



## Ventus

By Karl Schroeder

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### Ventus By Karl Schroeder

*Ventus* is a large-scale Hard SF adventure novel in the tradition of Larry Niven, Vernor Vinge, and Arthur C. Clarke. Karl Schroeder, a physicist and writer, is a winner of Canada's Aurora Award. His first novel was called the best first fantasy of the year by *Science Fiction Chronicle*, and now his first SF novel launches a major career in SF.

Young Jordan Mason, on the terraformed planet Ventus, has visions. Kidnapped by Calandria May--a human from offworld sent to investigate the AIs (the Winds) of Ventus--Jordan is desperate to find the meaning of his visions, desperate enough to risk calling down the Winds that destroy technology to protect the created environment, who descend and wreak havoc. As a result Jordan escapes from Calandria and sets out to discover his destiny on his own. Calandria and others, both human and AI, search for Jordan, who holds the key to catastrophe or salvation.

*Ventus* is an epic journey across a fascinating planet with a big mystery--why have the Winds fallen silent? It is one of the major, ambitious SF novels of the year and the international launch of an important new hard SF writer.

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## **Ventus** By Karl Schroeder **Bibliography**

- Rank: #694931 in eBooks
- Published on: 2001-11-19
- Released on: 2001-11-19
- Format: Kindle eBook

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### Editorial Review

#### From Publishers Weekly

Although Aurora Award-winner Schroeder is probably best known for his fantasy fiction, this novel, his first large-scale SF work, should greatly expand his reputation. A thousand years ago, highly advanced artificial intelligences (AIs) called Winds terraformed the planet Ventus into a comfortable world for human settlement—but something went wrong, and the Winds never relinquished control. Now they rule as gods, using their "mecha" creatures to squelch anything that creates imbalance in their perfectly groomed environment. Enter young Jordan Mason, whose visions show him dreamlike images of far-distant events that are somehow linked to the Winds. But Jordan only begins to realize the truth after he meets two off-worlders, the assassin Calandria and her partner, Axel. Jordan's visions link him to Armiger, a spy created by a megalomaniac AI called 3340. Though Calandria "destroyed" 3340, she fears Armiger carries the seeds to resurrect the entity. Jordan's link offers the only hope of finding Armiger, but there are other forces at work as well. Civil war fomented by the Winds threatens to overthrow mad Queen Galas, the most egalitarian ruler in Ventus's history. And in a distant system called the Archipelago, Calandria's boss, a rival AI, is sending warships to decimate Ventus and insure 3340's demise permanently. Canadian Schroeder handles his large cast of characters with impressive dexterity. Fans of the high-tech foundation and grand world-building of Iain M. Banks and Ken MacLeod will feel right at home here, as will anyone else who appreciates a challenging, original story. (Dec. 18)

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#### From *Booklist*

Jordan Mason of the planet Ventus comes from a long line of stoneworkers, and he has a clear understanding of his place in his world. He is subservient to the aristocracy, who in turn bow to the Winds, who control the weather, plant and animal life, and human undertakings. Lately, Jordan has had troubling visions, in which his immediate surroundings are blotted out by a different sky and a different forest, and he sees through another man's eyes. One night, searching in the forest for his sister, Jordan meets captivating Calandria May, who says she can explain his visions if he will help track Armiger, through whose eyes he has gazed. Armiger is a rogue artificial intelligence (AI), sent to Ventus to co-opt the Winds, which are also AIs, into enslaving humans and creating a powerful, ruthless world-mind. Through Armiger's eyes, Jordan sees how his interactions with an independent, tender peasant woman and a fierce, lonely queen are changing the AI's cold objectives. As Jordan and Calandria close in on Armiger, they see that the Winds are divided into pro-human and antihuman camps. Wondering whether he is on the right side, Jordan uses his visionary power to speak directly to the Winds. A final battle for Ventus brings human generals, intelligent moons, and a roving off-planet archaeologist onstage. Although strictly hard sf, full of technology, Schroeder's novel is so rich in character and emotion that it feels like classic fantasy. *Roberta Johnson*

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#### Review

“Dramatically effective and a milestone in science fiction about nanotech and fine-grained distributed systems.” – Vernor Vinge

“A fast-moving, entertaining, and intriguing novel.” --L. E. Modesitt, Jr.

“The glowing, intricate plot arises organically from [the] stunningly inventive backdrop . . . Delightful and engaging, both intellectually and viscerally: a superb achievement.” –*Kirkus* (starred

review)

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