



Blood of the Cosmos

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The second book in Kevin J. Anderson's Saga of Shadows trilogy, a riveting science fiction epic. 'Anderson hits it out of the galaxy again' - Booklist, starred review, on Dark Between the Stars

An epic space opera of the titanic conflict of several galactic civilizations against a life-destroying force of shadows, a dark cosmic force that has swept through the undercurrents of the human interstellar empire...

The intertwined plot, overflowing with colorful ideas, a large cast of characters, and complex storylines, spans dozens of solar systems, alien races, and strange creatures.

As the second book of the trilogy opens, the humans and Ildirans having narrowly escaped annihilation at the hands of the Shana Rei and their robot allies in Book One, are desperate to find a way to combat the black cloud of antimatter of the Shana Rei. The mysterious, alien Gardeners, who had helped them previously turn out to be a disaster in disguise and because of them, the world tree forests are again in danger. This opens up a second front in this galactic war. Believing they have found a way to stop their dreaded enemies, a new weapon is tested, but it's a horrible failure, throwing the human race and its allies to the brink of extinction.

Blood of the Cosmos Details

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Author : Kevin J. Anderson

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From Reader Review Blood of the Cosmos for online ebook

Kelly says

There is a lot of repetition in this series, but I am listening to the audio version and can get distracted, so the repetition isn't a bad thing. The Saga of the Seven Suns and this series are good enough to ignore the repetition, and keep listening. On to Book 3.....

Ciara says

The writing definitely has shortcomings. It's repetitive and not particularly stylish. Things are largely explained in third person omniscient instead of demonstrated or covered in dialogue. However, I like the characters, and I always wanted to learn what would happen next. The world and plot are interesting and engaging. It's enjoyable.

Note: I listened to one of the series as an audiobook, and it may suit that format better since the repetition makes it forgiving for distracted listeners.

Cathy says

I still liked all of the characters, they're all well-drawn and almost all are actually likable too. Despite the multitude of characters I never had trouble distinguishing who's talking or keeping track of all of them, much less so than in many books with only two points of view. There's a glossary of characters and terms at the back of the book but I never needed it, despite the many points of view, locations, historical events, and everything else, including the year since the last book (which I don't think I liked quite as much?) and my generally terrible memory. I think that says a lot for the writing being good at giving me the clues I need to spark my memory, usually without info dumps. Though there was a very welcome extensive "The Story So Far," at the beginning that was just a huge info dump, but it wouldn't have been nearly enough for the 600+ page book without smart cues in the writing.

But it did bug me when the author made a character act like an idiot just to advance a plot point. The green priest who had the most to gain from protecting the bloated just blurted out the secret of them to a Roamer (coincidentally a b-list character who's skymine was in trouble because of the ekti-x). The priest had reason to not be at his best but he also had many more reasons than most to know that that secret needed to be kept, he wasn't likely to comment on it with anyone casually, the whole scene was really unbelievable.

It's still primarily a series for fans of the original Saga of the Seven Suns series though. It isn't that you couldn't read this trilogy and enjoy it. It's just that you wouldn't understand the significance of most of it. Most of the characters are either from the first seven books or kids of characters from the first seven books. And even when Anderson recaps or briefly explains who they are you can't really get a feel for that kind of history in just a few short sentences. Like the Exxos, the evil robot who is a major character in this series. He just does not seem scary or even particularly significant in this book. There's no sense of the long history of his people or the role that they played in the last war. He feels like a toady. Fans of The Saga of the Seven Suns would know that that is really not what the Klikiss robots are all about, would have a whole different

sense of them.

Some things did come across quite well though. I thought the verdani and the worldtrees and the idea of the green priests were explained very well and felt as vivid and realistic here as ever. It's one of those ideas that I can never decide if I'd like or not. I always wonder how a survey of readers would go on that. All of the information in the world available at a touch, instant communication too. But it seems to have put books, at least reference books, out of business. I'm not sure that would/could actually happen with the numbers of low number of priests and costs the author seems to be suggesting though. Anyway, they come across with that sense of magnificence and alienness and familiarity at the same time. I think everything about the forest and the trees should really work even for new readers.

There are other things that work as well, I'm not suggesting that new readers won't enjoy the action and adventure, the interesting characters, etc., etc. It's just that the characters aren't all that deep because despite being the second huge book in the trilogy, there are tons of characters and there's only so much you can tell about each with this style of many short point of view chapters. So without really knowing the background it might be hard to really feel the connection to them that someone who read the other seven books first would be able to feel. But it might still be a fun series for them. Space opera light would probably be how I'd describe it. It's definitely easy reading, despite the size of the book. It's kind of nice to have an alternative to some of the heavy, dark, military space operas that have been coming out so much lately. My general preference might be for something in between, a bit more character oriented but still on the lighter side, but that's neither here nor there. It was a fun book. It's always enjoyable to watch Anderson do his juggling act with his points of view with he's really on the ball and I thought he was mostly was here, there were only a few times when I got annoyed that a character was repeating him/herself a lot. Overall it was a book that fans should enjoy and new readers might well enjoy as well.

Julie says

Blood of the Cosmos

Another excellent book from Kevin J Anderson. I absolutely love this author. He gives you an excellent space opera that doesn't get confusing with technical jargon.

Melissa Goodall says

Always a pleasure reading Kevin J Anderson.

prcardi says

Storyline: 3/5

Characters: 2/5

Writing Style: 2/5

World: 2/5

Sometimes a sequel makes you look back on the first in the series and hold it in higher regard. The sequel

can enrich characters whose identities had yet been brought to fullness, it can provide further depth to institutions or technologies and their relationship to society, or maybe it will bring together storylines or viewpoints in such a way to show you that the author had been cunningly juggling complicated relationships and plots all along. On the other hand, there are sequels, such as *Blood of the Cosmos*, which sap the wonder and accomplishments from their precursor. So the characters are the same people doing the same things with the added wrinkle that.... they're doing it someplace else. The technologies and the conflicts are the same except that.... they're bigger. The revelations and twists remain as a promised, the difference being that.... well, actually there's no difference; the same things are promised and the revelations put off until the next book. This second in the *Saga of Shadows* trilogy exhibits all these attributes.

The story still has some momentum and appeal; I very much doubt anything here would deter Anderson fans or *Saga of the Seven Suns* devotees. The author still manages to squeeze something additional from the mini-chapter format and shifting viewpoints perspective. There are enough plot developments and new problems and solutions to entertain. The single greatest flaw of the book is that it aspires to be an epic but lacks the complexity to pull it off. "The Story So Far" prologue was a several page summary of the events in the last book. One of the challenges of a sequel is how to re-familiarize the reader with the characters, boundaries, and stakes of the story in an aesthetically pleasing way while complementing the new story. The summary approach is a blunt, lazy device in any circumstance. This particular summary was especially hamfisted: overly long, odd details, simple prose with a choppy functionalism. It was additionally awkward, however, because it didn't replace the reviews and reminders in the story. Thus we get additional flashbacks, commentaries, musings, etc., that explain who the characters are and their relationship to others. There was no need, then, for the prologue; in fact, the experience would have been better without it. Anderson doesn't stop there, however, with the reviews and summaries. They occur throughout the book. Sometimes the exact same phrasing and description is used; one can see the copy/paste function at work. That is a reasonable way to write a first draft. You stick on some placeholders intending to come back and rework the descriptions, add a little nuance or a tweak that delivers something extra, but Anderson didn't come back for those revisions. This is something an editor should catch, and one has to be surprised that a publisher with the reputation of Tor didn't do more. Those writing and editing flaws are magnified, however, by Anderson's decision to keep the characters to a very limited two-dimensions and the conflicts nearly identical to what was written in book one. Nearly all of the characters are exactly who they were in book one. There's little attempt at growth or depth; in fact, what we get are repeated reminders of the singular qualities that we are supposed to know about them. So their dialogue reinforces a single trait: cold-bloodedness, indecisiveness, insecurity, genius, tenderness, militarism, etc. Then their actions reinforce those same traits. Then the omniscient narration reiterates those same traits. Over and over and over again. The worldbuilding, too, has this over and over and over again problem. I think now that I liked *The Dark Between the Stars* more than was warranted. Not having read the seven-part *Saga of the Seven Suns*, the world was new to me. In this second volume, I had already tired of revisiting the same places decorated with the same descriptions. If this is what the *Saga of the Seven Suns* was like, then readers could have skimmed much of this. One bonus that might have been available to followers of the full saga is the interactions with characters from the original series. They work fine in this story for readers coming to the series anew, but perhaps there was an added level of anticipation or satisfaction that I wasn't able to access. I'll read on to *Eternity's Mind* and finish the trilogy. I don't expect much from Anderson at this point, and if the final volume is like this, then he's not going to be an author I seek out. Still, the problem of repetition aside, there is little here to annoy a reader. The characters are two-dimensional, but there's so many of them that you get plenty of variety. Most of the environments are already familiar, but they're neat environments. The plot is recycled, but Anderson is capable enough at generating a mild tension. It was a mediocre book, and I'd much rather read one like this than a bad one.

Phrynne says

First Kevin J. Anderson wrote the Saga of the Seven Suns which consisted of seven books and now he has followed up with a further three called the Saga of Shadows about the same characters and their worlds. This is the second of those books so I feel I know the characters really well!

And you need to know them well because there are very many of them and the author moves his story to a different group of them in each chapter. As a result each chapter ends on a cliff hanger and the reader has to wait many pages until a resolution comes around. As a page turning technique this is brilliant.

As with all the others this was a very long book but I enjoyed it hugely and am looking forward to the next one.

Conal says

The continuing adventures in the Saga of Shadows trilogy and this picks up right where the *Dark Between the Stars* left off. This one might suffer a little from middle book syndrome as you see lots more war, death and destruction happening between the Confederation/Ildiran alliance and the Shana Rei but nothing really gets resolved yet. Still a quick and fun read and really looking forward to the last novel in this series.

4 stars for a fun read and recommended for space opera fans along with those following the Seven Suns/Saga of Shadows books.

Kelly says

I like the overarching story, but the story is so fragmented that you only get around 4 pages per person before it switches to another character. I will still read the last one but I feel frustrated while reading it.

Les says

Another great installment of this exciting space opera trilogy from one of the genre's finest exponents. It continues the series immediately from where *The Dark Between the Stars* left off, and gives further truck-loads of the same fast-paced action and bigness which are hallmarks of Anderson's epic stories.

Like the previous books, for a kick off we're given a decent story recap which is a great feature of the series, one of the key things which make these books so readable. You can come back into it after some time away and quickly pick up the story again, brought back up to speed with key events and plot elements that jog the memory sufficiently to enthusiastically get right back onto the roller coaster. That's exactly what this series is, a fast-paced action science-fantasy space opera with most of the tropes that make this type of thing so appealing. It's fantastic science fiction, full of the sense of wonder that the genre is famous for and there are so many things to help you get lost in it.

All of the familiar players return and many of them begin to take on larger roles in the story, which evolves at a breathtaking rate. We learn more about the dark and insane Shana Rei and their diabolical plan for the universe, aided still by the murderous Klikiss robots who are now seeing things for what they really are. The

enigmatic Bloaters, the strange organic nodules found in deep space and abundant source of ekti-x stardrive fuel, remain an anomaly for the moment. A few more subtle clues are offered about their essence and I'm very eager to learn what these are all about. I'm anticipating something big from them. The background to many of the characters continues to be fleshed out, recounting much of what was presented on the *Saga of Seven Suns* which will further help readers who haven't read that earlier series. The action is practically non-stop and I was always eager to return to the book after having put it down, always treated to something spectacular whenever I did. The world building is nothing short of spectacular.

The large science-fantasy elements to this story are superb; the magical realm of the worldforest on Theroc with the trees' instantaneous communications across the universe, facilitated by the fascinating green priests, the inter-dimensional and matter-manipulating abilities of the Shana Rei and the mind-bending Faeros who, along with the Hydrogues, are again going to play pivotal roles in the story. The Onthos aliens, who made their grand entrance at the end of book one, once tenders of another ancient worldforest, are sheltering on Theroc and take on a new more sinister role. Big things are going to happen with the worldforest and the green priests in book three.

As you can see, there really is so much going on in this story and I'm assuming that any reader of this would have at least read *The Dark Between the Stars* and maybe even the *Saga of Seven Suns*. If so they'll know exactly what to expect. The large scale of the story makes this a superb escapism read and I usually found myself reluctant to "snap out of it" after a session in the pages. Huge marks for pure entertainment that's for sure.

It's looking like it's going to be one hell of a climactic conclusion to the trilogy because the story is still building. I'm preparing myself for quite a ride in book three *Eternity's Mind*. I highly recommend this book and series to lovers of space action and adventure. Sure, there are more "intellectual" space opera works out there, but for pure entertainment (which is exactly what this is intended to be) it cannot be beaten.

Santos says

Just could not bring myself to finish this book. The first book was long and has tons of characters with their own story lines in it and a bit slow at times but did keep moving forward. The second book however just felt like more of the same, stuck in the middle and going nowhere. I don't mind long books but this felt just like a rehash of the first with nothing to move the story forward I felt. Now the third books is out. Do all the character story lines come together in the end, I'll never know at this time. I am not going to spend anymore money on this series at full price to find out. I'll wait till it goes on sale or see it on Bookbub.

A. Roy King says

"Blood of the Cosmos" is the second novel in Kevin J. Anderson's space-opera series, "The Saga of Shadows." This series is supposed to be a trilogy, and is actually a sequel to the previous seven-novel series, "The Saga of Seven Suns."

Yes, it's a long story. It all takes place in a future time, when humans have developed an empire spreading out into the "spiral arm" of the galaxy. Along the way, they have run into alien races, some of which are pretty powerful and pretty crazy.

I find these stories engagingly complex and fun to read. I know some readers don't like Kevin J. Anderson, so maybe I'm just easily entertained.

Cleanness Rating: * * _ _ _

This novel only gets two stars out of five. There's some profanity, but the main issue is a fair amount of violence, some of which gets gruesome.

ARK -- 23 October 2016

Michael Nalbone says

I am glad I bought all three before starting. The Second One ends with a stunning blast.

Kéké says

Well, I'm sad to say that this saga is disappointing compare to its prequel. If the "Saga of the Seven suns" was a revelation, wonderfully written, K.J. Anderson has somehow missed something in this one.

Pay attention that the Universe in which we're evolving is still amazing, but the literature style don't make it easy to red. Each time the book switch from characters, we're rewarded with its biography so far, even if we've been reading those events it 50 pages ago. I start to mind it at the end of the first book, the eagerness to read the sequel of the first Saga being strong, but the second book has totally dissolve that.

I started to skip the first 5 pages of each new chapter to avoid the revival of the same event I've already read 5 times.

Even it makes it more difficult to read, I repeat it, the Universe is still very pleasant and refreshing.

Avidan says

Another excellent installment by Kevin J. Anderson. My only complaint is that the constantly shifting viewpoints means it takes a long time to come to resolution; there's a portion in the middle where five consecutive chapters basically end with "something is coming..." The payoff is well worth it, though.

Also, Elisa is the worst.
