



The Wooden Spaceships

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Twenty-three years ago, the inhabitants of Overland left Land to escape the Plague. In this sequel to The Ragged Astronaut, the survivors of Land bring an ultimatum-- submit or die of the Plague.

The Wooden Spaceships Details

Date : Published July 1989 by Baen (first published 1988)

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Author : Bob Shaw

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From Reader Review The Wooden Spaceships for online ebook

Sarah Sammis says

I love Bob Shaw's books. This one was my first of his that I read.

Derek says

This book is in the unfortunate position of being the rather ordinary middle child bookended by exceptional siblings.

Part of the fun of *The Ragged Astronauts* was the notion of a pre-Newtonian culture coming to grips with the reality of weightlessness, and that theme carried forward is a major strength of this book (as the astronauts realize that a weightless object still hits you really hard, and so forth). The author finds several ways to explore it here.

Unfortunately he also made some strange decisions about the plot and setting. The people of the planet Land have migrated to the sister planet Overland and must rebuild their civilization in the wilderness. While this set up screams for a Wild West or New World style adventure (especially as the planet Overland has this stuff called "metal" that might be extremely useful), Shaw instead moves the clock forward to some twenty or thirty years after colonization. The planet is still mostly uninhabited, but the heavy lifting of establishing governance and an economy has been accomplished. What's more, Overland has a nearly-identical ecology to Land, and is uninhabited by human natives. This, frankly, sucked most of the wind out of my sails.

The book is unevenly divided between repelling an invading force from the planet Land--rocket and balloon combat in the weightless zone between the planets, in their shared atmosphere--and later a primitive rocket trip to the distant planet Farland. The plot lines play out in parallel and are thematically linked by the self-destructive character of Toller Maraqueine. This arrangement lacks the cohesion of *The Ragged Astronauts*, and in fact the results and discoveries of the Farland expedition (the alien superscience) crush the focus on hard science and alternative technologies.

Gaurav says

I picked up this quite by chance from a discarded 20-year old lot at my local bookstore, and while I'd not read anything by Bob Shaw earlier, I still found the plot a rather intriguing concept - twin planets sharing a common atmosphere/ interstellar rivalry and war/ planetary exploration. Also very nice was the simple narrative technique used by Shaw throughout the book.

I rank the book a 4 on 5 because the end of the story seems hurried, almost as if Shaw reached the assigned word limit. Consequently, the climax does not do ample justice to the rest of the story. But read it to enjoy the simplicity and magic of the mid-20th century authors.

Bill says

The sequel to The Ragged Astronauts. If you liked the first one, you can't go wrong here. Shaw has a writing style that really holds your interest.

Since it's a sequel I can't really go into much detail without spoiling the first book.

Carmine Apra' says

Let's put it clear: the actual rating for this book should have been at least 4 stars and a half. Two stories converging towards an amazing finale, an epic battle in space that leaves you breathless, a breathtaking reckless journey to an alien world, the following... well, well, well, let's not spoil it.

This is a true 'must read', really better than its predecessor. Very well written and wonderfully describing all the scientific gaps a civilization has to fill in in order to travel safely into space.

Well, wow, I'm really looking forward to read the third part of this 'Land and Overland' cycle.

Chrissey Harrison says

Bob Shaw continues his fictional speculation of life on a binary planet system: Land and Overland. The Wooden Spaceships follows two characters, Toller Maraqueine, who is dealing with an existential crisis of purpose, and Barton Drumme, who stumbles upon a strange and uncanny place on their new home of Overland. The trajectories of the two characters eventually meet and catalyse an epic, though misguided, attempt to cross the gulf of space in a spaceship made of wood.

The binary pairing of Land and Overland offers a gentle stroll from ground level to a place outside the gravitational pull of the planets, which invites the reader to speculate on what humans might have attempted and achieved had we not needed such massive rockets to overcome Earth's gravitational pull.

Detailed, speculative and exciting classic sci-fi.

John says

series book PT2

Keith says

Sequel to "The Ragged Astronauts"

Nina says

I started this and just could not finish it, not good read at all.

Luís Baixinho says

Review no segundo volume.
