



## Diving into the Wreck

*Kristine Kathryn Rusch*

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Boss loves to dive historical ships, derelict spacecraft found adrift in the blackness between the stars. Sometimes she salvages for money, but mostly she's an active historian. She wants to know about the past—to experience it firsthand. Once she's dived the ship, she'll either leave it for others to find or file a claim so that she can bring tourists to dive it as well. It's a good life for a tough loner, with more interest in artifacts than people.

Then one day, Boss finds the claim of a lifetime: an enormous spacecraft, incredibly old, and apparently Earth-made. It's impossible for something so old, built in the days before Faster Than Light travel, to have journeyed this far from Earth. It shouldn't be here. It can't be here. And yet, it is. Boss's curiosity is up, and she's determined to investigate. She hires a group of divers to explore the wreck with her, the best team she can assemble. But some secrets are best kept hidden, and the past won't give up its treasures without exacting a price in blood.

## Diving into the Wreck Details

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## From Reader Review Diving into the Wreck for online ebook

### **Sherwood Smith says**

This was one of those books that I wanted to be something else. I like tough heroines, but Boss was just so tough, so monotone and distant, often summarizing rather than interacting, that I gradually lost interest, especially when the diving scenes peeled off characters but didn't really seem to add up to much.

I was wildly curious about the room of lost souls, but as the mystery was solved, it became less and less interesting. Boss's family dynamic was probably the most intriguing bit of the novel, but I've seen that dynamic so many times, I finally finished the book without much reaction.

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### **Simcha Lazarus says**

While I have been an avid fantasy reader for most of my life, it's only recently that I've begun reading science fiction, and those have been mostly older classics. But after reading a couple of interesting reviews of Kristine Rusch's *Diving into the Wreck*, I decided that it was time to expand my horizons and try some more modern SF. I also have no experience with SF space adventures- I've never even watched a single episode of *Star Track* or any of the *Star Wars* films- so this was my opportunity to try some space adventuring as well.

*Diving into the Wreck* is divided into three sections, each of which reads like a short novella, but which build on each other to tell a single story. The first two parts were actually each previously published as separate short stories and each won Asimov's Readers Choice Award for Best Novella.

Boss, as she is known to her friends and co-workers, is a professional wreck diver who spends her days exploring deep space in search of abandoned spaceships. These ancient discoveries are explored and studied and will often be turned over to museums for preservation or will become sites for tourists to visit. But each night Boss is tormented by nightmares of the day, almost forty years ago, when her mother disappeared into the Room of Lost Souls, leaving behind her young daughter.

Boss's experiences have turned her into a solitary figure who prefers to live and work alone, except when she requires a team to help her investigate a newly discovered wreck. In the first part of the book, Boss comes across a lost ship, while returning from a salvage operation, which she excitedly tracks down. But when she reached the calculated location, Boss is shocked by her possible discovery and she rushes home to do some research and put together a diving team.

The story then follows the team's preparations for the dive and the surprising discoveries that they make- discoveries that come at a severe cost to Boss and her team. In the following two sections, Boss, who is living with the repercussions of her earlier diving adventure, is given the opportunity to explore the place of her nightmares, where her mother had disappeared. But her explorations will uncover some unexpected answers that will lead Boss to take a stand against those who would use her discoveries for dangerous purposes.

*Diving into the Wreck* is an exciting, fast paced adventure that, once I started, I had a hard time putting down. I have never been deep sea diving, but Rusch's vivid, and often eerie, descriptions of Boss's dives into

the depths of outer space, almost make me feel like I have.

I spend most of my time going over and over my equipment looking for flaws. Much as I want to dive this wreck—and I have since the first moment I saw her—I’m scared of the deep and the dark and the unknown. Those first few instances of weightlessness always catch me by surprise, always remind me that what I do is somehow unnatural....Descending into the hatch is trickier than it looks on the recordings. The edges are sharper; I have to be careful about where I put my hands. ...

Gravity isn’t there to pull at me. I can hear my own breathing, harsh and insistent, and I wonder if I shouldn’t have taken Squishy’s advice: a ten/ten/ten split on my first dive instead of a twenty/twenty/twenty. It takes less time to reach the wreck now; we get inside in nine minutes flat. I would’ve had time to do a bit of acclimatizing and to have a productive dive the next time.

Diving into the Wreck is focused largely on Boss, from whose perspective the story is told. She is a complex character who prefers to maintain her distance from others but is also watchful and protective of those in her care. Throughout the story, Boss’s character slowly evolves as she deals with the repercussions of tragic events from the past, and attempts to find a way to right some of those wrongs that she herself participated in.

While Boss is a character that readers can easily connect with, unfortunately the same can’t be said for most of the other characters, who were largely left on the sidelines. The reader is briefly told about the other members of Boss’s team, but I didn’t feel that I really got to know any of them. No personal interactions between the team members are described and no relationships seem to develop, which I thought was odd considering that they spent a substantial amount of time confined together on the ship. Even had Boss herself not participated, just recounting that such interactions occurred would have made the other characters seem more real. There were a couple of exceptions- characters who were fleshed out a bit more fully when the story required them- but I felt the story would have affected me a lot more intensely had I felt a deeper connection to more of the characters.

I also felt that the book lacked a clear explanation of what stealth technology is, which would have been appropriate considering that most of the events in the books were centered around it. While the ancient stealth technology is apparently very dangerous, I didn’t understand how it was different from the stealth technology that was currently in use. While I’m not one who requires extensive scientific explanations of complicated technology, just a bit more of an explanation would have been appreciated.

I will admit that I was surprised by how thoroughly engrossed I was by Diving into the Wreck and that it was a lot more readable and entertaining than I had expected. The events in the story, while taking place 5,000 years in the future, were still believable enough that I had no trouble following along, and I didn’t feel like I missed anything by not having before read space travel books. The only thing that could have made it better would have been a stronger cast of supporting characters, though perhaps in the sequel the rest of the team will get to share the spotlight.

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**Chris says**

I kinda like the movie *Event Horizon*, a supposedly horror movie about a missing ship. It has a pretty good cast. A couple British actors you know from Masterpiece or the Harry Potter movies, a couple of American actors you know from TV, Sam Neil, and Laurence Fishborne. It should have been a very good movie. The idea was good, a supposedly haunted or possessed spaceship. In fact, the movie was good until the writers decided they need to kill just about everyone off in really stupid ways. It's a movie where I watch the first half and then change the channel.

*Diving into the Wreck* got me thinking about *Event Horizon* because *Wreck* is what *Horizon* should have been.

It's a bit strange that I like Rusch as much as I do because I am more of fantasy fan. I like swords, not ray guns (I'm sure Freud would have something to say about this). I like magic, not hyper drives. It's why I like Star Wars more than Star Trek. Light sabers are funky swords. I first read Rusch when she started her Fey series, and then picked up her Retrieval Artist series. I think Rusch writes better SF than fantasy. *Wreck* is a good example of why.

It's not a perfect book to be sure. The major flaw is that some of the characters introduced at the middle/end of the novel are indistinguishable from each other. The pacing is good, however, and the atmosphere is perfect.

Rusch tells the story of Boss who dives wrecks of spaceships. Think ocean diver but in outer space. She finds an old spaceship that should not, cannot, be where it is, and with a crew, explores it. Then bad stuff happens.

Unlike *Event Horizon*, Rusch takes just the right time to build up to each bad thing. This isn't a slasher horror movie designed to get the highest, bloodiest body count. Rusch doesn't do this. One of Rusch's strengths is her ability to let characters go; she is not afraid to kill characters off. More importantly, though, she doesn't go for the slasher movie killing spree. The deaths have purpose. The deaths are felt. This more than anything helps keep the spooky feeling of the story. Because there is this sense of tension that runs the length of the novel, right at the beginning, because the reader knows something is going to go wrong. We know. It's like a horror movie. "No you bimbo, don't go there! NO, you twit! Take off your F\*\*\*K m\* shoes before trying to run away". That kind of knowing.

BUT . . .

Rusch does not fall into the cliche horror movie idiot character reaction trap. Her characters make mistakes. They make mistakes because they are human and, therefore, flawed like the rest of us. Additionally, she does not go "kill them all" attitude. She keeps the tension but rejects the stupidity.

It works very well.

It's true that perhaps the shockers aren't as shocking as they could be, but the book does raise the issue of how and when to wield power, of the rights and wrongs of testing. Additionally, Boss, the narrator, while likable is not super likable. In fact, you respect her before you like her. She is no where near a Mary Sue. The book might be a start of a series, but easily could also be a stand alone.

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**Mike (the Paladin) says**

Look for you who like this book, I'm sorry. I wanted to like this one, it sounded so good.

In my opinion what we have here is another case of great idea, poor execution. The "hook" here is that our protagonist is a wreck diver. She travels through space looking for derelict or abandoned ships. She then explores them or claims them...sometimes she leads tourists on tours through them.

Okay sounds good huh? The thing is... Well there are several things. I got almost halfway through the book (which is really a series of novellas strung into a longer book) before I returned it to Audible. What we seem to have here is a seemingly half thought out multiverse. First of all it's set 5000+ years in the future. Yet somehow the vacuum suits are only good for 60 minutes of breathable air (I mean come on we can do better than that now). Also in spite of the fact that humans have been "spacefaring" for many centuries their "space suits" not only can't carry more than an hour's air/oxygen everyone seems to live in deadly fear of "sharp edges and corners". Over and over we hear about how the suits can be ruptured by sharp edges...

Our heroine goes on and on about how she's been doing this for many years and is ready for it. then she goes on and on about her panic. I think the writer was going for a semi-horror (maybe something like the first Alien movie) but it never comes off.

So, halfway through I pitched it...to bad. Can't recommend this one.

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### **Carolyn Storer says**

Boss is a loner - she seeks out old ships to dive, not to loot, but for its historical value. She also prefers her own company and doesn't really interact with people or have any friends. When she finds a space ship that is five thousand years old, human made and shouldn't be in this sector of space, she groups together a team to help her explore the ship.

Her interactions with her crew are somewhat cold and matter-of-fact, as is her narration. There's no warmth or show of emotion, to her fellow crew mates or to the reader. But Boss is not hard, just closed off and as we read further the prologue becomes clearer and we get to understand why she is the way she is.

There is no real build up to the story as it jumps in straight away into the action and Boss finding the ship. But we soon realise that this isn't the primary story but the lead up to it. As the story progresses from finding the ship to being hired to find a man who has been lost a place called The Room of Lost Souls, it becomes apparent that this is a personal story, Boss's story and it becomes a personal mission and not just about the exploration of an historical ship or finding The Room.

The story picks up pace about half way through and becomes exciting as Boss learns about The Room of Lost Souls where she last saw her mother alive. She begins to offer glimpses into her past, her pain, her mother's death and her strained relationship with her father and we get to see this more as she is reunited with him after years of ignoring his calls and messages. We begin to learn and understand why she is such a loner and so private. But as we get to know her so do the other characters in the book. She opens up more, shows emotion, especially with the deaths of her friends.

Boss is a complex character and although there is not a huge amount of dialogue in the book we get the feeling of so much history, so much has gone on in her life that she is an immensely interesting character and I enjoyed getting to know her very much. I wish there was a sequel to this book so I could keep up with her

life and get to know her more.

The story is great too and if you are new to science fiction a great book to start as the sci-fi jargon is kept to a minimum and all scientific explanations are easy to follow. I enjoyed the descriptions of Boss's world in space. I must admit the ending surprised me a little - to end with a 'if you can't beat them join them' attitude was quite a change in direction and I felt went against Boss's whole character. However, It didn't ruin my enjoyment of the book and I wasn't disappointed.

Verdict:

I found Diving into the Wreck to be an exciting and thoroughly enjoyable read. For me my favourite part was peeling away the layers of Boss's personality. If you enjoy a strong, complex heroine and an exciting plot, then this is definitely the book for you. I will certainly be checking out Rusch's back catalogue.

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### **Michael says**

I give this one good marks for capturing some of the illusion of the "right stuff" held by the heroes of classic sci fi portrayals of spacefarers. As revealed by Tom Wolfe in his account of the U.S. space race, the prototype is the test pilot Chuck Yeager, who was laconic, a self-reliant loner, brave in a matter of fact way, and a stickler for details. The lead character in this tale, known simply as Boss, fits this profile in a female form. In her first-person narrative told in present tense, we are immediately immersed in the suspense and thrills of her profession, which involves finding and investigating derelict space ships and then making money from their value as historical artifacts or as salvage.

The ship she has found turns out to be a craft from Earth several thousands of years old, before the time they had the capacity to travel to where it lies in interstellar space. Boss' research leads her to infer that the ship is in the class of a military prototype believed to be an experiment in a dangerous form of stealth technology. She needs to pull in a team to do this form of archeology in a safe and competent way and do so in secret to avoid drawing competition from space pirates or interested governments. I loved the details of selecting and harnessing the different people needed for the team and the atmospherics of the space station city where she does her recruiting. In "diving" this first wreck, we get a fine sense of the dark claustrophobic spaces, unknown dangers, and excitement of discovery associated with marine divers exploring sunken ships.

When things go wrong and lives are lost, acrimony and blame begins to bring out the humanity of Boss, otherwise obscured behind her wall of her no-nonsense, obsessive approach to her work. The secrets behind her personality come out in a second part of the book. She is commissioned to explore the mysteries of the "Room of Lost Souls", a place on a remote, abandoned planetary outpost where people disappear. The setting is where she lost her mother Boss was a girl, and the source of a permanent breach with her father. The exploration of this site had some of the same tension of the early scenes of the first "Alien" movie, but without the aliens, it loses some edge.

The third part of the book pulls all the sections together and rather abruptly sets Boss on a quest to carry us into the next books in the series. I am not happy with an element in the mystery that involves an implausibly genetic immunity to some of the adverse outcomes of human exposure to the stealth technology. But I am intrigued enough with Boss and her ways to want to continue with the saga. Other readers also encourage me to pursue her "Retrieval Artist" series, a set of sci fi mystery procedurals that involve the tracking down of humans guilty of crimes against aliens.

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## Melissa McShane says

Kristine Kathryn Rusch's books fill a very specific niche in my reading--serious SF, a little bleak, with some fascinating explorations of alien mindsets. In this case, it's not so much aliens as humans she's exploring, but the central idea is that some humans can think and do things that might as well be alien to everyone else. This novel was constructed from two stories Rusch published in Asimov's, but you can't see the seams. (I think Rusch is a far better short story writer than novelist, and since she's an excellent novelist, you can just imagine how incredible her short fiction is. My point is that I feel she has such a handle on her stories that she understands how they might fit together and how they need to be joined.) The idea is that this woman--her name becomes Boss in the second and third sections, but it looks like just a title in the first, so I don't know what the deal is--leads teams of "divers" into wrecked and abandoned spaceships, just as 21st century explorers might search the ocean depths for treasure. Except Boss cares more about the historical sites, so when she comes across an impossible derelict, she can't pass up the opportunity. Unfortunately for her and her crew, there's something else on that ship that's been forgotten for five thousand years, and once they've found it, there's no way to hide it again.

I get seriously creeped out by underwater stories. You can't see far enough ahead of you, and all sorts of things could be lurking down there. This felt exactly like they were diving in an actual ocean; Rusch puts limitations on her technology that are a lot shorter than we usually see in SF, so the divers have barely an hour to explore on each trip, and getting stuck in a wreck can have deadly consequences. She also plays out the discovery of the ancient artifact (you thought it was an alien creature from what I wrote above, huh? That was on purpose) slowly, so the book also reads like a thriller, possibly by the bastard child of Michael Crichton and Dean Koontz. Despite the fact that they're dealing with a mysterious *thing*, it sometimes seems alive, probably because it has such terrifying powers.

There's a small problem with the transition between the first and second parts of the book, because the story in first section is self-contained, and the second seems to be about something entirely different. It takes a little while for the two stories to connect, but after they do, the transition, in retrospect, doesn't seem so abrupt. Most of what dissatisfied me about the book had to do with the ending. It's a little "rah rah let's all devote our lives to stamping out this evil" and sort of melodramatic. The book did a good job of establishing how serious a threat this technology could be and how hard it would be to stamp it out, so we didn't need Boss reflecting on how the quest was going to consume her whole life but she had to for the sake of humanity and her dead friends.

I'd recommend this book to readers who like their science fiction to fall somewhere between hard SF a la Niven and Pournelle and more character-driven SF like by Moon or possibly Bujold. Also to readers who like a bleak perspective on a future society; some of Rusch's stories could have been written by Thomas Hardy, if he'd lived a century later and didn't like Wessex so much.

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## Bookbrow says

Judging a book by its cover...you have seen this kind of cover before, the babe in a skin tight suit in some space craft, the slanted font with red in a back to the future kind of style, hinting of a military sci fi kind of story. Well one could draw that conclusion with Diving the Wreck by Kristine Kathryn Rusch. I am glad to

say that the book was much more than the cover presented, a novel in three parts with a interesting premise of space divers who salvage wrecks, it has that familiarity of suiting up and going in to the wreck. There was elements of dread and claustrophobia in the tight spaces of the dead ships, a nice element of history, the characters were touched upon but you got a good feel for the protagonists viewpoint. Parts of the story reminded me of Alastair Reynolds. A very enjoyable enjoyable read.

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### **Carolyn says**

Have to say I was disappointed with this one. I love KKR's Retrieval Artist series of SF mystery novels.

Not sure if it was done on purpose for some obscure reason, but I was mildly irritated that our main character is never named and barely described. Even when she meets up with her father (after many years of separation), even when a total stranger seeks her out in a bar to do business, she is never named. The back of the book calls her "Boss", but that isn't her name, some of the crew she hires for dives call her 'boss' a few times, and that's it - even the ones she's known for 10+ years as well as the one who trained her to dive in the first place...

Entire book is narrated first person, present tense, which just didn't work with me on this one, although I've read some others recently which have (The Hunger Games, Tomorrow, When the War Began), both of which I enjoyed.

Plot is pretty slow and not really engaging. I find it hard to believe that 'wreck divers' as described (risk-takers who are adventurous and free spirits) would be so timid over every little thing that happens. Gets tiresome after a while. Lots of buildup to some very anti-climactic events.

Looks like a standalone book from the description, but we find out in the last couple of pages that the whole book is just a setup for a series.

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### **Felicia says**

OH YAY THIS ISN'T A ROMANCE BOOK! It is, however, a very interesting Sci-Fi tale with extremely interesting world-building and a strong female protagonist. I feel like this book is pretty singular in NOT having a big romance arc.

Basically the main character is a space ship wreck diver, and the peril with which she infuses the dive sequences is more than worth the price of admission here. Haven't seen this much tension infused in a scene the same way since I saw The Abyss for the first time, just GREAT tension. I also loved the main character because she is paranoid and OCD and...er, I empathized and congratulated her on her paranoia/thoroughness a lot, haha.

This book is a BIT strange because it feels like two novellas strung together, and it might be the case that these started out as separate novellas, but they're linked together well enough to enjoy as a pair. Looking forward to reading the second.

One complaint, the Kindle edition is 9.99, and for an old book that seems pretty lamely expensive.

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## Kristin says

Very start-and-stop narration; hard to get into it since there was no flow--and lots of repetition of plot points (protagonist makes a decision, explains it to her crew who parrot it back to us/her; v trying). The author is going for the hard-boiled, first person narration, and only partly succeeds; it's hard-boiled, I guess, but it's also stuffed full of one- & two-dimensional characters whose motivations seem linked only to moving the plot forward. Hard-boiled characters can be inexplicable, but they aren't supposed to be flat--especially not in first person narration--and the 90-degree plot "turns" are not interesting or mysterious. I wasn't bored, exactly, but I wasn't engaged, either. Disappointing.

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## The Flooze says

\*\*3.5\*\*

Diving into the Wreck is comprised of three novellas following a single character through a series of startling discoveries. Kristine Kathryn Rusch's writing style is very straight-forward and matter-of-fact. She's efficient in her sentence structure, perfectly reflecting her narrator's methodical nature. Despite this lack of elaborate prose, she manages to convey the sense wonder with which her main character (named simply Boss) approaches her work. She's also adept at portraying the deep anger, guilt and renewed purpose felt when Boss experiences betrayal and loss.

Boss' passion is historical wreck diving. She finds abandoned ships out in the blackness of space and pokes around to find out what was, and what could have been. She doesn't scavenge--greed is not her motivator. Instead, it's the quest for knowledge that drives her. More and more we learn that this quest is borne of survivor's guilt and a need to discover the mysteries of her own past.

Apart from this passion, very few things seem to give her pleasure. She's a loner, so removed from anything organic in a way that's both hard to fathom and yet understandable given her experiences. Once we learn her story, it's simple to see how this fixation occurred. We get brief glimpses into her past that show why she works so hard at remaining detached. We also realise that she's not actually detached at all--she's just very good at hiding her emotions from those around her.

Boss is complicated. The mysteries she stumbles into are doubly so. Diving into the Wreck, the first novella, details her discovery of the biggest find in several generations. It's an ancient vessel with secrets that could destroy the current order of the galaxy. In the second, The Room of Lost Souls, she visits a legendary space station where countless people have vanished in their pursuit of forgiveness and understanding. The third, The Heart of the Machine, brings everything back full circle as Boss finds a new purpose in life--perhaps the purpose she was meant for all along. Through the intervening years, she's found some answers and formulated even more questions. But the unknown doesn't matter anymore because she now has an ultimate, definable goal: revenge.

Overall, Boss is an intriguing narrator. She's capable and careful, and inspires respect in others. Her various crew members seem to look at her as a mentor and a valued colleague even though they don't always agree with her methods or her stubborn attitude. The world-building is subtle, with just enough to give us an

overview of the political climate. There aren't any cultural influences per se, but given Boss' removal from society that's acceptable. My only problem with Diving into the Wreck is that, despite it being an interesting storyline told in a straight-forward style, it does not skip along. This is not a tale of adrenaline and breathlessness. It is so matter-of-fact in its telling that I didn't feel the "oh, my god" that would keep the momentum going, that would inspire me to devour the book in a matter of hours. This took me ages (in my terms) to finish because I felt the need to step back from the somber tone. I'm learning more and more that I need an infusion of ironic wit to keep me glued to the page. This book inspired a perpetually furrowed brow and good number of sighs. It's so filled with helpless tension that I spent the whole book hunched and waiting for the next tragedy to occur, the next unavoidable death. It's not "Will they survive?" It's a case of "How many will they lose this time?"

All that said, the ending has the characters embarking on a new chapter in their lives--one that I wouldn't mind reading should Rusch decide to follow them. If you like the bleakness portrayed in a lot of sci-fi sagas, the feeling that you're just a speck in the universe and you can only do so much to affect your surroundings, then this one is for you. It reminds me of what happens *before* a rag-tag crew lead their rebellion against the evil Empire. It begs for a continuation of space opera proportions.

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### **R. Alexander says**

When I first saw the concept of the novel, I instantly fell in love with it: Wreck diving in space? Awesome!

But as I got into it, I found that while the story was good, the execution of it started putting me off. Not so much as to stop reading but enough where I stopped enjoying it.

My main issues with the novel are mostly related to the protagonist. Since it was a 1st person POV novel (not usually my favorite POV to be honest) we spent the entire time in her head and the problem with it was she began to annoy me greatly. It was very hard to relate to her and in some places I'd hoped that one of the other characters would smack her but they didn't.

Along with the annoying protagonist and her repetitive soliloquies the writing itself was a bit sparse and in some cases (especially the ending) it was a telling more than showing. In fact, the last chapter for me felt like a quick wrap up report written by the character and handed to me in order to setup the next book.

To be honest, while I love the concept and the diving scenes were well written, I don't think I can deal with being in this woman's head for another novel.

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### **Stefan says**

Diving into the Wreck is a short but excellent science fiction novel by Kristine Kathryn Rusch, who has also written extensively in fantasy, mystery and romance, and is the former editor of the prestigious Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction.

The main character of Diving into the Wreck, who goes by the name "Boss," is a specialist in the exploration

of derelict space ships. Accompanied by a team of specialists, she goes into these abandoned vessels, in a process that is very similar to deep sea diving with all its careful preparation and inherent dangers. When Boss discovers a 5000 year old Earth ship that couldn't possibly be in the sector where she found it, a string of events is set in motion that leads back to some of her earliest memories, and will possibly have huge implications.

Boss is an extremely interesting character. She's a control freak (as evidenced by her nickname) and more than a little obsessed with privacy (see her ship's name, "Nobody's Business"). She's extremely good at what she does, and you quickly get the idea that being capable is more important to her than being liked. The traumatic childhood event that's described in the prologue still affects her every day. At first it seems disconnected from the book, but it comes back as the driving force of the entire novel.

Diving into the Wreck is told from a tight first person perspective, so everything — including Boss herself — is seen through Boss's eyes. As a result, some shocking events are at first described in her very cold-sounding, matter-of-fact tone — and only later we find out how strongly she was affected by them.

The novel is affected in other ways by this choice of narrator and perspective. Aside from the bare-bones prose style, we also only get the most basic information about the political set-up of the novel's universe, which involves a dominant Terran empire and a smaller breakaway group of independent planets, with the story firmly set on the side of that alliance of independent planets. After all, exposition is not on Boss's mind: this is her story, and Diving into the Wreck is more about Boss and her psychological growth than about the SF universe it inhabits.

Much like Adrienne Rich's poem of the same name, Diving into the Wreck uses diving as a metaphor for self-exploration and self-discovery. This may be a very personal interpretation, but the first person, present tense narrator frequently gave me the impression that the main character was narrating the events of the book under some form of therapeutic hypnosis, eyes closed, voice monotone, completely immersed in the experience.

However, this isn't just a psychological novel without SF underpinnings. Kristine Kathryn Rusch throws in enough world-building details to give the reader a basic idea of the political and historical background of her SF universe. There are a few intriguing chapters set on a military research planet that would probably merit an entire novel. I couldn't help thinking that someone like Peter F. Hamilton would have squeezed several thousand pages out of this universe. Not that this necessarily would result in a better work, but to be honest, I wanted more!

One issue I had with the novel: the side characters who accompany Boss on her dives are, for the most part, not very well defined. A few of them gain depth as the story progresses, but most are interchangeable figurines — which, possibly, they were in Boss's eyes, too.

At just under 250 pages, divided into short chapters, Diving into the Wreck is a fast and entertaining read that starts off as a deceptively straightforward story about shipwreck retrieval but quickly reveals additional psychological, political and ethical layers. This is one of those rare SF novels I'd recommend to people who usually don't read the genre: it's easily recognizable as science fiction, but it does much more with standard elements of the genre than you'd initially expect. Recommended.

(This review was also published on Fantasy Literature - [www.fantasyliterature.com](http://www.fantasyliterature.com). Come check us out!)

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## **Paige Ellen Stone says**

Superb stuff and a very seductive beginning to a trilogy. It's been around a while but it is a fine piece of work by a very prolific (several pseudonyms) author. The lead character is a woman of few words, some complexity and infinite intrigue. Rusch's manner of taking us through the on-going self-doubt, self-confidence and self-discovery of this lead character is intriguing, well-written, and, for me, irresistible. This is a space opera, set far in the future and far away from earth. All of the science is believable and what is of particular interest to me is the notion that after 5 millennia, humans/humanoids have forgotten more of the technology that has been developed than they currently know and utilize. Rusch's character is a "diver". She explores wrecks in space, usually for historical interest, but is not immune to making some money from it. In this opening salvo, she discovers stealth technology that is from Earth of five thousand years past. It is a complete mystery as to how the ship got there. The ship is dangerous, lethally so, to those without a certain genetic marker, which she happens to have.

The story goes on to bring us to meet "Boss"'s father and we learn of how her mother died as a result of this mysterious technology.

Rusch's writing is very appealing; she draws the reader in slowly, developing characters with brevity yet depth. There is a certain terse, tell you what you need to know style here that I find very attractive.

I already own the other two books in the trilogy and will be at them in the coming months. This is not new stuff, but it is great, recent, if you will, wine. Drink deeply.

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