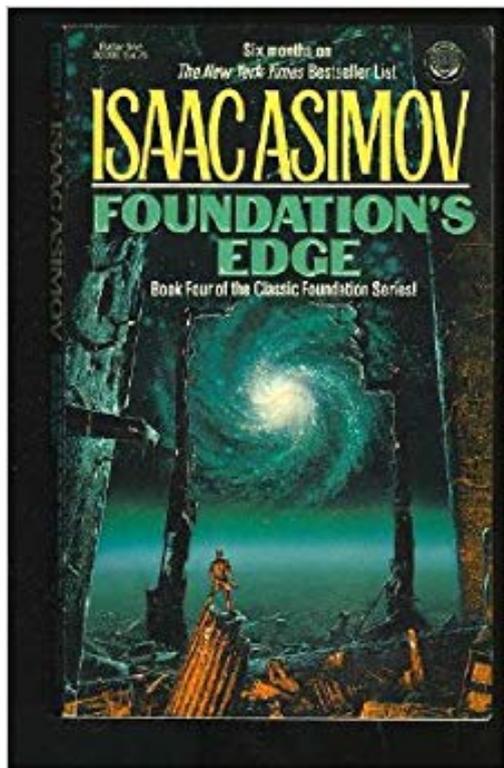


## Foundation's Edge *by* Isaac Asimov



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**Author:** Isaac Asimov

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Now, 498 years after its founding, the Foundation seemed to be following the Seldon Plan perfectly. Too perfectly. Now an impossible planet -- with impossible powers -- threatens to upset the Seldon Plan for good unless two men, sworn enemies, can work together to save it!



## Reviews of the *Foundation's Edge* by Isaac Asimov

**Nirad**

Foundation's Edge (Foundation Novels) is the immediate sequel to the Foundation Trilogy, written some 30 years after the original series. The first two thirds of the story renews the jealous pursuit of the Second Foundation by the First. Woven in nice counterpoint, the Second Foundation finds itself in a crisis. These two threads are pursued with considerable momentum in a madcap three way chase in which the three main characters strive to discover Earth, the Second Foundation, and a mysterious third power in the Galaxy, simultaneously!

Alas, when the mysterious third power, Gaia, is found, things go rapidly downhill. At this point, the

plot devolves into an extensive description of a planet that has become a single conscious entity, with every person and object joined via telepathy. To provide some relief from this endless discussion, one 23-year-old, organically human, female portion of Gaia, named Bliss, becomes romantically, sexually, and unbelievably involved with Pelorat, a well-aged, naive Earth-lore scholar. Neither of these developments sustains the drama and excitement of the first part of the book, and the explorations of the psychological and philosophical aspects of Gaia seem interminable.

I consider this book marginally successful as an extension of the original trilogy. Overall, it's a moderately good SciFi read. However, from my own perspective, I would limit the Foundation Series to the two prequels ( Prelude to Foundation (Foundation, Book 1) and Forward the Foundation ) plus the original trilogy ( The Foundation Trilogy ). If forced to choose only three books, I'd stick with the original trilogy, which rank among the very best science fiction novels.

\*\*\* SPOILER WARNING \*\*\*

The least appealing feature of "Foundation's Edge" is the character of I/we/Gaia itself. Gaia is a very strange mix of power/helplessness and competence/incompetence that results from an extension of the Laws of Robotics and robots' telepathic abilities into the realm of "human" life. The resulting entity can use mental power to manipulate the physical universe, but at the same time is unable to decide whether it is the proper future for all of humanity. In this connection, the mighty Gaia relies on a single human being, Golan Trevize, who (supposedly) has the uncanny ability to make right decisions on the basis of inadequate information. Until the time setting of this book, Gaia has secretly reinforced the Seldon Plan, making the plan proceed more smoothly than could be expected. From the time of this story into the future, the Seldon Plan becomes a meaningless shell. The First Foundation and the Second Foundation are deluded into thinking that each is exclusively guiding humanity, while in the background, Gaia (with occasional help from Trevize) will be building the true future.

**Yar**

Of all the science fiction stories that Asimov wrote, this and Robots of Dawn are the two best. Of course all of Asimov's science fiction novels are stellar but in a stellar constellation these two are outstanding. The level of creativity here is marvelous.

The Foundation Trilogy was great and I have read all three many times and enjoyed each on the fifteenth reading as much as on the first. Asimov is not a grand master for nothing. But Foundation's Edge is so far above the first three on every level: especially characterization and plot development not to mention the fabulous ending. After Foundation's Edge and Robots of Dawn Asimov went on to write another Robot novel and three more Foundation novels but they were rather disappointing. They were formulaic. I suppose every author that writes a series uses a formula but it doesn't do to let the bones of the formula show through. In the fourth Robot novel and the three final Foundation novels the protagonist(s) travel to this place then that place then another place then a final place and the endings (except for Robots and Empire) don't justify the time we've spent traveling from place to place. The creativity is gone. Which makes Foundation's Edge all the more glorious. I can't recommend this book highly enough.

**Brick my own**

this is the third or fourth book I have read, from the foundation series. I have read them one right after the other. Of the first three, this one I have liked the most. Although the central theme is always the foundation, in each of the previous novels Asimov covered various generations of characters, situations and locations. This Novel deals with only one generation of characters, and

one mayor conflict. Various characters are involved and developed with much detail and depth. Isaac's novels are more than 90% dialogue between the characters. Minimal to none landscape or battle description. He explains the development of technologies or philosophies but mostly through his characters. What I love most about this and the other novels, is how he brings you into a colloquy, or everyday discussion of current events (of the characters) as if we are already living in a world of intergalactic travel. The novel, feels more like accounts of events which will happen in a very distant future.

### **Darksinger**

This book is a continuation of the Foundation series, but written decades after the original three books. Asimov's style and storytelling is notably improved in this book, compared the the original trilogy. Although Science Fiction is, by definition speculative, it is much easier to expound on technology trends when they already exist in contemporary society. To that point, this book paints a future more integrated with computers than the previous books since the early 80's when the book was written already pointed the way to the prevalence of computer devices such as laptops, tablets and smart phones that occurs today.

The plot is also more intriguing. Character development is improved and the only complaint I would have is that Asimov spends a bit too much time going over the history of the "Seldon Plan" again and again when it should be fully understood by any reader who has read the previous books.

### **MARK BEN FORD**

There is an emotional appeal to soft sci fi that leads the unwary into romantic fantasy. The best hard sci fi is believable but can easily fall short of anything worthy of human belief. The great masters combine deeply spiritual meaning with plausability that provides a better basis for kindness and ethics and hope for meaningful human life than any religion. Asimov was among the first to achieve such an inspiring synthesis. It seems unlikely that we would have an orson scott card or a greg bear if it were not for the loveable old atheist who showed the way to combine wisdom and compassion without making any overt reference to the historical buddha.

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