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Fluency (Confluence Book 1)



Synopsis

NASA discovered the alien ship lurking in the asteroid belt in the 1960s. They kept the Target under intense surveillance for decades, letting the public believe they were exploring the solar system, while they worked feverishly to refine the technology needed to reach it. The ship itself remained silent, drifting. Dr. Jane Holloway is content documenting nearly-extinct languages and had never contemplated becoming an astronaut. But when NASA recruits her to join a team of military scientists for an expedition to the Target, it's an adventure she can't refuse. The ship isn't vacant, as they presumed. A disembodied voice rumbles inside Jane's head, "You are home." Jane fights the growing doubts of her colleagues as she attempts to decipher what the alien wants from her. As the derelict ship devolves into chaos and the crew gets cut off from their escape route, Jane must decide if she can trust the alien's help to survive.

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Customer Reviews

I Speak AlienBy Bob Gelms Fluency by Jennifer Wells, the first book in the Confluence series, causes me to ask the first question, "When can we expect book number two?" This is a wonderful

book. Ms. Wells does almost everything perfectly that a sci-fi novel should. The book follows the exploits of Dr. Jane Holloway. She is a linguist, hence the title of the novel, but fluency in what? The answer is why she is included in the latest mission in space. Sometime in the 1960â™s NASA discovered a spacecraft orbiting the Sun in the asteroid belt. Itâ™s gigantic. They donâ™t know how it got there or how long itâ™s been there. It doesnâ™t send out signals of any kind detectable on Earth. It evinces no hostile intent; in fact, it evinces no intent at all. NASA has come to the conclusion that the craft is uninhabited and is nothing more than a derelict. So, NASA, of course, has hidden its existence and set about with the space programs Mercury, Gemini, Apollo and the space shuttle developing a mission to send to this craft to find out what it is and where it has come from. More importantly, where is it going? Is our solar system its destination? This is called a first contact story. Dr. Jane Holloway is included in the crew because NASA needs someone from Earth to figure out how to communicate with an extra-terrestrial life form if there is one on board. Jane is a specialist in reconstructing ancient languages from scratch and in her resides Earthâ™s best hope of communicating with an alien on the ship. Ms Wells puts a fair bit of hard science in Fluency, which is very much to my liking. There is enough to drive the story forward in a fascinating way because all the hard science is believable, much like in Andy Weirâ™s The Martian.

I was surprised at the number of mean-spirited reviews tallied for this novel by Jennifer Foehner Wells. I mean, how dare she categorize a book under SF&F>Science Fiction>Military>Space Fleet and include a romantic element to the story. That is not to say there aren't a lot of positive reviews, but, wow, the pot shots. I admittedly came at this book from the Romance>Science Fiction angle. Clearly we romance readers are a kinder, gentler crowd. Ironically, I found the romance lacking, but the aeronautics, engineering and biology aspects of the book were absorbing. Was it accurate? I don't know and I don't care. This is a fantasy novel. It was engrossing, imaginative, lightly philosophical and action-packed. In a gender-bender of an action story, we get to see Jane kicking alien butt and carrying study but unconscious Dr. Bergen away to safety. Linguist Jane rapidly ascends to being in charge of the mission due to her special skills, unique cognitive abilities and humanity. A lot of the naysayers of this book take it to task for the way in which the military head of the mission, Walsh, was unprofessional and irrational. I interpreted it more as JFW pulling from the James Cameron canon of thought in movies such as Aliens, The Abyss or Avatar. In some ways, it felt like NASA set up the linguist on the team, Dr. Jane Holloway, to be the sacrificial lamb once they arrived at Target. Well, she surprised Walsh, the rest of the team, and herself. Fluency is the story of the birth of a leader. A lot happens in this book, but there is such a good suspense factor that I

don't want to spoil it. The spookiest alien movies swell the tension just before the hatch opens, and the best sequences penned by JFW are when the team first docks and explores the alien vessel.

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