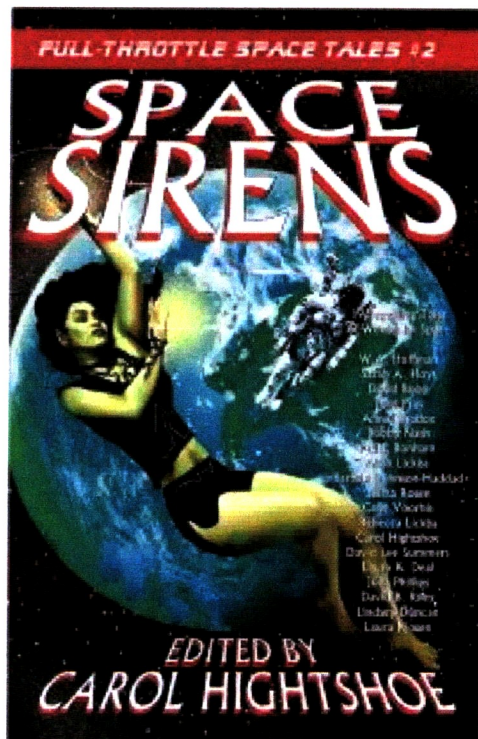




(The Denver Post)

series about a modern pulp hero invented by Hard Case Crime founder Charles Ardai.

The first book is "as told to James Reasoner." Reasoner is an expert on the Civil War and brings this expertise to the story.

At a reception at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, a strange woman approaches Gabriel Hunt and his brother with a package. Before she can deliver it, guns are drawn, and the woman is kidnapped.

The only clue is a broken bottle wrapped in a military flag from the Civil War. Tracing the flag takes Hunt to a Central American jungle and a valley preserved from an earlier time, where he dodges assassins and meets a beautiful museum director. Readers are tipped off to the valley's secret from the book's title long before the characters know.

This is the type of story that gave rise to the cliché of "nonstop action." A large body count trails Hunt, and there's never a long pause between attacks.

"Space Sirens," edited by Carol Hightshoe, \$17.95

The second volume of local publisher Flying Pen Press' Full-Throttle Space Tales has the theme of women in space. Ten of the 19 stories are by Colorado writers. Besides featuring heroines, the most striking feature of this collection is how many stories involve mining either in space or on a planet.

My three favorites: "Outpost 6," by Julia Philips about the new doctor on a backwater planet (and a mining accident); "Real Hero," by W. A. Hoffman, about a kidnapped singer and her captor; and "Ruler," by David B. Riley, about a princess appointed a planet's governor.



(The Denver Post)