character. There is absolutely no way she would have risen to the rank she did with the society and war in place as presented. Not in this lifetime, or the lifetime that she is living in. Never never never. The fact that the two races are at war, coupled with the fact that Repletians are practically kept in concentration camps, coupled with the general sentiment towards the race in general means she would have never even survived military training let alone make it through security screening/personality testing by whatever powers-may-be. Wouldn't have happened because a) exactly what did happen (her being attacked in her sleep) would happen on a regular basis, b) there would always be more people who distrusted her than would trust her, so people wouldn't willingly follow her orders or serve under her, and c) she would never be privy to sensitive or classified information because of the distrust, especially since she would effectively be attacking her own kind. I'm sure there are a dozen more reasons this major plot point in the story which could be said that makes it laughably absurd, however I'm going to stop at the ones I've mentioned. But it has to be said that because THIS plot point is discounted that the entire story falls to pieces and is unredeemable.

Another thing that I noticed that really bugs me is the inconsistency in units of measurement. You cannot measure some things in meters and other things in inches/feet/miles. They are two completely different measurement systems, and shouldn't be used together. Either go with the Imperial system, or go with the US system, but don't mix them. (Here's a HUGE hint for you.... scientists never use the U.S. system....)

OK, now here's a matter of semantics that stopped me dead in my tracks. The book tells us over and over that the Amphorians and Repletians are at war. But I came to a dead stop because about halfway through the book it states quite clearly more than once that genocide is forbidden. \*cough\* OK. Let's try to get a handle on this shall we? By definition, genocide is simply mass murder. Easy enough. Exactly HOW can you be at war with another race when mass murder is forbidden BY LAW? Exactly how many people need to be killed in one place for this law to come into play? You'd never be able to use any type of bomb or explosive ordinance. Hell, even automotive weapons could potentially trigger the anti-genocide legislation. Someone didn't have their thinking cap on when this little tidbit was added to the plot. I figure it'll take me a couple more weeks of the book sitting on the table beside the bed before I'm able to crack it open again after this nugget...

ALMOST DONE this dreadful book. I told myself I wasn't going to dedicate any more time to adding to my review/critique of this book, mostly because it's not worth my time or energy to do so, but I came across another horrifically bad example of the REALLY BAD science that abounds in this book... Skip ahead to page 312... we are told that a planet is "flattened because of the tug of two distant suns." I actually DID throw the book at the wall for this one. It's just so horribly, completely, TOTALLY WRONG, that I just don't have any words. Well, OK, I do have some words. Planets are mostly spherical. ALWAYS. They aren't completely spherical, but this ISN'T caused by the gravitational pull of a sun. Any moron who knows even the smallest iota about astronomical physics (and we're talking BASIC highschool type knowledge here) could deduce that if a sun generated a strong enough pull on a planet to affect the general shape of that planet that

said planet would NEVER be able to maintain a stable orbit (that is, the orbit would degrade so fast that the planet would have long ago been pulled in by the sun's gravity and the two would have collided). This is basic knowledge. But there IS what is called planetary bulge (where a planet is not completely spherical) which usually occurs along the equatorial axis (because planets spin around their polar axis). But this bulge is caused by the rotation (the spin) of the planet. Planets that spin very fast can be non-spherical, but NEVER flat. The gravity from the sheer mass of a planet is what keeps them mostly spherical, not the external gravitational forces of other celestial bodies around them.

And this is the last word on this horrible drek. I'm going to finish the book (because I'm masochistic about things like this) and then throw it away (even though I normally pass books along to other people to read when I'm done with them). NOBODY else should be subjected to this crap.

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### **Christine says**

The book ended in a cliff hanger. I want to know what happens next!

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### **Kelly Flanagan says**

this was my first Gerry William's book, but not the last. His ability to transfer the deep issues of colonization, apathy, empathy, and more importantly the intense confusion that comes to those stolen from their own. poignant, with a plot that didn't let me put the book down until I read all the way from cover to cover. Then, I sat and thought about the book. We all know, a book that stays long after you've read it, is a masterpiece. Because it is only the stories closest to us that we take in so deeply. Read this author!

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