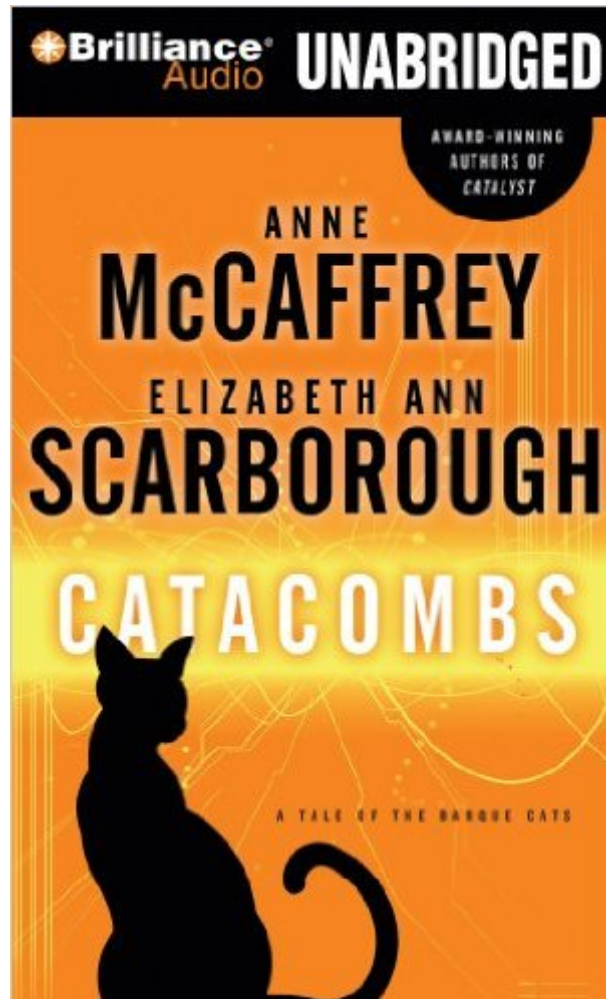


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Catacombs: A Tale Of The Barque Cats (Barque Cats Series)



Synopsis

In *Catalyst*, award-winning authors Anne McCaffrey and Elizabeth Ann Scarborough introduced listeners to the beguiling Barque Cats: spacefaring felines who serve aboard starships as full-fledged members of the crew. Highly evolved, the cats share an almost telepathic bond with their minders, or Cat Persons — until, suddenly, there is no — almost — about it, and a particular Barque Cat, Chester, learns to exchange thoughts with his human friend, Jubal. Other cats soon gain the same ability. Behind the seeming miracle is a mysterious cat named Pshaw-Ra, who possesses knowledge and technology far beyond anything the Barque Cats — or their humans — have ever seen. When fear of a virulent plague leads the government first to quarantine and then to kill all animals suspected of infection, Pshaw-Ra — with the help of Chester, Jubal, and the crew of the starship *Ranzo* — activates a — mousehole — in space that carries the refugees to a place of safety: Pshaw-Ra's home planet of Mau, where godlike cats are worshiped by human slaves. But Pshaw-Ra's actions are less noble than they appear. The scheming cat plans to mate the Barque Cats with his own feline stock, creating a hybrid race of superior cats — a race destined to conquer the universe. Yet right from the start, his plans go awry. For one thing, there's a new queen on Mau: Pshaw-Ra's daughter Nefure, a spoiled brat — er, cat — with a temper as short as her attention span. Pshaw-Ra's other daughter, the rightful queen Renpet, is exiled, running for her life in the only direction available to her — down into the vast catacombs beneath the Mauan desert. Far from receiving the hero's welcome he expected, Pshaw-Ra must use every bit of his considerable cleverness just to survive. Meanwhile, as usual, Chester and Jubal stumble right into the middle of things, in the process uncovering the lost secrets of the Mauan civilization. But that's not all they uncover. In the forgotten catacombs deep below the Mauan capital, something has awakened. Something as old as the universe. Something that hungers to devour all light and life — and that bears an undying hatred for cats.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The book relies heavily on one specific fact: that Cats Are Cute. If you have never willingly lived with a cat you may have difficulty processing that fact. If you don't think its cute to see a cat batting at a ray of sunlight, or pawing the air to get your attention, or a million other things that cats do - if you don't see it as cute then you are not a Cat Person (CP). Don't worry, there's no shame in that. But it means you can't win the CP of the year award and that you may have some difficulty reading this book. The cuteness is offset by some minor plot and characterization flaws that are easy enough to overlook, assuming you had a reason to do so. For example: there are only three or four places in the book where one is forcibly reminded that the MHC (main human character) is a ten year old boy and not a 19 year old hardened space veteran. And every time it comes up is a jarring and sudden reminder that startles the reader out of the narrative flow. The reason for this is because the character of Jubal (the MHC) isn't well developed or made distinct in any significant way. But you can get back into the story easily enough by picturing how cute the kittens are at whatever it is they're doing next. After all, the focus of the book is on the kittens most of the time so they are, in a way, the reason for the minimal character development. I read this book without having first seen the previous book in the series (Catalyst - I think). But it seems to be complete enough to read on its own as there are enough "reminders" in the text to play catch-up with. I suppose that also varies according to what kind of reader you are but attentive readers willing to do a little analysis shouldn't have any difficulty.

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