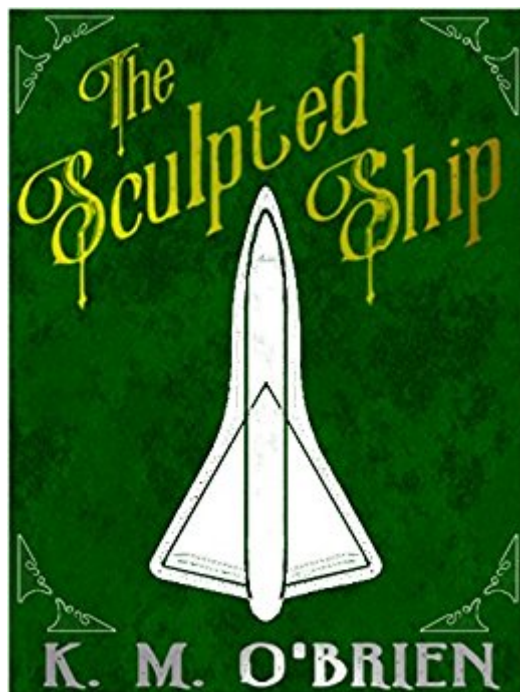


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The Sculpted Ship



Synopsis

Starship Repair and Society Manners Starship engineer Anailu Xindar dreamed of owning her own ship, but she didn't find the courage to actually go for it until she was forced out of her safe, comfortable job. She goes shopping for a cheap, practical freighter, but she ends up buying a rare, beautiful, but crippled luxury ship. Getting it into space will take more than her technical skills. She'll have to go way outside her comfort zone to brave the dangers of safaris, formal dinners, a rude professor, and worst of all, a fashion designer. She may even have to make some friends... and enemies. "The Sculpted Ship" is set on the outskirts of an interstellar empire where FTL travel is commonplace but intelligent robots are rare and expensive. Though the Iris Empire has stood for a thousand years, a talented individual can find plenty of opportunity. But the nobility of this empire guards its privileges jealously.

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Customer Reviews

I thoroughly enjoyed The Sculpted Ship. When I read the sample chapter prior to purchasing this book, I had the impression that The Sculpted Ship would be heavy on character development with a

light plot, similar to books like Nathan Lowell's Solar Clipper series. And for the first half of the book, that's largely what it was. I not trying to imply that the pacing was slow for the first half of the book (it grabbed my attention in the first paragraph and kept it for the entire book), just that the plot was driven by the protagonist's development into a ship's captain. This changes in the second half of the book into something very different and introduces plot conflicts that have me excited to read any future books written by the author. The book begins with a very shy ship's engineer, Anailu Xindar, leaving her previous job and starting on her dream of captaining a ship of her own. Although she starts out with a simple, practical plan, she takes a risk on purchasing a derelict ship of the same model that had inspired her to go into space in the first place. However, there are some very unusual secrets about this ship, and about Anailu herself that come to light as the story progresses. I will say nothing further to avoid spoiling the story for any other readers. On the technical side, I found the editing of the writing to be first rate. The story flowed well, even when moving the focus away from character development. Anailu was a very likable character and shows real growth as she deals with the many challenges of her unique ship, and the author has left me very excited for any follow-on books. I highly recommend this book to fans of science fiction/space opera of all ages.

A very likeable protagonist and an intriguing future are key to an enjoyable experience reading *The Sculpted Ship*. The world that the protagonist, Anailu, inhabits is not perfect, in fact there are many greedy, manipulating, violence-prone characters that Anailu must go up against. Yet, like Anailu herself, there are also characters drawn in the story that are motivated by a hopeful worldview that allows them to team with Anailu to move the plot forward. I love a good zombie or post-apocalyptic world as much as anyone else, but it was a nice change of pace to see such optimism. More than this, Anailu is someone I would like to meet and get to know. She could be a good friend. As much as I enjoyed the book and hated to see it end, I am giving 4 stars, rather than 5 due to some classic first time author problems. While he does a good job of drawing out several realistic characters, some are 2 dimensional and SF tropes (e.g. shiftless pawn broker with a shop in a seedy and dangerous part of town). The pacing is uneven. For example, the ending feels thrown together with an improbable series of events that all succeed without a hitch to wrap up the story. This is so in contrast with the care taken in the first half of the book to show Anailu working through obstacles to succeed. Finally, if poor grammar bugs you, there are a lot of mistakes that should have been driven out through good editing. I didn't really see spelling errors, but sentence structure is messed up badly in multiple places with missing articles, verbs, and conjunctions. Each time I hit one, it pulled me out of the story and forced me to look at the words. Nonetheless, really enjoyed the story and

can't wait for a sequel. I'm rooting for the author to bust out with a second book that carries forward the themes of the first book as well as the maturity of a second novel.

This first novel is a little rough, but very entertaining. Not heavy into action and drama, but a lot of development and mystery. It reminds me greatly of an all time favorite of mine, Nathan Lowell's Solar Clipper series. The writing is not quite as polished or eloquent, and there are clear editing issues still present, but they only slightly diminish my enjoyment of the book. One thing I felt could be improved upon is the presence of tiny chapters. The content of them was fine, but if they were more fleshed out it would have made a better contribution to the flow of the story. It would have changed the pacing to do so, but overall would have made the story have more sense of world building to go along with the already strong main character development. Will certainly read the next installment as soon as it is available.

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