



The Marian

Taylor Hohulin

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Ethan Denby doesn't know how he got on the Marian. He just woke up one day inside the body of its captain.

The Marian is unlike any ship Ethan has ever seen. It crawls on long, metal legs over dunes of salt in search of water, despite laws granting exclusive harvesting rights to a corrupt organization known as HydroSystems Worldwide.

HydroSystems is closing in, tensions are mounting aboard the Marian, and on top of all that, Ethan is beginning to think the dreams he's been having aren't completely harmless. If he doesn't get home soon, Ethan could die inside someone else's body in this wasteland of a world. The only way back seems to be through the Cloud, but how can he convince the crew to take him there when it means confronting a dangerous cult and venturing into a place where the very fabric of reality has worn thin?

The Marian is a wild, post-apocalyptic pirate adventure, equal parts *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Mad Max*. It is the first book in The Marian Trilogy.

The Marian Details

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From Reader Review The Marian for online ebook

Jillian Moomaw says

After Alpha, I was very excited to read another book from Taylor. I think The Marian is a wonderful second book from him. I was very entertained the whole way through and found the story extremely fresh and interesting. There were some parts I felt were too spelled out for the reader; moments where I didn't need Taylor to tell me why someone did something because the writing already had me assuming it. There were other parts I felt were given a lot of weight with no story to back up the importance and they felt a bit empty. BUT. That said, as it is the first book in a series, I believe I will get my answers down the road, and when I revisit the first book, I will understand those weighted parts.

Overall, it was quick and fun read that I recommend to anyone looking for a soul-swapping good time!

Natasha Bennett says

I am not usually a fan of black and white covers, but in this case it works, especially with the font choice and the contrast to the second book (which has a younger version of Ethan and red text).

Overall there is a great deal to like in the Marian, especially if you are a fan of pirate stories. There is descriptive and unique content, colorful characters, and a mystery involving a place called 'the Cloud', which I found to be the funnest part of the book by far. Ethan is a reactionary hero (in other words, everything he does is usually in reaction to something happening) but that fits given that he is only fifteen years old and completely out of his league. Percy is one of the more interesting characters, as it is not fully clear if he will turn out to be a hero or a villain.

The Marian does drag a bit towards the second half and could have used a few scenes trimmed, but that's a minor issue. It does end on a cliffhanger, which normally is an annoying trend in books and can turn off the reader. However it ends at a good part and there is enough unique ideas that I would fully recommend picking up the second. This is a good time to get into the series as well, as the final book is also scheduled to be released at the end of November.

Darth Vix says

When I read the synopsis for The Marian I immediately jumped at the chance to read and review it! Not only do I lack considerable experience with steampunk-esque novels, but the synopsis drew me in and I wasn't disappointed!

I don't want to give too much away about the plot because I definitely think this is a book that you'd want to read and I don't want to spoil it but I did want to talk a little about the story. The Marian is a ship, crawling through the desert of the ocean whose crew specializes in water smuggling under the nose of the government corporation that holds "all" of earth's remaining water. Ethan Denby suddenly finds himself aboard The Marian and thrust into this life of constant danger as part of this crew, always looking over their shoulder and

hoping to make a difference in a world where hope is scarce. The big question is, will he ever get back home?

I gave this book a 5 star rating because I really enjoyed this book and this world. This is my first steampunk novel and I really enjoyed the steampunk influence and being thrust into this world of post apocalyptic machinery. I love how the ship has been outfitted to crawl on the ocean floor and drill into “water wells”. The world building and the history of how the world got this way was so interesting to me and I found myself lost in this world and the characters.

One of the best things about this book, besides the well crafted world, is the cast of characters. I love all of them! I’d have to say my favorite character is Buddy and the sort of conundrum he is to me. I see him as this big burly guy yet he’s this teddy bear of a man who loves reading and writes poetry, I love it! I also love Bonnie, the fierce female of the crew who can hold her own amongst the men in a seemingly all male industry like water smuggling where danger abounds.

The plot of this book is so interesting and definitely different than any other post apocalyptic book I’ve read so far. It made me think of what could happen if one day we found ourselves in a similar predicament. I liked this story because the “pirates” were the good guys and we live in a world where pirates are seen as bad, so it was good to see a positive spin on pirates in this book!

All in all I loved this story and I can’t wait to continue reading it because, good news, it is the start to what I think is going to be a killer trilogy. If you are a sci-fi or fantasy fan you need to check this book out and embark on a truly interesting and entertaining journey that will leave you at the edge of your seat!

Heather says

After a nuclear war decimates the water supply on Earth in the far future, survivors are left in a desert world eking out a survival. Ethan is from the past (our current present), 15, and likes to play drums. Ethan finds himself transported not only to a new world but a new body; he is the victim of a soul swap and now inhabits the adult body of the captain of The Marian. Pirate boats become steampunk mechanical bugs that “sail” over sand dunes.

Ethan tries to learn the way of a sand pirate, extracting water from the barren land with the crew, and trading with local “islands.” Finding himself in more scrapes than peace times, Ethan starts to literally lose pieces of his body. Eventually visiting the creepy as hell “Cloud” where the priesthood does some wicked voodoo, he learns his future fate. Trying to find a solution, he meets some whacky characters, some of the crew some later joining in the story, and fights the water hoarding HydroSystems.

Ethan is a pretty typical 15 years old, and I completely understand his spaz fest in the beginning of the book. The crew, a motley sand pirate crew that it is, has an interesting cast of characters that work well together to make the story entertaining. The story is an enjoyable YA, steampunkish sci-fi. Ethan’s fate is major creepy and the book ends on a huge cliff hanger.

Macy Klingerman says

I received a copy of this book from the author in exchange for a honest review.

THIS IS A BOOK ABOUT PIRATES.

YES.

POST APOCALYPTIC PIRATES.

GUYS.

YOU NEED THIS.

All shouty caps aside, The Marian was one of the best books I've read in a quite a while. I've been DNFing books left and right (post about that coming up soon), and The Marian was my breath of well written fresh air. All through the book, I found myself wondering why it wasn't more well known. Taylor's writing is truly great, even better than some of the more popular authors dominating the market today.

This world is crazy. The story takes place in a post apocalyptic world, where a bomb dropped, decimating the world's water supply and turning oceans into giant salt dunes.

But Macy, I thought this was a pirate book? If there aren't any oceans, how can there be pirates?

THE SHIPS ARE BASICALLY MASSIVE METAL SPIDERS. Instead of sailing the ocean, they literally crawl over all of these massive salt dunes. How cool is that?

It gets better. In this new world, there's a place called the Cloud, where things aren't ever what they seem. The Cloud is a place where reality itself is distorted, and those who have been to the Cloud often come back out..changed. It's inhabited by the Priesthood of the Cloud. The Priesthood is terrifying, and everyone knows to stay away from them unless it's entirely necessary. They're some seriously creepy people!

The cast of characters are all loveable in their own ways. Ethan was a great narrator, and it was a pleasurable experience being inside his head. While he's a bit on the young side for a YA protagonist, he was still mature for his age. To be honest, Jackie, who is supposed to be older than Ethan, acted younger most of the time. My favorite characters were definitely Kale and Kyle, mostly for their snarkiness.

Overall, The Marian is a great read. Four out of five stars.

Sharon Clark says

This was a great read and I'm so glad I got the next two books already! The characters were really well written, their personalities evident in their dialogue and movements. The action was just the right pace, not too frenetic, there wasn't too much jammed into each chapter. The post-apocalyptic world feels very real in the way the people are described: You can tell who was around before the "apocalypse" and who hasn't known anything different, and I hope to get some more backstory on all of them! (Taylor could probably

write individual books on Percy and the Navigator and even Duncan!) I definitely have some favorite characters and I really look forward to seeing where the story takes them! I would have imagined a 15 year old boy might have freaked out a little bit more to be in his situation, but I'll have to read the other books to learn more about his life and who Ethan is. Definitely recommend!

Amy says

What if you woke up in a different time? In a different body? You'd freak the hell out! That is exactly what happened to Ethan Denby. Now he is trapped on The Marian, a water scavenging ship. There is no water to be found on the land any more. Now they must be plunge below the Earth's surface to search for pockets of water to smuggle back.

Ethan's dreams are pulling him, guiding him, but is it to late? He needs to find the key to all of this and the only place he can think of going is the Cloud. Officer Jarvis from HydroSystem is hot on their tails for illegal pirating. Can they get to the Cloud before HydroSystem gets their ruthless hands on them?

I really liked the Cloud and the mystery around it. The Crew of The Marian is a mish mash of characters! The Navigator has to be my favorite, he's a wreck, but sharp as a tack at the same time. The crew is all well written and handle very nicely. I was a silent deckhand on the ship, taking orders from Captain Percy. My heart went out to Ethan, one day an average kid in Dallas, then an old

Without revealing to much I will say this is a catchy beginning of the series. There was so much to say about this book, but I want you to read, I want you become a crewman on The Marian with me. Take the plunge, join us as we fight off HydroSystem, smuggle water, and visit the Cloud. One word of warning, don't stay in the Cloud to long.

The Cloud changes people. It does give them power, like in the case of Officer Jarvis, but that's not all. The more time you spend in the Cloud, the more those changes start to harm you.

I'm looking forward to the rest! Mr. Hohulin are you working on them???

Jalyn says

I participated in a blog tour for this book when I was supposed to be on a blogging break. That just tells you how excited I was to read this. A little bit steampunk, a little bit post-apocalyptic (both genres that I really enjoy), body-switching, and a place where reality isn't always reality? Sign me up!

I liked Ethan more than I thought I would . But he was pretty mature for his age, and brave despite being in a dangerous, confusing new world. I wouldn't call him a leader, but he could stand up for himself. I usually have trouble connecting to younger characters, males especially, but I really enjoyed Ethan.

Even though Ethan was the only character major enough to get his own paragraph, the other characters were all great. Brilliant mechanic and Ethan's new friend Jackie, Jackie's tough and intelligent sister Bonnie, ex-mercenary and the *Marian*'s new captain Percy...even the cook, who only said about three lines the whole book, had a unique personality.

THE MARIAN has a two-pronged plot. First is Ethan – how did he end up here and how can he get home? The second is the world – scavenging for water and discovering that HydroSystems is perpetrators of a huge conspiracy. Both plots were great, and they were kind of interconnected. They both had things to do with the Cloud. The Cloud doesn't really show up until near the end, but it seems like everything in the world is connected to it. It's a really weird, creepy, fascinating thing.

My only problem with the book: it was too short! Due to quite a few loose ends, I think it's first in a series. I didn't like that – not because I wouldn't enjoy spending another book in this world, but because I wasn't aware of it going in. I guessed how things would play out, and the book ended before I could see if my plot psychicness was acting up or if this was one of those awesome books that made me draw wrong conclusions.

I had very high expectations for THE MARIAN, and it delivered. I'm looking forward to reading the sequel, whenever that happens.

I received a free review copy of THE MARIAN from the author. His generosity in no way influenced, or sought to influence, this review.

Isabelle says

** I received a copy from the author in exchange for an honest review. Thanks Taylor Hohulin! :)*

My safe (SPOILER-FREE!) thoughts. . .

This book is really good! It was adventurous and thrilling. The setting presented characters that were like pirates but in a post-apocalyptic time with paranormal activities taking place!

I loved how each chapter was exciting. The crew of the Marian would always be up to something, so there wasn't any boring parts at all. The start of the book immediately introduced us to the problem at hand, not much of an introduction so you just need to catch up to the details as the story goes. But it's because of this that I got hooked right away. As for the ending, I thought it was perfect. It's definitely a cliffhanger but in a good way just because it's enough to keep you anticipating the next book without killing you over the wait. It also creates a lot of possibilities for what could happen in the next book.

I still think that this book still has a lot of potential to be even better. It didn't explore the realm of being a mystery that much. Yes, we know that Ethan woke up in a different body from a different time but for the most part, the book had a more adventurous vibe with the crew travelling around a lot and facing different scenarios. So hopefully in the sequels we'd get to focus more on Ethan's "body issues".

One of my favorite things about this book would be the characters! And there's a variety of them too. Our protagonist is Ethan and he seems pretty decent. I give him props because even though he woke up elsewhere, he isn't emotional or too whiny. Basically he adjusted pretty quickly. Then there's the crew of the Marian. You have the missing Captain Duncan, who (according to character accounts) seems like a good leader, very respectable and everyone is just loyal to him. Then you have Percy, the temporary captain who has a possible hidden agenda. He just seems kind of suspicious sometimes. You have an easy-going but still brilliant engineer named Jackie and his tough sister Bonnie (the only female crew member). Then there's Buddy, the artistic one. Tucker, your resident doctor who seems kind of wise from experiences. You also have a Navigator, who knows everything but doesn't know anything. And finally, Lester the cook whose

only line was “No waste. No waste”. They really seem like an interesting bunch, so I hope to get to know them more in the next book.

Over-all, it was just a quick, fun read. It’s only around 210 pages. So you can read this even during your busy weeks because before you know it, it’s already done. The writing style was great. It balanced the elements of the book. Everything just seemed very natural.

*Read my other reviews at **The Reading Izzy***

Derek Rodriguez says

There were so many things I enjoyed about this story. First of all, the author does a great job of describing the post-apocalyptic society while also leaving some shroud of mystery with the entire story. He feeds you just enough to keep wanting to know more about what exactly is going on...I kept turning page after page wanting to know "What exactly is The Cloud?".

The character development in this book is great. We learn about the characters and what motivates them behind their actions. The author also uses witty and clear dialog to explain characters in detail, which I enjoyed.

Finally, there's a cliffhanger at the end that leaves you wanting more. After burning through the last 40 pages, I was saddened with the ending, but have a good feeling that we'll see more of Ethan in the future...

All in all, a very entertaining read. If I could give feedback, it was a little slow moving the first few chapters, but I have a feeling if there are sequels, now that we already have a lot of the character development in place, there will be a little more action in the beginning of the novel (especially given where this one ends!). Very fun read.

Cayt Landis says

The Marian by Taylor Hohulin tells the story of Ethan Denby, a young man who wakes up to find himself in someone else's body. Not only is he now apparently someone else, the world he finds himself in is so different from his world as to be unrecognizable. The book takes place in a world in the future where a calamity has destroyed nearly all water on the planet. Water is a sought after commodity and Ethan has turned up on a ship of illegal water harvesters. Ethan must figure out where he is and how to get back home while discovering how his world deteriorated into a strange, water-less husk.

I really enjoyed this book. It begins with Ethan waking up in the body of an adult captain of a ship. It soon becomes clear to him, and everyone else, that he doesn't belong there. The world is well thought out and very original. All of the oceans have been emptied of water so ships no longer sail the seas. Instead, they walk on mechanical legs over the salt dunes left behind when the water disappeared. People are always wanting for water and the water supply is strictly regulated by a corporation who is in it for the money. People like Ethan's new crew mates risk their lives and freedom to find water illegally and sell it for reasonable prices to people in need. I have never read anything with a world like this before and it felt fresh.

The storyline is very intriguing. I love the setting and the fact that there is an interesting magical phenomenon going on. The world is certainly strange now that it has no water, but there is also a cloud area that is full of crazy, dangerous magic. To find a way home for Ethan, and restore the real captain that he replaced, the crew must venture into this dangerous area, risking everyone in the process. As the story progresses the idea behind the cloud and the history of the event that destroyed all of the water becomes more and more clear. I can't wait for the sequel to find out what's going on and what's going to happen next!

Each character in this book felt realistic and relateable. Ethan really comes across well as a teenager stuck in an older man's body in a strange world. He doesn't adjust immediately and he has trouble fitting in and figuring out where he stands. The crew of the ship are diverse and each have a unique point of view that helps to flesh out the world and add depth to the story. The antagonists are not over-the-top evil and there is always a new layer to uncover about everyone.

I highly recommend this book. Though not technically Steampunk, it reminds me of some of the best books of that genre that I've read. The world alone is a good enough reason to read the book and I imagine that future books will really delve into some interesting places.

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Rachel Barnard says

In a world where water is scarce and the people must buy it from a company called HydroSystems Worldwide that jacks up the price, Ethan Denby is tossed into the soul of a ship's captain. But where there is no water there are no oceans and this ship called the Marian, powered by coal, walks on legs. Not only must Ethan contend with being in a different body and a different time altogether, he has been marked to be taken from this world and to Those Beyond, a place nobody would ever want to go.

The premise is intriguing. Everyone involved has a goal. There is a lot of tension. When there's not enough water and you have to buy it from a monopoly, there are some people who would rather steal the water than pay the man. What a great book of the person versus the corporation.

The author tossed up what could have been a predictable plot with the concept of the Cloud and the fantasy/sci-fi bit with soul swapping. Ethan Denby doesn't fit into this world and that's what makes both him and the world so much more interesting.

I loved the characters. Each had their own unique personality. Bonnie is the token female who wants to be tough but has a difficult time in the apocalyptic environment. Jackie is the wild and unabashed engineer who will put himself at risk for the Marian and for Bonnie, his sister. Tucker is the good-natured ship's doctor who doesn't make much of a fuss and you almost forget he's there until he acts as a mediator. Percy is the man with the past who picked up the role as captain without a second glance behind him and is a bit rough around the edges. The Navigator is the crazy one, a crazy genius that is. Ethan is the bewildered newcomer who wants to just get home but has an amenable personality that gets along with most everyone. Lester is the cook who can't cook and abides no waste on the ship. Buddy is mostly just an added voice and sometimes devil's advocate as well as resident book-keeper and poetry writer. The Marian is the steampunk post-apocalyptic Mad Max type ship they travel on. Jarvis is the too smart for his own good can't see beyond his own nose face of HydroSystems (the enemy).

