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Pushing Ice



Synopsis

2057. Humanity has raised exploiting the solar system to an art form. Bella Lind and the crew of her nuclear-powered ship, the Rockhopper, push ice. They mine comets. And they're good at it. The Rockhopper is nearing the end of its current mission cycle, and everyone is desperate for some much-needed R & R, when startling news arrives from Saturn: Janus, one of Saturn's ice moons, has inexplicably left its natural orbit and is now heading out of the solar system at high speed. As layers of camouflage fall away, it becomes clear that Janus was never a moon in the first place. It's some kind of machine - and it is now headed toward a fuzzily glimpsed artifact 260 light-years away. The Rockhopper is the only ship anywhere near Janus, and Bella Lind is ordered to shadow it for the few vital days before it falls forever out of reach. In accepting this mission, she sets her ship and her crew on a collision course with destiny - for Janus has more surprises in store, and not all of them are welcome.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In a number of ways, it's a less brutal story than are most of his, but in at least one way - the relationship between the two protagonists, Bella and Svetlana - it contains a more brutal relationship than any I remember in any of his other books. Brutal for the raw emotional attachment between the two. As for the story and the underlying science, both take the reader to shockingly unexpected places, and, as always, Reynolds's science is both hard science and uncompromisingly hard simultaneously. Me, myself, I prefer my physics to have more "wobble room" than the unapologetically Relativity-governed universes in which his tales play out. Frankly, from nearly

anyone besides Reynolds, I find such Relativity -constrained tales claustrophobic at best and boringly banal at worst...except when its Reynolds. In his hands, the Laws of Physics that we appear to have been immutably, inescapably dealt nonetheless suggests (with all the plausibility I require) the possibility of a future for Humanity out in the stars that can be a grand adventure for us all. It is the rare hard science writer that offers a milieu in which satisfying space opera is a plausible future. I can't think of more than a handful of writers who have pulled it off, and none of them close to the equal of Reynolds. Pushing Ice is not his best, most polished work - a premonitory sense that I've had about it for years, which is probably why I had put off reading it until there was nothing else left of him to read (to date), but., though my premonition was correct, it was overly harsh. There is much too much on offer in Pushing Ice to let it go unread. Yes, by his standards, it's got a few flaws. By the standards of all but his very few fellows at the top of the contemporary Sci-Fi pyramid, it's that rare book rigidly bound by the Laws of Science that still abounds in magical adventure.

NOTE: THIS REVIEW CONTAINS NO SPOILERS! Pushing Ice is the first Alastair Reynolds book I had the pleasure to read, and as such I didn't know exactly what to expect when I started it. What I found was a pleasant surprise - a highly intelligent story busting with mind blowing ideas, page-turner mysteries and astonishingly accurate technological descriptions. The scope of the story is huge. The story is essentially divided into three parts, and each of them feels very different from the other two, while still managing to feel like part of a cohesive whole. The ideas get bigger and bigger as the pages turn, until an ending that left my brain numb for hours after I read it. So the story truly delivers on the fronts of being intriguing and making the reader think. The story delivers a bit less on the front of making the reader feel, though. I cared about the characters when reading, but they were mostly one dimensional in the sense that they never really evolved in the story. Dialog also felt not entirely natural at parts, and while the story is based on some very heated emotions between two of its major characters, it's not entirely convincing. One more note - if you are going to read this book, better make sure you have some basic understanding of physics, computer science and engineering. As the story follows the crew of a spaceship in a very hard sci-fi story, the kind of trouble they struggle with often has to do either with a ship malfunction (which they fix with engineering) or some sort of outer-space physics related trouble (one memorable sequence has the crew figuring out a way to spin their long-as-a-skyscraper ship around as quickly as possible without tearing it in half from the inertia) . As such, it's better to have some idea about such concepts.

I see this excellent novel as a partly a reimagining of Clarke's Rendezvous with Rama--with a dash of

Larry Niven thrown in. I've seen some of the reviews complaining about character development. To the extent that characters are not deeply developed, that is just a characteristic of plot driven science fiction. The characters are certainly developed thoroughly in terms of what is a fairly multifaceted plot as it develops over time. This is epic, large vision and time scale science fiction of the sort that Clarke wrote, but it also deals much more with the human psychological consequences of events. The writing style is also excellent here, and there is some almost whimsical imagining of aliens as physical beings. Overall it is very well done sophisticated and entertaining science fiction. One of his better novels.

I very much enjoyed reading this. It is a page turner, I think I knocked it out in two days, which is to say I could not stop reading it, even when there were other things I should have been doing...Fantastic story, interesting concept, complex personalities, strong female roles, good pacing, and I couldn't predict the last few chapters, which is always nice. I think my only complaint might be that it was difficult at time to recognize the giant leaps in the timeline right away, and I had to go back and reread a few pages to make sense of what just happened. A little editing there might clean this up, but it may just be me, and others won't have this issue. The book itself is relatively clean of simple editing errors, which is a nice change of pace. I've been reading a lot of independent fiction on , and sometimes it can get in the way of enjoying a novel. I only ran across a handful of those type of errors, so nothing to worry about.

Now I'm pissed there isn't another one. How do you live when you've lived forever? When there doesn't seem to be a be anymore? Poke holes in a few of the pieces of you will, like where exactly, and how they picked up that cube. Anyway I mostly liked it. "This is Bella Lind and this is CNN" or something.

the other reviewers so right this is flat out an amazing book. written so very well. no need to rehash what others have said, just know yet another reader just had an amazing experience with this stellar fantastic work of fiction. fyi due to the many and complex story lines understand that the first few chapters are slower than the rest of the book due to the necessary foundation of details to get you going later in the book.

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