



# Foundation's Edge

*Isaac Asimov*

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## Foundation's Edge Isaac Asimov

At last, the costly and bitter war between the two Foundations had come to an end. The scientists of the First Foundation had proved victorious; and now they return to Hari Seldon's long-established plan to build a new Empire that the Second Foundation is not destroyed after all-and that its still-defiant survivors are preparing their revenge. Now the two exiled citizens of the Foundation-a renegade Councilman and the doddering historian-set out in search of the mythical planet Earth. . .and proof that the Second Foundation still exists. Meanwhile someone-or something-outside of both Foundations sees to be orchestrating events to suit its own ominous purpose. Soon representatives of both the First and Second Foundations will find themselves racing toward a mysterious world called Gaia and a final shocking destiny at the very end of the universe!

## Foundation's Edge Details

Date : Published December 31st 2010 by Bantam/Spectra (first published October 28th 1982)

ISBN : 9780553293388

Author : Isaac Asimov

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# From Reader Review Foundation's Edge for online ebook

Clouds says

**Christmas 2010:** I realised that I had got stuck in a rut. I was re-reading old favourites again and again, waiting for a few trusted authors to release new works. Something had to be done.

**On the spur of the moment** I set myself a challenge, to read every book to have won the Locus Sci-Fi award. That's 35 books, 6 of which I'd previously read, leaving 29 titles by 14 authors who were new to me.

**While working through this reading list** I got married, went on my honeymoon, switched career and became a father. As such these stories became imprinted on my memory as the soundtrack to the happiest period in my life (so far).

*Foundation's Edge* won the Locus Sci-Fi award in 1983, finishing ahead of *The Golden Torc* (sequel to the previous year's winner), *2010* (the sequel to Arthur C Clarke's classic *2001*) and *The Crystal Singer* (the first in what, my wife and Mother assure me, is a fine Ann McCaffrey trilogy) to name just three.

I've read the Foundation series twice in my life, and *Foundation's Edge* was one of the six winning books I had previously read before I began my Locus Quest.

The first time I read the Foundation series as an awe-struck pre-teen, I'd have instantly given the whole series a 5-star review: it was a story that became a foundation stone (excuse the pun) of my love for sci-fi.

Let's get this out of the way: Asimov's Foundation series is required reading for anyone with more than a passing interest in science fiction. If you've not read it yet, put it on your list!

Returning to Asimov in my mid twenties I was expecting to be disappointed. Some issues are unavoidable – much of the characterisation is shallow and doesn't develop far and there series as a whole tends to repeat plot devices with surface variations – but overall I was pleasantly surprised.

Asimov tends to remind me H.G. Wells. That may sound extreme considering *The Time Machine* was written in the 1890s while *Foundation's Edge* was released in the 1980s, but the Foundation series was conceived back in the 50s. Wells and Asimov may represent the best of pre-WW1 and post-WW2 sci-fi, but their formative cultures have more in common with each other than post-2012 audiences.

To me, their stories are now are charming combination of dated ideals and visionary speculation.

This is one of the few Foundation novels which can stand alone, so I can heartily recommend it to all - not just fans of the series.

I'm no longer blown away as I once was, but it's still a very enjoyable read!

**After this I read:** Ilium

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## **Derek Davis says**

I didn't plan to read the "later" Foundation books because most attempts to reinvigorate an early, highly successful series (and except for "Lord of the Rings," no original series of the '50s and '60s was as successful as the Foundation trilogy) usually leave you somewhat embarrassed for the author.

Not here. Rather than trying to reanimate the sword-and-hoopla of much of 1950s SF, Asimov writes us a 450-page logical argument. You might think that would be enough to give Socrates a headache, but, as the master storyteller he always was, Asimov keeps you hanging on every unexpected but perfectly reasoned turn of plot.

By "logical argument" I mean a warring of intensely bright minds trying to one-up each other's motivations and uncover the structure behind a constantly reorganizing viewpoint of political and social organization.

Roughly 200 years after the original stories, the Foundation has taken peaceful control of nearly half the galaxy's million colonized worlds. The Foundation believes that the secretive Second Foundation has been exterminated, but we (of course) know that it still lurks on the former Empire home world of Trantor, controlling the unfolding fate of the galaxy through subtle but benevolent mind-tuning.

There's no need to list more facts, because this is not a fact-based novel. It's a constantly unfolding and interfolding of ideas through the truly deft use of mind games. And it works only because Asimov created superb characters who speak to each other not in didactic paragraphs but in a genuine attempt to explain the situation to each other. We, the readers, are but eavesdroppers.

One thing from the original series remains the same, and it's always seemed both silly and endearing to me. Despite the fact that the galaxy is home to a quintillion human beings (or, one royal shitload squared), their fate always hangs on tiny a handful of isolated minds, who meet two or three at a time out behind some planet where any two spaceships can always conveniently find each other, like neighborhood rudeboys dreaming up a heist in the parking lot of the Pep Boys' warehouse.

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## **Diego Fernández says**

It is really amazing that got me with lot of surprises. I knew something from the second book and I given the task to theorise that I was right and it was. I think for book fair on October I'm going to buy the other books. Damn, I'd like to ask much questions to Asimov, but that's maybe in other life when I die. xD ha ha ha. Let's go for the fifth!

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## **David (???) says**

4.5 Stars

Definitely a better read than the The Foundation Trilogy, as some friends had suggested. :)

Having written this much later in life (early 1980s, 32 years after the publication of the previous Foundation book Second Foundation), Asimov's writing style seems to have had improved than from the 1950s. The book won the Hugo Award for best novel and the Locus Award for Best Science Fiction Novel in 1983.

Although the book is self-contained, the story in this book is a continuation to the original trilogy, and it is recommended to read this only after reading the first three books.

Mysteries (if any) are very well-maintained, while reading the book until its last page is interesting. Some of the themes mentioned in the book were not new to me, and as a result have not really happened to put me in a state of awe, as a result of which my inability in giving it a perfect five-star rating. However, I was glad to see those embedded themes, and the series' integration with Asimov's other series of his books.

Some of my questions which I had conceived while reading the original trilogy were particularly attended to by the author, for which I am glad, such as the question of Earth in the Galactic Empire's History, and the possibility of other life-forms. These concepts have now been well-integrated.

Now on to the next in the series: Foundation and Earth :)

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### Stephen says

4.0 to 4.5 stars. Excellent book, but not as good as the original trilogy.

Winner: Hugo Award for Best Science Fiction Novel (1983)

Winner: Locus Award for Best Science Fiction Novel (1983)

Nominee: Nebula Award for Best Science Fiction Novel (1983)

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### Mahdi Lotfi says

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### Luca Ambrosino says

English (Foundation's Edge)/ Italiano

«The First Galactic Empire was falling. It had been decaying and breaking down for centuries and only one man fully realized that fact. He was Han Seldon, the last great scientist of the First Empire, and it was he who perfected psychohistory-the science of human behavior reduced to mathematical equations»

The story so far: a large part of the galaxy is under is controlled by the Foundation, and the Seldon Plan, in place for 500 years, is perfectly progressing. So perfectly, enough to raise doubts about its existence...

Here we come to chapter four of the Foundation series (if we do not consider also two preludes, Prelude to

Foundation and Forward the Foundation, and one sequel, Foundation and Earth). And we come probably to the best among these four, written 30 years later after the publication of the previous three books. A more mature Isaac Asimov distributes science-fiction ideas about the colonization of the universe left, right and centre, increasingly persuasive and tantalizing. The sensation that in the distant future described by Asimov the loop will be closed is strong now. Only one more book. We can do that.

Vote: 8

«Il Primo Impero Galattico stava crollando. Erano secoli che si stava sgretolando e disfacendo, e solo un uomo si rendeva pienamente conto della cosa. Quell'uomo era Hari Seldon, l'ultimo grande scienziato del Primo Impero. Era stato lui a perfezionare la psicostoria, ovvero la scienza del comportamento umano espressa in equazioni matematiche»

La situazione finora: la Fondazione controlla oramai buona parte della Galassia, ed il Piano Seldon, in atto da 500 anni, procede perfettamente. Troppo perfettamente, tanto da generare dubbi sulla sua stessa esistenza...

Giungiamo al quarto capitolo del ciclo della Fondazione (se non contiamo anche i due preludi, Preludio alla Fondazione e Fondazione Anno Zero, e il sequel Fondazione e Terra). E giungiamo probabilmente al migliore dei quattro, non a caso scritto ben trent'anni dopo la pubblicazione dei primi tre. Un Isaac Asimov più maturo, che distribuisce a destra e a manca fantascientifiche teorie di colonizzazione dell'Universo sempre più convincenti e stuzzicanti. La sensazione che nel lontano futuro descritto da Asimov si sta per chiudere il cerchio in maniera decisiva è forte. Manca un solo libro. Ce la possiamo fare.

Voto: 8

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### Adrian says

Although written much later than the original Foundation trilogy, this book in my opinion is on a par with them. Not only is it a great story, well written as ever by Asimov, but after having read the Foundation novels, the Robot novels and the Empire novels (some many times), you realise how cleverly this book starts to bring everything together the way Asimov intended.

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### Denisse says

Asimov surrounds me everytime I read his books. This time he worked more on the characters and their interactions, which made the book even more fluent to enjoy. The writing style is still very simple, so even when the plot gets dense it doesn't bother and **everything Asimov has to say about the Universe, the human race, our minds as a group or a single person is so fascinated to me.** A very special book about balance, our decisions and how important they are. Second favorite behind Foundation. I really enjoyed this continuation.

*En una época extraña e imprevisible, nos aferramos con miedo al pasado.*

**Lo más page-turner de Asimov que he leído hasta ahora.** La trilogía de la Fundación original es más seria, por decirlo de un modo, con Los Límites de la Fundación se divierte más sin dejar su estilo y sin arriesgar la trama. Hay personajes más activos, diálogos más fluidos y un misterio más interesante. Digamos que solo deja de meterse tanto con los problemas sociales y nos adentramos más a una aventura espacial mientras el Plan de Hari Seldon está a mitad de camino.

Como siempre, este Plan se ve amenazado por alguna disputa y/o pensamiento desviado y ahora para prevenir la catástrofe se debe enderezar el camino. Y como siempre, **la resolución final es contundente, imaginativa e ingeniosa al mismo tiempo, lo que hace del libro una experiencia increíble de forma redonda.**

*Lo único que debe hacer es mirarse atentamente a sí mismo y entendera a todos los demás.*

Otro gran detalle son las dos grandes referencias a otros libros del autor, te hablan sobre el pasado prehistórico del Primer Imperio Galáctico y te pica la curiosidad por leer esos otros volúmenes ~~de los cuales ya tengo uno yei!~~

En general, esta cuarta entrega de la serie trata más acerca de lo que escapa a ambas Fundaciones, su razón de ser y su papel en la historia. **Ha sido muy interesante y te deja con muchas ganas de leer Fundación y Tierra...**es una pena que no lo encontrara en la Feria del Libro. Espero lo traigan pronto. Recomendado para quienes disfrutaron la trilogía principal.

*Si hubiéramos esperado hasta que la seguridad fuese doble y triple y cuádruple e infinitamente grande, habríamos esperado siempre.*

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## **Timothy Freeland says**

In his fourth installment in the Foundation Series Asimov blunders and completely drops the ball. While the first three novels did a marvelous job of telling the story of The Seldon Plan (The True Main Character of the Foundation Series), Asimov decides to toss what was a very good plot aside in favor of connecting the Foundation Series to the Empire and Robot series.

I was flabbergasted as a *dues ex machine* arrives to serve only one purpose (make everything fit together). Not only was the sudden twist horrible, it was a giant hole unto itself. The intervention of Gaia would never have been needed if they hadn't interfered in the foundation's existence.

Supposedly Gaia calls together the Mayor, the Speaker, Trevis together because without intervention the First Foundation would have gone on conquest and subjugated the Second Foundation or the Second Foundation would have focused on Physical strength and taken a more forceful hand with the First Foundation. None of that would have happened if Gaia had stayed out of the whole event!

Think about it: The Mayor wouldn't even have thought to look at Seyshell if Gaia hadn't have orchestrated events to have Trevis go there, and the Second Foundation wouldn't even have had to the inclination to deal with the new physical power of the Foundation if the Gaian's hadn't have, again, revealed themselves to the Second Foundation by interfering with a corrected Seldon Plan.

If anything, the Gaian's should have destroyed the mentalic shields of the First Foundation as an apology for destroying the whole Seldon Plan by shrugging of responsibility for The Mule.

Terrible. This book was a complete disappointment.

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### **ttrygve says**

This was, like its predecessors, an enjoyable story. I enjoyed the premise for it, the pacing, and even the characterization is very much improved over the earlier Foundation novels (however little that may be saying).

But I cannot review this book without spoiling it. So read no further if that bothers you.

The real shortcoming is that Asimov abandons (at the very end) the first two foundations to have yet a third organization secretly pull strings from behind a curtain. I get that they're benevolent, that's fine, but Asimov spent the first three books building up the predictive powers of psychohistory as thoroughly grounded in scientific fact and experimentation, and vetted and improved upon by the Second Foundation, only to tear it down in this book and say -- without a bit of explanation -- that it wasn't good enough to account for the growth rate of technology, despite the fact that that's a big part of what it had been designed specifically to do and had done just fine at thus far.

But now we end up with yet a \*third\* organization working to construct a new second empire. This one, like the second, also operates in secrecy in order to achieve its goals, and so \*again\* Asimov comes back to ignorance as a key to solving problems created by knowledge, and that just seems like a huge betrayal of the principles he seems to be trying to embrace. He seems to have this split desire to deify science and the pursuit of knowledge in general most of the time, while embracing ignorance at other times. It's just too incongruent, in that regard.

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### **Apatt says**

First published in 1982 almost 30 years after the last volume of the iconic original Foundation Trilogy, namely Second Foundation, I was skeptical that Asimov would be able to maintain his mojo post the Golden Age of Science Fiction when he was publishing his most iconic sci-fi stories and novels. Of his 80s books I only read The Robots of Dawn which I thought was quite good but not in the same league as his 50s robot novels The Caves of Steel and The Naked Sun. Still, I liked it enough to rekindle my interest in the Foundation series of which I have only read the original trilogy in my teens. For some reason I neglected the series from the 4th volume onwards and to catch up I did not want to simply dive into it as it was decades ago since I read the previous books and I have gotten most of the background details. So I reread the trilogy a couple of months ago and enjoyed it very much in spite of already knowing the major plot twists. The Foundation saga remains quite potent after all these years.

*Foundation's Edge* is the 4th volume I speak of. It is set 500 years after the establishment of the Foundation. The Seldon Plan is going swimmingly and the First Foundation is at the peak of its strength having dominated all the neighboring planets through its superior technology and military might. The people of the Foundation believe that the threat from the mind controlling Second Foundation has been eliminated and



there is now only one Foundation, theirs. Alas someone always shows up to rock the boat otherwise we would not have much of a story. Enters one Golan Trevize, a Council member and an original thinker; a dangerous combination.

It occurs to Trevize that the Seldon Plan has been going too well of late and there is surely something wrong when things are just too right. It is unnatural for things to always go according to plan, some deviations must occur. Trevize believes this is an indication that the Foundation is being surreptitiously controlled by puppet masters from the dreaded Second Foundation who will ensure the Seldon Plan reaches fruition and then step in as lord and masters. Voicing such a controversial idea turns out to be unwise as he is summarily kicked off the planet Terminus (home of the Foundation) with a secret mission to locate the Second Foundation in order for the First to do away with them once and for all. Many surprises ensue.

In spite of not being action packed as such, I find *Foundation's Edge* to be a gripping page-turner. The plot tends to move through dialogue rather than narration. Every page seems to be stuffed with dialogue as characters are always discussing or arguing about something. The climax is also played through dialogue. This is a surprisingly effective method of storytelling as the book is never dull. Asimov writes reasonably good dialogue, but his characters do have a tendency to belabor their points at times.

Asimov's major strengths are his epic ideas, world building and plot; these are the reason he is one of the most popular sci-fi authors of all time (possibly *the* most popular). His world building here is better than ever, I particularly love the telepathic society and culture of the Second Foundation on Trantor and the strange people of Gaia. It is also lovely to see the robots and their "Three Laws" worked into the Foundation universe, plus a clever explanation for the absence of aliens in the Foundation universe.

Asimov is often criticized for his utilitarian prose and thin characters (the same criticisms leveled toward most Golden Age authors). While he was no Dickens or Oscar Wilde in term of prose, characterization and dialogue I find these criticisms a little unfair. His prose is not extraordinary, but it is uncluttered and very readable, it is never clumsy or semi-literate; he never insults the readers' intelligence. His dialogue is often full of amusing witty banter and sardonic remarks. As for his characters, while some of the supporting characters are indeed flat his central characters and protagonists are often memorable. After decades away from his books I still remember very well Hari Seldon, The Mule, Susan Calvin (from *I Robot*), Elijah Baley and R. Daneel Olivaw (from several robot novels). As for *Foundation's Edge's* characters, Golan Trevize, and several lead characters are quite vivid and memorable also. In contrast I can not remember a single character from Arthur C. Clarke's books (except Hal 9000 and Dave Bowman); no disrespect to Sir Arthur though, he has his own brand of greatness.

The climax of *Foundation's Edge* is just wonderful and the epilogue leads nicely to the next book *Foundation and Earth*. Asimov always seems to enjoy telling his Foundation stories tremendously and his enjoyment is infectious. Can't wait!

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## Tfitoby says

Expectations are funny things you know. Working in a secondhand bookshop I see so many copies of this title on my heavily discounted shelves all the time, nobody buying it even at \$2; I was under the impression that it must've been a very poor addition to the series because every other Asimov gts bought instantly. How wrong I was.

This is quite possibly my favourite of the Foundation novels so far, not including the early robot/Lije Baley books, it would have received 5 stars if it was for the final three parts of the story letting it down with its wishy washy 'communing with nature' nonsense.

It's quite a bit longer than the original trilogy but Asimov manages to pack the story with intrigue so you barely notice the length. It's fascinating, exciting stuff, taking the series in a whole new direction with new, interesting characters that you can't help but get behind as they each undertake a personal mission that will inevitably draw them all together for an unexpected ending.

The 400+ pages fly past, I missed sleep as I couldn't stop myself from starting another part, desperate to know what was going to happen next. The great news is that you don't need to have read the preceding 13 books in the Foundation universe to enjoy this one, the self-contained storyline works completely for once and can be enjoyed by newcomers to the series and old fans alike.

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### **Jan-Maat says**

Sort of brick-like sequel to the earlier Foundation books.

One can read and enjoy this book and the one that comes after it and as a pair they serve to tie the Foundation series back to the Bailey/robot books.

They take the Foundation idea in a slightly different direction by introducing a factor and the possibility of a factor outside of the original psychohistorical calculations made by Seldon. Which rather renders the original stories superfluous. The drive of late Asimov to completeness and neatness, tying all of his stories together into one superbundle is accomplished at the cost of the integrity and cleverness of those original stories from the 40s and 50s.

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### **Davide says**

[2018]

Questo è l'unico libro di Asimov che ho riletto, una ventina di anni dopo la prima volta, con sensazioni miste, non prive di una certa delusione. In seguito, ho pensato che fosse meglio tenersi stretti i ricordi - vaghi ma meravigliosi - delle prime letture quindicenni.

[1987]

Quarto capitolo della trilogia della fondazione, questo libro prende in considerazione un tempo meno lungo della storia galattica asimoviana.

[2010]

Le tre stelle sono la media tra le quattro della prima e le due della seconda lettura.

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