

SPECULATIVE FICTION REVIEW by Stephanie Young

TITLE *Star Fish*
AUTHOR Peter Watts
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Précis In order to supply the world with a cheaper and sustainable energy supply, development of geo-thermal energy is being done on the ocean floor. Once the technology is established it will not require much human intervention but at the start, several people will have to live down there for weeks or months at a time.

Because of the physical modifications needed to live in the crushing pressure and low light conditions, and to work hours in the water away from the habitat, the Company finds misfits and somewhat unstable personalities to fill the positions. It also gives them a chance to study the interactions of the different types as well.

The results are interesting: a few become addicted to living outside, some become withdrawn and others just feel used. All the while things are happening above that are not revealed to those below. As the story develops, the real motivations become clear and the misfits are forced to make some difficult decisions.

Protagonist Lenie Clarke
Antagonist Patricia Rowan

What I liked The details of life in the deep oceans, the creativity of the technology and the believability of it, the mystery of what was going on.

What I didn't like Slow beginning, revelation of the big picture occurs way to late in the book, ending that fits but also is not set-up well.

Final Comments I almost stopped reading this book about a third of the way through because the characters were slow developing and the plot was glacial. A key development occurred just in time and kept me reading to the end and it was worth it barely. The story starts out as this interesting study of humans stuck in a difficult situation and then the end comes along and it is about a world-changing event. I felt the connection was contrived and could have been done better.

If you are into deep sea technology and such you will love the way Watts has described the deep ocean and his technology for human's living there seemed well researched and interesting, but as a story it was so-so at best.

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