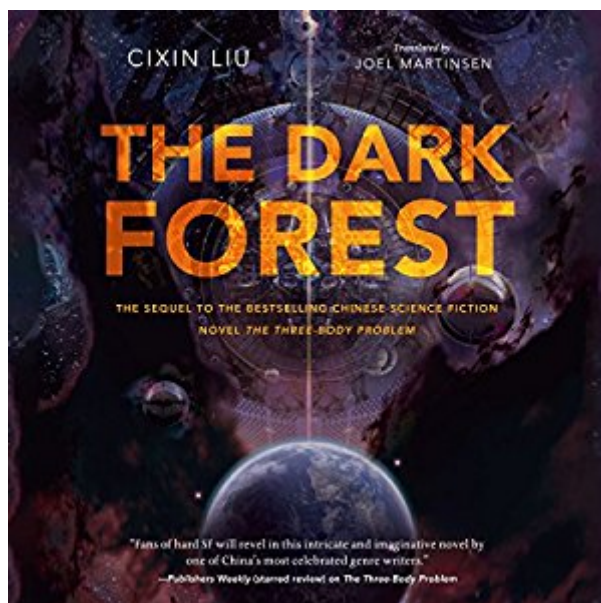


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The Dark Forest



Synopsis

This near-future trilogy is the first chance for English-speaking listeners to experience this multiple-award-winning phenomenon from Cixin Liu, China's most beloved science fiction author. In *The Dark Forest*, Earth is reeling from the revelation of a coming alien invasion - in just four centuries' time. The aliens' human collaborators may have been defeated, but the presence of the sophons, the subatomic particles that allow Trisolaris instant access to all human information, means that Earth's defense plans are totally exposed to the enemy. Only the human mind remains a secret. This is the motivation for the Wallfacer Project, a daring plan that grants four men enormous resources to design secret strategies, hidden through deceit and misdirection from Earth and Trisolaris alike. Three of the Wallfacers are influential statesmen and scientists, but the fourth is a total unknown. Luo Ji, an unambitious Chinese astronomer and sociologist, is baffled by his new status. All he knows is that he's the one Wallfacer that Trisolaris wants dead.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bought on Day 1 and finished on Day 3. It was a fantastic Sci-fi reading experience from beginning right to the end. You just couldn't stop feeling surprised and stunned by those choices and decisions made by the characters all the time, regardless they matter or not. The unthinkable scope of the plot and sceneries just repeatedly stroke your imagination and nerves like forever. Twists and turns in both large and small scale are blended into the whole logical story-line, which is so well-arranged that it turns out to be better than a mind-bending blockbuster movie. Comparing with the first volume,

the new translator localized the writing in a more "English" way, making the reading for English speakers feel like reading an original Western literature instead of an Eastern-Western translation, which may not be too good for "preserving" the original writing, but... there isn't too many Chinese culture/history related content in this second book anyway. One more thing to add, unlike vivid human beings appear in regular full-length fictions, most characters Liu sculpted in his works look like symbols instead, which I fancy is on purpose, being probably the only "obstacle" for this book in the way of becoming a true saluter to those real Classics back in the Golden Age of Science Fiction. Definitely a powerful Hugo/Nebular contender and a likely winner next year. For your own sakes, read it yourselves.

The second book of this series, *The Dark Forest*, has its obvious shortcomings. The most glaring flaw I personally feel is Luo Ji (the leading character of the second book)'s romance with his "dream girl". But how many engaging love stories have been told by scifi authors anyway? In addition, for American readers who have enjoyed the Chinese cultural/historical aspects of book one, reading *The Dark Forest* requires no understanding of the Chinese culture. Some of my friends also think that the Wallfacer project does not make much sense, but I disagree. This book deserves a five-star rating thoroughly. Unlike the *Three-Body Problem* that bears the burden of slowly laying the contextual foundation for the plot of the entire book series, the pace of *The Dark Forest* moves rather quickly from the beginning. There is no three-body computer game anymore. But a different game is played between four Wallfacers and their respective Wallbreakers. Each Wallfacer tried and failed in searching for a way to counter the looming invasion. Yet it does not seem to matter because, before the first alien fleet arrives, human technology has accelerated and risen to a level that rivals the alien race. Yes, inter-planetary peace is afoot. Part III of *The Dark Forest* is the climax and most dramatic stage of the entire trilogy series. Both Luo Ji and Zhang Beihai are two leading characters of the book who are awakened from century-long hibernation to witness the human race's first physical contact with the aliens. I am not going to the details because it will spoil the fun of your reading. Suffice it to say there are several brilliant twists of the plot that forces the question: what is humanity after all? In my mind, the best scifi novels are not so much about the light-speed space dashing or spectacular galactic wars, but how we define humanity when facing an alien encounter or invasion. *The Dark Forest* just did that, in a chilling way. Almost like a social scifi, the socio-psychological elements give the book a provocative depth and resonance. Zhang Beihai comes out almost as a Vulcan from *Star Trek*. Not only did he go

undercover for many centuries, but also he came up with a shockingly unhuman solution to save the human race in the most dire moment. Morality is of no concern. Just another rational but dark choice in the face of desperation, which is quite consistent with the pervading sense of pessimism about humans through the first two books. This book presents an interesting theory about how different civilizations view each other in the vast universe, hence the reason for the book title *The Dark Forest*. It's similar to the famous prisoner's dilemma where betrayal or hostility seems to generate the biggest rewards. The overall concept reminds me of the Inhibitors in *Revelation Space* by Alastair Reynolds. Again, the theory does not produce any good prospect for cosmic harmony. If you think the Three-Body Problem is a bit depressing, the Dark Forest gets bleaker. And of course, Liu is not done yet because the final installment of the trilogy is called *The Dead End*. The Three-Body Problem was the finalist for both Hugo and Nebula awards this year. I will not be surprised if the Dark Forest actually wins it. That's how GOOD it is.

I loved the moody mystery of Three Body. While this book retains the unfortunate emotional flatness of the original, it also retains the boundless creativity and ability to deliver delightful and horrifying surprises to the reader. While it isn't without flaws, it is nonetheless a classic. My only advice is to read it now and guard yourself against spoilers.

As an avid reader of sci-fi, it was refreshing to read the Remembrance of Earth's Past series. It's inventive, well-written series so and Liu is a master at keeping enough information from you to keep you guessing what everyone is thinking. If you like realistic explanations of alien technology then this is your book. It's not like you reading an astrophysics textbook but it's not Star Wars soft either. Liu aims right for the sweet spot for believable sci-fi. I'll admit, I was a little skeptical about the sequel because I didn't know if it would be able to top the fantastic Three Body Problem. Dark Forest dragged a bit in the beginning and I feared that he wouldn't be able to top the first novel. But the story keeps building and building until the second half of the book where all the ideas really come together. You can feel the pressure humanity is under to survive or enjoy their days as the timer counts down to the doomsday battle. And it's so fun and exciting to see a character's plan to come through as they create their own fate only to be put in a tougher dilemma. Liu moves into the future with this book. Unlike the previous book, Liu takes the story into the future. Three Body spent quite a bit of time in revolutionary China and was one of the fascinating aspects of the story. I like that I

got a little cultural lesson as I read. There is less of that in the sequel. We have a hero but he isn't our focus. We are given an assortment of characters to root for or against. They aren't the most developed characters I've read but I didn't find myself caring too much about that the world itself is the main character here. I even found myself empathizing with the Trisolarans, they have their rational reasons for wanting to exterminate humanity. Who's to say we wouldn't do the same if we were in their position?. I'm not leaving any spoilers here. There are no boogeymen in this universe unless you're talking about the other hunters in the dark forest. You're going to have to read the book figure this one out. It's great, read it. Five Stars!

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