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The Cinder Spires: The Aeronaut's Windlass



Synopsis

Jim Butcher, the #1 New York Times bestselling author of the Dresden Files and the Codex Alera novels, conjures up a new series set in a fantastic world of noble families, steam-powered technology, and magic-wielding warriors. Since time immemorial, the Spires have sheltered humanity. Within their halls, the ruling aristocratic houses develop scientific marvels, foster trade alliances, and maintain fleets of airships to keep the peace. Captain Grimm commands the merchant ship Predator. Loyal to Spire Albion, he has taken their side in the cold war with Spire Aurora, disrupting the enemy's shipping lines by attacking their cargo vessels. But when the Predator is damaged in combat, Grimm joins a team of Albion agents on a vital mission in exchange for fully restoring his ship. And as Grimm undertakes this task, he learns that the conflict between the Spires is merely a premonition of things to come. Humanity's ancient enemy, silent for more than ten thousand years, has begun to stir once more. And death will follow in its wake. . . .

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have literally been waiting years for this book. Literally. Years. Ever since I heard that Jim Butcher was penning a steampunk series, I have been slaving to read the first Cinder Spires book. And Butcher doesn't disappoint in "The Aeronaut's Windlass," which feels like the love child of Final Fantasy and Horatio Hornblower -- a rousing, action-packed fantasy set in a world where everyone lives on vast nation-like Spires, and crystal-powered airships sail through the clouds. His rich imagination is on full display here, and he weaves together a fast-moving, multi-layered story that

promises to become even more epic in the installments to come. After the AMS Predator is badly damaged in battle by an Auroran battlecruiser, Captain Grimm has to face the possibility that his motley crew may lose their home for good. But then the forces of Spire Aurora attack the people of Spire Albion, and Grimm is one of the brave people who manage to repel them... or rather, most of them. The Spirearch suspects treachery, so he enlists Grimm -- an honorable outcast -- along with a trio of capable new Guard trainees, a snobby cat and a pair of very, very eccentric Etherealists. But their seemingly-simple mission quickly becomes much more complicated when they arrive at Hubble Landing, and Grimm begins to realize that traps are being set up all around them. Mysterious attacks, rumors of horrors in the depths of the Spire, and Auroran spies all begin to coalesce around Grimm and his crew, trapping some and wounding others -- but the worst is yet to come, as one of the etherealists senses a terrible enemy lurking nearby... Jim Butcher is well-known for solid world-building, and "The Aeronaut's Windlass" is no disappointment.

I finally caved, and started listening to Jim Butcher's THE DRESDEN FILES in audio this year, so while I'm still busy playing catch-up on that series, I was excited to be able to get in on the ground floor of THE CINDER SPIRES. The humour was not along the same lines as what I've come to equate with this author, but the world-building and characters were, and two out of three ain't bad! And, in all fairness, Rowling probably made this novel 3/3 for cat people, I just can't in good conscience admit to that for fear of retaliation from my fur babies. Book 1 has to be THE trickiest installment to write in my opinion because they have the huge task of making an awesome first impression while also developing the protagonists / secondaries / world enough that readers want more without reaching the critical information overload point of no return. Butcher cheated a bit by buying himself extra fleshing out time with his 640 pages, but overall he used the added length to his advantage with epic airship shoot outs, Steampunk-ish gadgets / beasties, and kickass story telling. I enjoyed the alternating POVs; the separations were distinct, the locations were identified at the start of each chapter, and once I got to know the characters, it was easy to pick out which one was MC-ing just by their dialogues, and narrative styles. I bring this up because this may very well end up being one of the bigger critique points of this series; this particular style can be difficult to follow if you spread out your reading sessions, so essentially what I'm getting at is that this is not a lunch break • kind of novel!

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