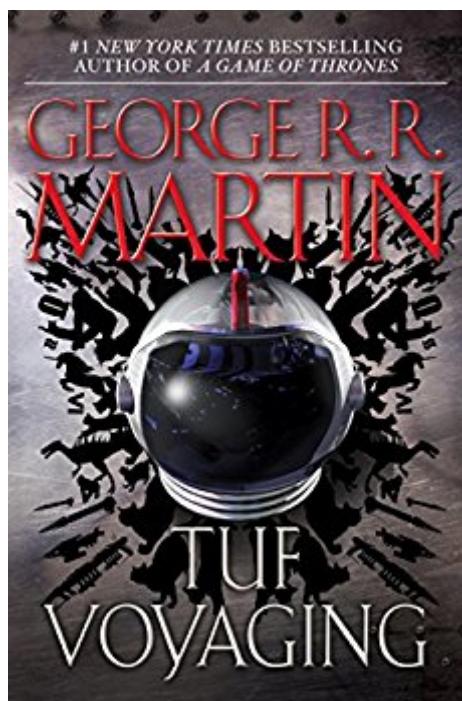


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Tuf Voyaging



Synopsis

Long before *A Game of Thrones* became an international phenomenon, #1 New York Times bestselling author George R. R. Martin had taken his loyal readers across the cosmos. Now back in print after almost ten years, *Tuf Voyaging* is the story of quirky and endearing Haviland Tuf, an unlikely hero just trying to do right by the galaxy, one planet at a time. Â Haviland Tuf is an honest space-trader who likes cats. So how is it that, in competition with the worst villains the universe has to offer, heâ™s become the proud owner of a seedship, the last remnant of Earthâ™s legendary Ecological Engineering Corps? Never mind; just be thankful that the most powerful weapon in human space is in good handsâ "hands which now have the godlike ability to control the genetic material of thousands of outlandish creatures. Â Armed with this unique equipment, Tuf is set to tackle the problems that human settlers have created in colonizing far-flung worlds: hosts of hostile monsters, a population hooked on procreation, a dictator who unleashes plagues to get his own way . . . and in every case, the only thing that stands between the colonists and disaster is Tufâ™s ingenuityâ "and his reputation as a man of integrity in a universe of rogues. Â âœA rich blend of adventure, humor, compassion and all the other things that make being human worthwhile.â •â "Analog Â âœA new facet of Martinâ™s manysided talent.â •â "Asimovâ™s From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Originally a collection of shorts published in Analog magazine as a continuing saga, Tuf Voyaging is all the pieces put together into a smooth novel with an extremely unique protagonist. Haviland Tuf and his ship, the 'Cornucopia Of Excellent Goods At Low Prices', has been hired by a group of five people to travel towards what is known as The Plague Star. When upon arriving, they discover it is not a star at all but a long abandoned Seedship, left over from the war a thousand years ago. Their first problem is getting past the ship's automated defenses and boarding, their second problem is the greed that has filled every head except Tuf's. Tuf, of course, winds out in charge of the Seedship, named the Ark. (no details, just read the book! The first chapter details these events, and is most excellent!) the remaining six chapters chronicle Tuf's voyages from planet to planet, using the Ark to solve problems such as overpopulation, sea monsters, cruel animal-fighting pits, and religious plagues. Eccentric and droll would be the best way to describe Haviland Tuf, a very tall and very large bald man. He travels alone, except for his cats, Havoc and Mushroom. The cat family expands, and Tuf is inspired by his human encounters to name the new kittens Suspicion, Doubt, Hostility, Ingratitude, and Foolishness. Tuf is a loner, intelligent, peculiar, a vegetarian with an enormous appetite, and a dry wit. Indeed. The Seedship is a marvelous invention of Martin's, thirty kilometers long and three kilometers high, the pinnacle of the old Earth Ecological Corps inventions. Although the EEC used their Seedships for war, Tuf has only benign uses for it.

I first came across these stories when reading "The Plague Star" in an issue of my father's Analog magazine. Ever since, I've avidly consumed everything I could find by Martin. This collection of stories is such a pleasure to read, I can't do it justice here. If this book has any weakness, it is that the stories were written over a fairly large span of time (ten years, or more - I can't remember). Because of this, the quality of the written varies, growing better as Martin developed his skills. The stories work on so many levels, and Tuf is such a singular character, the stories remain in my mind almost daily even ten years after I've read them. The fact that these stories live in the 'ghetto' of science fiction shouldn't scare away those who don't typically read it. Martin's grasp of humor, horror and the human condition is unmatched. I've often compared him to Mark Twain, in that his writing is so simple and universally appealing, yet contains so much more moving beneath the surface. It's a wonder to me that with Martin's forays into screenwriting that he's never decided to

pitch "Plague Star". It works almost perfectly as a feature film, with just the right length, rhythm and imagery. Perhaps the one thing holding him back is the lack of the standard 'human' element in all these stories - Tuf is profoundly asexual, and indeed, seems to have almost no typical heartwarming hooks that Hollywood demands be in virtually every film it rolls out. There are no love interests, no (traditional) paternal emotions. There's no boy meets girl here, just boy meets destiny. Yet I think that it could appeal to a wide variety of viewers nonetheless.

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