



# The Glorious Becoming

*Lee Stephen*

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It is March of 0012, and change is on the horizon. President Carl Pauling nears retirement. Nightman control of Novosibirsk is reaching new heights. And in the depths of The Machine, a revelation about the Alien War has put the Fourteenth on a collision course with the truth. Embarking on a mission that threatens the very fabric of the war, Scott and his comrades seek to reveal an enemy far more dangerous than any they've faced on the battlefield. Far more sinister than anything from the stars.

## **The Glorious Becoming Details**

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### Michael says

#### I want more!!!! Now!!!!

1 Day a book. 4 days and I am hooked! I need more now unbelievable story and the twists keep coming. A great author.

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### Ben Babcock says

**Full disclosure:** I received this book as a gift from the author. Yes, authors, you heard that right: you can send *me* your book, and I will read and review it. Hey, I'll make it even easier for you: it doesn't even have to be your book. You can send me *any* book! I have just a few suggestions if you aren't sure what I would like. This message brought to you by the Organization for Ben Likes to Read Books.

So here we are again. The *Epic* series had kind of fallen off my radar for a while. I read the previous book, *Hero* way back in 2009! So it has been quite some time since I last hung out with Scott Remington and the Fourteenth of Novosibirsk. That's a shame; I don't exactly have time to re-read *Hero*, so I had to rely on any kind of recap available in *Glorious Becoming* to remember what was going on. Some of it came back easily, while other parts are probably still missing. The tight arc for this series' plot and characters means that you are better off starting with the first book.

Four books in and Scott and his comrades are fighting a war that doesn't make sense. Aliens—the Bakma, Ceratopians, and Ithini—attack Earth intermittently, and the Earth Defense Network (EDEN) repels them. Why would aliens send down ground troops when they can just wipe us out with some carefully-placed tactical nukes? Or devastate our communications by detonating nuclear devices in the upper atmosphere? Or sneeze on us with their alien germs? Ground invasions make no sense.

But Lee Stephen knows this. It's part of the plan. The war is a facade, a means to an end, and in *Glorious Becoming*, that end starts becoming clearer. (It is not, at least from the human perspective, all that glorious.) Up until now we've only had the fuzziest notion that what Judge Benjamin Archer and his co-conspirators are doing is not above board. Now the specifics of the situation are coming into focus, and it's not good. The Bakma and Ithini are pawns; the Ceratopians *might* be good guys; there's another alien species out there that holds one sex of each species hostage to ensure their obedience ... I won't go into spoiler territory here, but suffice it to say that if the previous books left you frustrated by the vagueness of the conspiracy angle, *Glorious Becoming* delivers some much-needed information.

I'm loving the conspiracy, not so much the uncovering of it. At times, Scott and the Fourteenth resemble the kids from *Scooby-Doo*, though they don't so much split up and look for clues as they do sit around carefully honing their theories. Except that, from a few disparate pieces of information and some suspicions, they manage to close in on the truth rather easily. To be fair, Stephen lampshades this, with Svetlana pointing out that one can't just jump to conclusions ... but they kind of *do*. Moreover, the entire scene struck me as a clumsy way to advance the plot and move our protagonists from ignorance to enlightenment. Four books in, I'm glad we're starting to get traction on this, but I could have gone for something more subtle, something as stylish and cleverly executed as the devious plot against *Novosibirsk* orchestrated by Archer. That was cool.

So Archer, Blake, and the other conspiring judges are bad guys, right? Yes. Maybe. I don't know ... they're

lying, certainly, but it also seems like they genuinely believe what they are doing is in humanity's best interests. It's a fine line, and maybe they've crossed it—but we don't have all the information yet. This moral ambiguity is what keeps *Glorious Becoming's* antagonists from slipping down the steep slope of nefarious villainery right down to the moustache-twirling bottom. They are probably doing the wrong thing—but maybe they are doing it for the right reasons?

Isn't that, after all, what Scott and his crew spend most of their time doing? *Glorious Becoming* really kicks off after Scott, Esther, Jay, Auric, and Boris are sent to *Cairo* on a clandestine operation. That's right: EDEN operations being sent to spy on another EDEN base. That General Thoor is one messed up dude. The trouble is, Scott, despite all the things he has done during his fall into the Nightmen, is still a nice guy. He likes (maybe more than likes) his new commanding officer, Captain Natalie Rockwell. She likes (probably more than likes) him. So he wrestles with the ethics of lying to her, pretending to be the genuine article when in fact he is planning to betray her and orchestrate a Ceratopian jailbreak before returning to *Novosibirsk*. At the same time, he has to deal with the fractures within his squad as a result of conflict between him and Esther and Varvara's cuckolding of Jay from the previous book. Oh, and Thoor keeps holding Svetlana over Scott's head like a ... well, like a hostage.

The acronym for the situation is "FUBAR". Or, in this case, "VUBAR", since Stephen insists on using made-up profanity. But it is messed up: ethically, politically, and personally. War is hell.

While we're on the matter of personal problems and Scott and Esther and Scott and Natalie (and Scott and Svetlana, for that matter) ... can we *please* stop having all these women fall for Scott? I know he's rugged and handsome and has that Midwestern All-American Heart-of-Gold Good-Soldier Award grafted to his chest ... but it's just awkward. It's not that Scott's a Mary Sue—he certainly has his flaws—but he can't go for a walk without stumbling over a chick who's hot for him.

*Glorious Becoming* also adds an unconventional cast member: Tauthin the Bakma has an expanded role. Scott makes some progress communicating/interrogating him, and Svetlana does even better. Not only does his alien perspective provide a valuable source of exposition, but I always enjoy when we get to know "the enemy" better. Svetlana's compassion, and Tauthin's decision towards the end of the book despite everything else he does, provide an intriguing set up for things to come even as they demonstrate that not all is black and white. Some enemies are enemies, some could be allies, and some are probably a fair way in between.

It's difficult for me to compare this book to its predecessors because of the large gap—but I'll try. Whereas the previous books have focused a lot on action and chronicling Scott's rise through the ranks to a position of leadership, *Glorious Becoming* puts on the brakes in that respect. There are a few action scenes—particularly the harrowing sequence after Scott's team's cover is blown in *Cairo*—but the bulk of this book consists of suspense and the gradual unspooling of mystery. Thanks to the clandestine operation at *Cairo*, Archer's plot against *Novosibirsk*, and yes, the romantic shenanigans, *Glorious Becoming* is a solid story in its own right. On the other hand, in many ways it also feels like a bridge into the next book, where I presume the new political reality in which Scott finds himself will require dramatic changes in tactics and priorities.

Military science fiction, particularly near-future stuff, isn't always my cup of tea. I'm more about the technology and its implications, and aside from some cool fighter jets and an alien spaceship, that's largely absent from the *Epic* series. Fighting a war against extraterrestrials has led to a few advances, but from what we get to see, life outside the military is pretty much like it is in the present day. What the series lacks in gadgets, though, it makes up for in story—intriguing ideas about wars that aren't really wars and alien chess games in which Earth, and humanity, are just a tiny corner of a galactic gambit.

**My reviews of the *Epic* series:**

← *Hero*

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### **Rbjumbob says**

The entire series a fun read. Really just more fun space opera type stuff.

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### **Mad-robot says**

One of the problems with books in a series is that you can fall out of touch with the characters. Unfortunately for me, that has happened with this series. Having read the previous books so long ago, I never got back into the vibe of the series and thus the book really lacked.

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### **Randy says**

SPOILERS WITHIN!!!! READ AT OWN PERIL!!!!

Where to begin?

Let's say you read my other reviews of the Epic series by Lee Stephen, you would notice that I adore these books. Would *The Glorious Becoming* be any different?

Hmmm.. Nope!

Simply put, *The Glorious Becoming* is ... glorious!

Honestly, I never really forgot about Epic, even though it's been 3 years since *Hero* (Epic 3) the story of Scott Remington has been settling in the back of my mind since the last few pages of *Hero*. That's how it always happens, you get a book you can't put down and you really never want it to end but it does and you're floored by what you just read. Every book in the epic series has had this affect on me, even though most of my reviews have me saying how hard it'll be for the next novel to be better, here I am again gushing over the latest entry into the series and again saying how hard the next book will be to top this one.

Faith plays a major role in the Epic books, and *The Glorious Becoming* is no different. A lot of things have happened to Scott over the last year, I know it's crazy of all the things that has happened to Scott only a year really has passed in Novosibirsk, Thoor is still a pain in the Fourteenth's side and Scott is still dealing with the loss of his fiancée Nicole. That being said a new relationship is starting to show with Svetlana and though things were looking bleak in the past, faith has come back into Scott's life and he takes more caution in his actions this time around. It's a testament to what really has happened to Scott to consider for a second that he even can acknowledge God in a positive light again, but he has the help of his friends to guide him along the way. Esther was introduced in *Hero* and she has a major role in TGB. A major revelation is told by Esther that completely shakes Scott to the core, it changes his entire perspective on the young scout and even puts the mission that Thoor gives to him and his friends in jeopardy. I loved this sequence in the book, the dialogue felt so real, just like a conversation you'd happen to pick up in a given day. Svetlana is again being

set up as Scott's next love interest since she's the one person that has been guiding Scott from "the dark side" the most, all barriers fall when both talk and it's also something I'm excited to see in future releases. I really enjoyed the new character Natalie Rockwell, I found her to be very down to Earth and even in the book Scott relates her to Nicole many times. It's gut wrenching to see the choices Scott has to make to ensure the survival of his friends and Earth in general. The ending of the book had me at a loss for words, I totally didn't see it coming, perhaps the best ending to a novel in a long long time for me.

I can go on and on about the book, this simply put is the best writing Lee has written to date, not taking about from his past books. TGB has everything you need in a fantastic story, just the dialogue between the characters could pass for a bestselling romantic novel but with all these aliens running around, and government conspiracies it just adds to the fantastic reading in the end! All I can say is ENEMY ONE! When! When! When!

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### **Andrew Rose says**

One of the best books I've read in a long time. I am thrilled that there can be science fiction what has a christian aspect where they are not the bad guys by default. The story is doesn't drag and the characters are not only believable but also people you want to root for. The deeper into the story you go the more angles the story has. I can't wait for the next installment.

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### **Jim says**

I keep giving these books high ratings although I'm getting a little ticked off at the author. He's got this hero guy wallowing in the death of his fiancé while he's now got a whole unit to worry about. He's also becoming a full-fledged wimp, almost coming out of it during the latter part of the book. He's taking way too much off a subordinate Scout who he should have shot about three times by now.

Yeah, the book does bring out the emotions in it's readers. I've fallen for the writing in the same way I think you will, if you can stomach the love story gone sour, or Romeo and Juliet and the aliens, themes running throughout the book. While the writing is very good, the story is really unbelievably complicated. You've got Scott Remington running off on a "secret" mission that everyone knows about and he's dragged four of his Unit 14 people with him, three of which are the absolute worst people he could ever take on a mission of any kind. And then, when he's got his hands full of love sick Scout, he finds his new, temporary superior officer, is a female Captain! Scott Remington can't handle dead females much less a live one equal or even higher in rank. You just know nothing good is going to come of this mission.

Then, towards the last of the book, things start getting interesting. Everything we've known and read about up to this point goes away! How the heck the author is going to get this mess straightened out is beyond me. No wonder it's taken so long to get the 5th book written and published. What was promised to be out in 2015 didn't happen and there's no word on when Epic 5 will be published. Oh, and couldn't somebody come up with a better series title than just, "Epic"? Very, very lame. Good thing the writer is good or this would have been a very, very bad review.

Start at the beginning with Epic #1, "Dawn of Destiny" and read the entire series. If you don't, forget about understanding anything about what's going on. And you apparently have plenty of time to read the first four books since book 5 is still a ways off, or so it seems.

## Niggledafiggle says

I wanted to score this a 2 but couldn't, because while I didn't enjoy it it still had some vestiges of good writing, so what happened to reduce my score based on other books?

The general focus, at least in the other books, is action in glorious sci-fi military style with the great addition of scheming in EDEN command and the necessary character relationships. But *The Glorious Becoming* puts the brakes on pretty hard when it comes to action and becomes chock full of personal relationships, conspiracy, and a despised procession of Scott Remington romances.

The change in tone was something I was unprepared for, but regardless of that I was getting into the whole unravelling of long kept secrets when it came to the Ceratopian and Bakma war. But I was constantly dragged down by Scott's stupid, and what I saw as unnecessary struggles with Sveta, Esther and the newly introduced Captain Rockwell (Natalie) in what I can only call 'groan out loud' scenes. From Esther's spiteful attitude after declaring her love (in an amazingly retarded fashion) and the blame placed on Scott, all the way to the shambles that is Scott and Sveta. Although I did surprisingly enjoy Natalie and Scott's relationship but just couldn't believe it after everything that had happened.

Suffice to say I grew sick of it fairly quickly, and I found myself not enjoying the book nearly as much as before with the new-found replacement of action with a string of women following Scott's path. A much better track would've been if Scott had acted more as a commanding officer and soldier in an alien war and less as a romance novel character. When a young soldier is reprimanding their commanding officer on multiple occasions, one cannot help but notice the road leading off from military realism and towards typical character 'romance drama' that doesn't belong in military focused books (at least from the soldier's perspective).

Also the new series of chapter dedicated to Falcon platoon and the tie in between them and the bigger picture was a cool addition, but the perspective of the character who shows this for the majority was not. Catalina is an insufferable character to read through, always emotional and almost never professional, despite her desire to become the next Remington or Donner of Falcon platoon (which I laughed at when I first read that passage). I found it myself unable to sympathize with her, which I managed to do with mostly every other character, even Esther. Reading her chapters were a chore to say the least, and the constant blaming of others was just icing to a bitter cake. I think anyone else would've been better barring Tom ("Racist cracker!" He would no doubt say).

Despite all that though there is good, the introduction of Vector squad was very welcome as was the return to EDEN command, with the always entertaining Russian judges Torokin and Grinkov, and Judge Archer's company of conspirators. The characters who we know and love such as Jayden, David, Flopper and of course Becan make their return, with Becan never failing to make me smile. And the new addition of Tauthin, a sympathetic alien captured by Scott.

So yeah, not a horrible book but a turn down what I would call the wrong track, a sappy romance novel hides deep below occasionally surfacing. I was disappointed, but have hopes the the next instalment 'Enemy One' will herald a return back to the military sci-fi action I love to read and a return onto the right track.

