



Wheels Stop: The Tragedies and Triumphs of the Space Shuttle Program, 1986-2011 (Outward Odyssey: A People's History of Spaceflight)

Rick Houston

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Humanity's first reusable spacecraft and the most complex machine ever built, NASA's Space Shuttle debuted with great promise and as a dependable source of wonder and national pride. But with the *Challenger* catastrophe in 1986, the whole Space Shuttle program came into question, as did NASA itself, so long an institution that was seemingly above reproach. *Wheels Stop* tells the stirring story of how, after the *Challenger* disaster, the Space Shuttle not only recovered but went on to perform its greatest missions. From the Return to Flight mission of STS-26 in 1988 to the last shuttle mission ever on STS-135 in 2011, *Wheels Stop* takes readers behind the scenes as the shuttle's crews begin to mend Cold War tensions with the former Soviet Union, conduct vital research, deploy satellites, repair the Hubble Space Telescope, and assist in constructing the International Space Station. It also tells the heart-wrenching story of the *Columbia* tragedy and the loss of the magnificent STS-107 crew.

As complex as the shuttle was, the people it carried into orbit were often more so—and this is their story, too. Close encounters with astronauts, flight controllers, and shuttle workers capture the human side of the Space Shuttle's amazing journey—and invite readers along for the ride.

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