



# Flashpoint

*Christie Golden*

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The Queen of Blades has fallen.

The sinister zerg leader no longer commands her legions of bloodthirsty aliens against the humans of the Koprulu sector, all thanks to the combined courage and tenacity of Jim Raynor, General Horace Warfield, and a mismatched team of Dominion soldiers and outlaw rebels.

Although the queen is no more, Sarah Kerrigan is very much alive. The woman who once controlled countless alien minds in a rampage across the stars has been spirited away by the man who dethroned her. Now Arcturus Mengsk's Dominion armada is on her heels, roaring for blood. Jim Raynor will need to test his strength, his wit, and his loyalties against impossible odds to protect the woman he loves.

*StarCraft II: Flashpoint* bridges the events that take place in *StarCraft II: Wings of Liberty* and the upcoming *StarCraft II: Heart of the Swarm*. Featuring never-before-seen glimpses into Jim Raynor's and Sarah Kerrigan's past, this novel opens a window into a world of passion, action, and adventure.

## Flashpoint Details

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Author : Christie Golden

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# From Reader Review Flashpoint for online ebook

## Ken says

Cheesy Starcraft fan service. Not bad for a video game story, many spoilers discussing the history of Raynor, Kerrigan, and the Ghosts.

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## Wayne says

Very Boring. Have read all the Starcraft books and enjoyed them all. I like Christie Goldens' writing but this book just felt like a waste of time.

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## Frank Lee says

Today I would like to introduce a book that I found was very interesting to read and had a lot of good stories and morals within the story. This book was a interesting book because in the book, it had a lot of morals even if it was actually a game related story. The name of the book is Starcraft- Flashpoint and it talks about the story of one man who found his love who was betrayed by his leader 10 years ago. In this book's story, the man who's name is Jim Raynor tries to find his old love who is now captured by the enemies because of the betrayal of his leader. Along the story, he has to go through a lot of dangers that affected him such as the pursue from his leader's army, attacks from alien organisms, and the conflict inside of him as he wonder if he can actually find his love or not. This story had a lot of moral meanings such as not losing hope and always pursue the things that you wish to achieve. A example of this can be found in the books quote where the man says "I never gave up on you Sarah, don't you give up on me." This quote was said by Jim (the Man) when his love Sarah was trying to give up on escaping and turn herself back in to the aliens. This was a moral that was very important in this book because the whole book is about escaping and not losing hope and this quote was a very important part of the book that was needed in order for the author to explain the morals of the book. Another moral of this book was that everyone will pay eventually. This was portrayed with the death of the leader by the hands of Jim and Sarah's hands at the end. He was thrown down to the aliens that was attacking the base of the leader. This was a good portrayal since the leader was the one who betrayed Sarah in the beginning and this book portrayed that everyone pays for their wrong doings in the end by making the leader get killed by the hands of Sarah. I suggest this book to people who are from 12 and above. This book is suitable for teens because there are the contents that all teens love which is fighting and the victory of the good. However, I also suggest this book to adults since this book has hidden meanings and morals that are suitable for adults as well.

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## Yael says

nice book, i love Christie Golden style of writing (which i missed since i read Vampire of the Mists), the events told here will serve as a bridge between Wings of liberty and heart of the Swarm and it tries to give us a new perspective on how much hardship Sarah Kerrigan endured as the queen of blades and how much mistrust and regret she felt when she regain her human self, it also show how much doomed is her

relationship with Jim Raynor - which i felt really sad for her as we all know that she will return as the queen of blades for the heart of the swarm expansion, which means that Jim and her will part way once and for all :(

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## **David King says**

Back in the late 1990's I discovered a PC game called Starcraft that I loved from the moment I installed it. Since then it has become a video game franchise that has continually entertained me although I never seemed to find the time to read any of the related novels. However, as the next game in the series was being released today I decided that I would read Christie Golden's novel entitled "Flashpoint" which serves as a link between the newly released game and its predecessor. I probably did this mainly because I had to find some way to calm my anticipation that was running in overdrive.

The plot picks up directly from where the single player campaign in "Starcraft 2 – Wings of Liberty" concluded with Jim Raynor carrying Sarah Kerrigan out of a cave on Char following her transformation back into partly human form. From then on, the reader gets to follow Jim & Sarah as they attempt to firstly flee from Zerg infested Char and then escape the continued machinations of Emperor Arcturus Mengsk who is more determined than ever to ensure their deaths. Of course there are hidden dangers as well, especially as some of those who help them in their journey are after more than just simple gratitude.

The writing and pace seemed tidy and competent which I was happy to see in a video game tie in novel like this one but unfortunately I felt that the plot itself was a bit limited. For example, whilst there are some interesting developments and revelations in the book, they are all rather minor and I can't say that any of them really surprised me. In addition, due to the book needing to tie in with the games there was no real sense of drama or risk as I knew that all the main characters were going to survive. I will add that Golden does try to deal with this by killing off a secondary character but this just felt a little forced and therefore it didn't really work for me.

Whilst the story itself may have been a little bit lacking I found that the characters themselves were captured perfectly. Golden has done a great job in making it feel like all the major and minor characters have stepped out of the game and onto the page. The main character element of the book however is probably the relationship between Raynor and Kerrigan and how both of them react to Kerrigan's return to humanity. I specifically appreciated seeing how Kerrigan was no longer the same woman she had been before infestation as she was now troubled by desperation, guilt and rage. These elements have all combined to create a highly damaged persona which is very understandable considering the billions of lives she has on her conscience.

Overall, I found this to be an enjoyable appetiser for the new Starcraft game that captures the characters perfectly. However the plot itself was probably a little bit limited in scope which I suspect this may be due to the constraints enforced by the games it is linking. Without doubt, this book's appeal is limited to fans of the Starcraft franchise only and I couldn't imagine someone enjoying it without any of the background that playing the games can provide. However, even for fans I am not sure if it will add much now that the latest game has actually been released which will probably cover most of the limited points revealed in this book anyway.

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## **Eszter says**

Habe versucht mich einzulesen, habe aber nicht spannend oder interessant gefunden. Schade. Habe mir viel von diesem Buch versprochen.

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## **Maximilian says**

For the odd souls who actually found the Starcraft II story to be compelling, this book will make a good read for those wishing to extend the whole experience.

It is nice to once again be in the company of these characters. Golden does a good job of drawing sharp, accurate portraits scene after scene.

A seasoned author of many similar books and some in the Starcraft universe, Golden writes from a place of knowledge of the universe, more so than I can claim to have and thus judge from. The story is not overblown. It takes its place in the epic saga calmly and with grace.

It is a nice read, the dialogue is good, and I would recommend it.

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## **Jim Rottinger says**

In spite of Golden's great character development and dialogue, the content of this book can be described as nothing more than filler material. The book is supposed to serve as a bridge between the campaign stories in the Wings of Liberty and Heart of the Swarm, which are the first two Starcraft II computer games, however, having played both campaigns, how much could really have happened between the two games? Wings of Liberty ends with the defeat of the Queen of Blades, leaving behind her former persona, Sarah Kerrigan, to be rescued by Jim Raynor, while Heart of the Swarm begins with Kerrigan being tested on in a laboratory. It's just a filler story.

One thing I did enjoy about the book, however, is that it filled in some of the details that the campaign stories left out or did not elaborate enough on, such as Narud's corruption, Valerian's reasons for betraying his father, and how exactly Mengsk came to be in possession of the Xel'Naga artifact.

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## **Phillip Wyrick says**

A enjoyable book for any Starcraft fan. Has tons of references to the SC2 Campaign and previous books. Sheds a lot of light on the connection between Kerrigan and Raynor. Highly recommend!

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## **Matt Berridge says**

**One heck of a girl... or monster**

Oh my god, I saw the blast when I closed my eyes (through Jim's) and after i woke up, I just died after seeing Valarian and Egon's faces!! PRICELESS!!!

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## Kryztina says

This review contains major **unmarked spoilers**.

This is one of those Blizzard books that you have to read if you want the *Heart of the Swarm* story to make sense. I wish I'd known that *before* I played HotS and read the Starcraft wiki on Dr. Narud to figure out what in the fekk happened there.

Since I'd already spoiled myself on one of the biggest plot twists in the book (which, in fairness, is foreshadowed six ways to Winter's Veil), I half-expected this to be another slog through 300 pages of filler-like material à la *Devil's Due*. Luckily, this isn't the case. Somehow, Christie Golden managed to take a haphazard infodump and turn it into a coherent narrative with enough tension and character development to make it a real page-turner. There's backstory, too, but not enough to become distracting, and the main side plot is adorable... until *that* shock-value twist that doesn't add anything to the story that we didn't already know (yes, Kerrigan has Deus Ex Machina-level psionic powers and no, she can't fully control them and really, *why?*)

Speaking of Kerrigan's powers, that's the one thing that bugged me throughout the book. Unless I missed something, they're not really explained beyond "yep, she can do that now, carry on." It could be zerg DNA, Xel'Naga shenanigans or whatever, but with all the science-y stuff going on, you'd think there might have been at least a throwaway line by someone to shed some light on what was going on.

This is still a good read, though, and it was nice to see some minor in-game characters get some proper screen book time and characterization, for once.

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## Eroldren says

Eroldren give his thoughts on the latest *StarCraft II* bridge novel by Christie Golden.

***“A slightly flawed gem Christie Golden’s Flashpoint is nonetheless a gem that shows her excellent storytelling is terrific reading material that can appeal to any StarCraft crowd.” – Eroldren, The Founding Fields***

Beware; *Wings of Liberty* and *Heart of the Swarm* spoilers included in the review down below.

By no means am I'm a stranger of the *StarCraft* franchise. After all, I've been spotlighting the *StarCraft II: Heart of the Swarm* short stories that been coming out for the past couple of months and it's been so far yet it's been a fairly a strong series. However, even short stories can take their toll on me so I've decided to return my attention back to a *StarCraft* novel I was lucky to obtain courtesy of BlizzPlanet and Blizzard Entertainment: *Flashpoint*.

Picking straight right up from the very ending of *Wings of Liberty* Christie Golden continues the story of Jim

Raynor, Sarah Kerrigan, Valerian Mengsk and the Raynor's Raiders. We start part way into the Showdown cinematic as Jim Raynor shot his old friend Tychus Findlay dead and carries out Sarah Kerrigan out from primary hive cluster as Dominion battlecruisers fight far above in the heavens. After that point the road the story turns into a rather fascinating ride as we push onward which will eventual set up the starting area of *Heart of the Swarm*. Throughout the course of *Flashpoint* we see some more of the Raiders aboard the *Hyperion* seen during of *Wings of Liberty* storymode that offers us a wider perspective into the motley company outside from Raynor's own narrow minded POV and the troubles he's confronted with after saving Kerrigan.

For what's it worth, despite *Flashpoint's* story set within a tight timespan of 10 days it was a delightful read and quite informational page by page. Even if you haven't dabbled with *StarCraft* fiction beforehand *Flashpoint* is packed with enough background material - both old and new - that any newcomer can appreciate it as a gateway novel which they can jump into without worrying about previous titles yet still see progression in the franchise's ongoing storyline.

One thing that I found most interesting Christie addressed in the flashback aspects of *Flashpoint* that it greatly fleshed out the relationship between Sarah Kerrigan and Jim Raynor into something much more concrete. In *Wings of Liberty* we see Raynor has been lamenting over the loss of Kerrigan, a women he loved until betrayed by Arcturus Mengsk and transformed into the unrelenting Queen of Blades. Except that notion was something new brought into the *StarCraft II* trilogy. Where did Raynor and Kerrigan having a romantic relationship ever come from? Jeff Grubb's *Liberty's Crusade* and *Queen of Blades* by Aaron Rosenburg had seeded that Raynor and Kerrigan had developed a relationship on good terms behind-the-scenes after their first impressions of meeting each other, yet even there it felt something that eventually became a bygone friendship. For the majority of old school *StarCraft* gamers who played the campaign thought that relationship had died, or perhaps even considered a nonexistent romance that never happened after 12 years of knowing *StarCraft* and *Brood War*. Only mutual respect. It was out of the blue and there was nothing clarified to how and why this happened until *Flashpoint* came around.

For myself, I'm not entirely settled on the idea the Queen of Blades was an overriding persona that took control and repressed Sarah Kerrigan, who was unable to direct her own actions as a monstrous creature slaughter billions. It was an understandable reinterpretation of the events but it still robbed much meaning to the atrocities the Queen of Blades committed and her sadistic nature. In turn, that diminished her character as one the top favorite villainess in gaming history. (i.e. "Omega")

Alongside that series of flashbacks Christie had also interweaved Mike Liberty from *Liberty's Crusade* partially as a sideline character which I found quite interesting. Let's say "You Pig!" been given a whole new meaning and waffles make a comeback. Too add with that, readers of *StarCraft* tie-in media can discovery nods to other works such as Cameron Dayton's *Kerrigan - Hope and Vengeance* comic which some collaboration was done with Christie Golden, "Homecoming" by Chris Metzen (Frontlines Vol. 4), and Christie's own The Dark Templar Saga. Finding those little in-universes references as minor layers of consistency were a pleasure to see uphold.

However, having played *Heart of the Swarm* before getting my hands on *Flashpoint* I did notice likewise the discontinuity between the two *StarCraft II* games and that in turn affected part of my immersion in a lesser extent. As a lore enthusiast I do keep out my eye for those background details that may reinforce previously written source material, see different interpretations, push forward my understanding of any fictional universe etc.

Without a doubt I found Christie's storytelling in *Flashpoint* kept me thoroughly entertained from start to

finish in whichever area – dialogue, humor, action, pacing – it was mostly all in the green and I cannot give her fault from her end. Even authors licensed by Blizzard are not entirely in the loop of things as a game is being developed.

(view spoiler)

At any rate, I sorely do hope Christie Golden will return to write the second novel that'll bridge together *Heart of the Swarm* and *Legacy of the Void* to uphold that storytelling continuity that Christie offers to readers. Besides, *Heart of the Swarm* ended on a point which can be thought as a cliffhanger in one aspect which I can see she would no doubt like to pick right up and explore further much to our delight.

**Overall Verdict: 9/10**

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### **Kumyin says**

I picked this book by chance off the shelves of the library on a whim. Gotta admit, I don't play StarCraft, so I did a little research about the backstory. Turns out, there's quite an interesting narrative behind it.

Anyway, back to the book. In my opinion, this book shouldn't be read by itself without knowing the characters or broad outline of the world of StarCraft. It's mostly just trying to escape from one recurring threat. By necessity, most of the main problems aren't resolved by the end of the book (since they are addressed in the game narrative if I'm not mistaken).

What I enjoyed from the book is how the characters thoughts, feelings and personalities are crystalized in the book. Wikipedia isn't much help when it comes to getting a sense of who the characters are. So it is with this mindset that I read the book and enjoyed myself thoroughly.

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### **Daena says**

feels like a filler story.

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### **Dino says**

First of all, i'd question my objectivity on any book that's related to StarCraft, simply because i consider myself to be a HUGE fan of the series and the story. Bearing that in mind, this is my opinion on the book.

The events in the book takes place after the last mission in StarCraft 2 : Wings of Liberty and before the first mission in StarCraft 2 : Heart of the Swarm.

I would like to start off by saying that quite a few people fault this book for being a "filler" or a "bridge" between two StarCraft games...and it really is that, BUT i don't find that to be a fault at all. Why should it be ? The book provided very interested background information regarding the events that happen between two



games, and i LOVE that it does that. Above that, the book provided more background about Raynor's and Kerrigan's relationship, and the words "I love you." were finally said! (I'm all for the Raynor/Kerrigan love story so this was a huge plus for me)

I assume that the majority of people who take the time to read StarCraft literature are fans of the series and play the game, and i'm sure a lot of people were wondering what happened between Wings of Liberty and Heart of the Swarm - well, this explains it. I personally found the story very interesting, action packed, informative but also very emotional. I think that Christie did a very good job writing this, given that it's MEANT to be a book that bridges two games, and made the most of it. Story about love, loss, betrayal (actually a lot of that going on), self-finding, trust (or lack there of) and the list goes on. I mean, when you start caring for a "minor" side character, you know that you're on to something good.

All in all, is it as good as Christie's "Dark Templar Saga" ? No. But not because the writing isn't on par, but simply due to it's limitations as "Flashpoint" wasn't meant to be anything other than a "filler" (and in my opinion, a pretty good one). Is it worth reading ? I say yes. If you're a fan of the series, i definitely think that you should. I personally enjoyed it, but in full honesty, mostly because it was about Raynor and Kerrigan. I can't stress how much i enjoy their relationship, and learning more about it, what it used to be, where it might lead. Both of these characters have lead a hard and unfair life, and yet they still can't catch a break. Finding out about how their relationship started brings a little solace to my mind, knowing that there's a chance at least (PLEASE BLIZZARD) that they might find happiness and peace in the future.

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