



A Forest of Stars

Kevin J. Anderson

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Five years have passed since humans set fire to the gas-giant planets, unwittingly committing genocide of the Hydrogues--an infinitely powerful species of aliens--and igniting a war of epic proportions. Meanwhile, as humans struggle to fight against increasing hostilities from the Hydrogues, they learn from the Worldforest that they have awakened an ancient, fearsome, and merciless enemy in the Hydrogues. And when the water-based Wentals and the sun-dwelling Faeros are found, will humans finally have the allies they need? Or will they be caught in the middle of a war that could break apart the galaxy...This thrilling, multi-volume chronicle of a legendary war that spans the galaxy is written in the vein of the best works of Peter F. Hamilton, Dan Simmons, and Frank Herbert.

- Hidden Empire (Aspect, 7/02) has won acclaim from many popular Science Fiction writers, including Margaret Weis, R.A. Salvatore, and Kate Elliot. Its 7/03 Aspect mass market publication will tie in with the hardcover publication of A FOREST OF STARS.
- Kevin J. Anderson has sold millions of copies of his Star Wars, Dune, and X-Files novels, making him one of the best known writers in the genre today. He has been nominated for the Nebula Award, the Bram Stoker Award, and the SFX Reader's Choice Award.
- Foreign rights to A FOREST OF STARS have already been sold in the U.K.

A Forest of Stars Details

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From Reader Review A Forest of Stars for online ebook

John Cook says

Another satisfying chapter in the Saga of Seven Suns epic. But the ending of the book was not nearly as compelling as Hidden Empire.

Michelle says

I like these books by Kevin Anderson because each chapter follows a character. They are great for reading in places where you have small snippets of time like the bathroom, the doctors office, the car waiting to pick up kids, on the morning train, etc. The chapters are short 3-4 pages and only follow one character at a time so it's not too confusing. The characters are also richly developed and the plot is always thickening. Just when you think you've figured it out the author throws something else in the mix which naturally prolongs the saga. Great fantasy, but not for children. It's a bit graphic.

Aidan Hamill says

Fantastic. Background story is more massive than I'd thought from Hidden Empire. Still after another entire book there's so much left to find out about the history never mind what's to come.

Adam says

Did you ever read a book where you wanted to know what happened in the overall story, but frequently got bored reading the book? Well, that's exactly how I felt about A Forest of Stars, and the first Saga of Seven Suns book, Hidden Empire. There are WAY too many characters, and at least a thousand too many unimportant plot threads in the first two books. It got to the point where I was relieved to have finished this book so that I wouldn't have to read about some of the truly despicable characters any more.

I decided instead to hit up the modern-day Cliff Notes, and checked Wikipedia for plot summaries and character bios to find out what happens in the five (!!!?!?!?!?) other books in this series. I can't imagine having to slog through five more books to find out what happens.

It's a common criticism of this series to say that it was way too long, and I can totally see why. If I was Anderson's editor, I would have cut at least 50% of the words in this book and sent it back to him with only a three-word instruction: "Be more concise."

The only reason this gets two stars instead of one is that the overall ideas presented in the books are very interesting. It's simply the execution that feels like the dog poop on the beautiful lawn of the grand concepts.

Nathaniel Turner says

With this book, I am doing something that I have never before done (at least not for a work of fiction): I'm reviewing it without finishing it.

With that caveat in mind, let me begin by saying that I actually had no particular problems with this book. I did not leave it unfinished because I hated it, or because it had detestable writing, or because it was poorly formulated or characterized--it was none of those things. Rather, I did not finish reading it because it did not excite me.

Part of the problem is that I'm not reading this contemporaneously with its writing. That is to say, I know for a fact that there are seven books in this series. I also know that at least two books in the series follow the same set of characters, and more than likely, the others do as well. Sure, some characters die and others are introduced, but for the most part, we're going to stick with the same folks throughout, I imagine. The upside of this is continuity and familiarity; the downside is that a lot of the questions that are posed in early books will not be answered until the last book of the series.

I like the book, but I do not like it so much that I am willing to suffer through unanswered questions for five more tomes. Mr. Anderson does an excellent job of keeping up with a large number of characters, with the side effect that these books are relatively long; they are pleasant enough, but they are not so pleasant that the idea of reading five more was enticing to me. As I was reading through this one, he introduced so many new questions, on top of the questions left unanswered from the first book, that I felt overwhelmed with a desire to know more--while simultaneously being unwilling to trudge through the emotional and relational problems of these characters just to solve the mystery.

Other factors that led to my putting this book down for good include an expansion of my complaints from the first book. The sexual content hinted at in the first book is expounded upon in this one. While still far short of actual pornography, the sexual content is more explicit and more pronounced than it was previously. Once again, you may think that it adds realism to the characters, but I'd simply prefer to limit the characters' sexual conduct to implication.

It's not a bad book. I imagine the series continues to thrive and is enjoyable to the end. I just don't have the stamina for it, not when there are so many other things on my reading list that are so much more entertaining.

Eric Braun says

This book is pretty good. Anderson begins to really focus in on his characters here, even adding a few new ones. Yet he thickens the plot by changing some of the main characters in a unique yet for-seable way. The first two books could probably have been condensed down to one, but if it were, I feel that the characters wouldn't be as strong. So far, this is one of the best examples of character development I've seen in a while. The tense seems to shift ever so slightly, but it's not hard to adjust to. I'm interested to see what this series may have to offer in the next few novels. Trees growing spaceships? I can't wait to see/read that.

Mike (the Paladin) says

Again a pretty good book. The story continues to advance, though the political machinations are getting more convoluted also. The more "alien" of the aliens humans have come in contact with are lining up in a war where humans mostly need to keep their heads down...and human traits, the ones we've always had, are still there.

The book/story seems to be bogging down a bit in this volume but not excessively so. The ending, opening new "lines of inquiry" and not really giving a final answer to any of the existing problems and questions definitely speaks of "more story to come".

Moses says

Yawn. I made it through the first, but...

I brought the second with me on a trans-pacific flight for entertainment during the 15 hours in the air. I was so uninterested in the story and characters that I gave up on it after a few hours. I haven't touched the book since and will donate this to the local library.

Kevin J. Anderson seems to be a fantasy writer in a scifi world and doesn't know how to make an interesting story (by this, I refer to the seeming inability of fantasy writers to write without going into painful detail about everything). After several chapters into the second of an N-book series, I only know that the premise for the main plot line is bogus and that I cannot remember any character from chapter to chapter. None of them are compelling.

Anderson resorts to magic to accomplish instantaneous communication and provides a silly mechanism for fueling faster-than-light travel. I expect my scifi authors to either understand their technology and science or not to mention the mechanisms with any more detail than broad brush strokes; not every person understands how something as ubiquitous as a computer or an airplane works now, so why would everyone understand how FTL travel works far into the future?

Anyway, my big problem with Anderson's Saga is that it's boring; the cycling through character stories as chapters means that even with the endless repetition for the first several pages of each chapter, I could not bring myself to remember or care about any of the characters. I was frustrated with the plot devices; Anderson doesn't know science, technology, or engineering, so he makes up crap based on crap he read in a non-science magazine. Yes, I know he worked at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, but as a technical writer, not as a scientist. He apparently doesn't do science/technical/engineering research for his books, so I am unwilling to include him in the genre of scifi.

Meh. I read another of his book and have no plans to read any more; 2.5 is more than enough.

A~ says

Spoilers Ahead

Short Summary: Trees want to grow, Roamers want to trade, Hydrogues want to kill everything and Faeros just want to set the world on fire. And if your plan to survive an apocalypse depends on breeding a five year old super psychic you are probably boned.

For this review most of it will be contained in the list of characters, once you see the list you will see why. Also part of my review is copied from my review of the previous installment. If the author can do it then I can as well.

Notes:

Humanity has split into three separate groups. The three groups have trade agreements and other connections to each other but the peace between them is tenuous.

Terran Hanseatic League: Centered on earth this government represents most of the humans. Think of Rome mixed with America with spaceships capable of laying countries to waste...wait no that sounds a bit too much like predictions for a Trump America.

Roamers: An independent collective of spacers. They are industrious and work in all of the places and jobs that most humans and aliens do not want. That friend who once said "I think I want to go gold mining," then got drunk grabbed some TNT and walked off into the snowy arctic...only to show up two years later with a bag of gold, six barrels of oil, a ton of steel and ready to do business.

Theroc: An aristocracy consisting of one planet with a lot of trees. These people are the descendants of a generation ship that found a planet that was covered in forest. Rather than raze the ground they decided to work in harmony with nature. It helps that the trees can talk to them. The trees are also telepathic and can instantaneously talk across any part of the galaxy. They can also keep all the information given to them and can process it in ways humans can't even comprehend. They also have priests who go through a ritual where they get turned green and can live off of sunlight if needed. The priests are the ones who speak to the trees. They also turn get absorbed into the trees if they die near them.

There are Three alien races.

The Klikiss: An ancient race of beetle people, it is thought. They are extinct and the only things that remain of them are abandoned cities and thousands of robots that they built.

The Ildrians: They all follow the Mage-Imperator, who has the ability to sorta feel/see what any other Ildrian is doing. He knows all the history of his people and is all powerful, seems like a good job except for the ritual castration thing he has to go through to get the power. The Ildrians come in many shapes and sizes bred to do specific jobs, called Kiths. Need to build a ship, there is a kith for that, need to remember history, remembrance kith, taken a shit and now need wiping...I wish I was joking, there seems to be a kith for that, at least for the Mage-Imperator.

The Hydrogues: A race of creatures that live inside gas giants. They live under UN-imaginable pressure and can best be described as silver mercury. They have war globes of immense power and are very hard to take down. They declare war on the races that live on planets because humanity turned one of their worlds into a star (and humanity couldn't find the right card to apologize for that at the hallmark store.)

Jess Tamblyn: Roamer: After the death of his brother, who was betrothed to Cesca Peroni, Jess is finally at a point where he thinks their love can come to the light and not be seen as an insult to his dead brother.

Unfortunately it's the normal, boy goes to declare love to the girl who is ruler of the Roamers, girl is engaged just days before to the king of the tree people kind of thing. Doing the noble thing he goes away and sulks in a ship alone gathering star drive fuel. He also gathers water in space And when the water starts to speak to him, rather than think he has gone crazy he decides to set off on an epic quest to bring back a water based race called the Wentils. His first stop has him get blown up.

King Peter: Terran. He was known as Raymond Aguerra, but after being kidnapped by the Hansa Chairman he was made king of everything (well almost everything). However unlike the first king Peter is not willing to be just a figurehead. He stands up to the chairman and brings up valid points about the new robots that are being brought online using Klikiss technology. Instead of being listened to he is married off and then almost killed.

Esterra Theron: Theroc. The forth born of the family she is not given a predefined role in the Theroc world. All she wants to do is pick flowers and have fun. Instead she is married off to King Peter in a move to try to strengthen the Hansa Theroc ties. It's her sister's fault(I wish my sister found me a rich wife). She is the one who discovers the plot on her and Peter's life.

Prime Designate Jora'H: Ildrian Royalty Kith. Learns that his love the green priest Nira is alive and that she is being held with other kidnapped humans on a colony world in a breeding program designed to make a super-mutant psychic. He decides to go rescue her, but before he can his father kills himself thus making Jora'H go through the ceremony to become Mage Imperator Jora'H Part of this ceremony is castration and after that he has a few other things in his mind to keep him away from Nira.

Nira Khali: Theroc. She is being held in a breeding camp with the descendants of the generation ship Burton. No one believes her stories that there are other humans, that being salves is not the normal human condition. She gives birth to four children. One of them being the child of Jora'H She is not allowed to keep them but she does meet her daughter when she is five years old.

Adar Kori'nh: Ildrian Warrior Kith. He is still in charge of the Space Navy. Despite his best work and inventiveness he is fighting a losing battle of retreat with the Hydrogues. When the Mage Imperator dies it gives him a short window to do what he wants. And what he wants is to a kamikaze flight into a gas giant. He dies, along with 46 other ships, but empty the gas giants of danger.

Cesca Peroni: Roamer. Now leader of the Roamers she finds her life very hectic. But looks forward to Marrying Jess Tamblyn. However, before she can make the announcement she is offered marriage by the king of Theron and has to decide on what is best for her people.

Tasia Tamblyn: Roamer. Still a roamer at heart she has advanced in rank within the EDF. When she learns of a planned attack on a Hydrogue infested gas giant she realizes it is also the location of a secret ship building facility of the roamers. So like Princess Leiah she dispatches her faithful compy droid to warn them, what is wrong with email? Despite the battle being a disaster she does wonderful and is given the chance to explode a gas giant.

Rlinda Kett: Terran. A merchant with only one ship left to her name and no fuel to fly it with she is given a chance to do a secret job for the Hansa. She flies Davlin to a Klikiss world. And together they find a way of trans world instantaneous transportation, the Klikiss Portal.

Basil Wenceslas: Terran. A bastard. The real ruler of the Hanza empire he has his fingers in everything. Unfortunately he realizes five years after the fact that he had lost a finger. He decides to send Davlin to find

out what happened to the archaeologists.

Davlin Lotze: Terran. He is starting to enjoy his cover life on the planet Crenna. With his vast knowledge he stops an epidemic of "Orange Spot" but before he can go back into the limelight he is recalled to work and picked up by Rlinda. He explores the Klikiss ruins where Margaret disappeared and doesn't find her, but does find a physics breaking trans-world portal.

Anton Colicos: Terran. Son of Margaret and Louis he is worried about them and is the one who reminds Basil that they were out exploring and had sent no updates. Before he gets his answer he is given the chance of a lifetime to go and research the Saga of the Seven Suns (roll series credits). After arriving he is soon chosen to travel with the head Remember Vao'sh to go to the planet of XXXX. The planet spends half the year in the dark and is full of unwatched Klikiss robots...I am sure it will be perfectly safe.

Mage-Imperator Cyroc'h: Ildrian Royalty Kith. He sees the results of his plans start to affect his relationship with his son, Jora'H His hiding of the breeding program, his lies about the green priest among others. Seeing his son about to do what he believes will endanger the kingdom he does the one thing that will stop his son. He ingests poison knowing that his death will bind his son to the throne and give him the knowledge that only the Mage-Imperator has, and in doing so earn forgiveness.

Beneto Theron: Theroc. He is enjoying being a green priest in the forgotten world of Corvus Landing. His life is filled with hard work, lack of wealth, and luxury(he is really boring). Unfortunately, the Hydrogues didn't ask him what he wanted before attacking Corvus Landing. Beneto dies as he lived among his trees.

DD: Terran. The little robot that worked for Margaret. He has been transformed by the Klikiss robots in order to join them in their quests. They hope for him to break the first law of robotics that is built into him. He spends the time upset at seeing how much the Klikiss robots have done in preparation to kill off humanity and the Ildrian

Dobro Designate: Ildrian Brother of the Mage-Imperator Cyroc'h, he is charge of the planet Dobro which is the home of the breeding experiments of the Ildirans. Over the last 200 years humanity has been bread with the various Ildrian kiths to try and develop a super psychic that would be able to communicate with the Hydrogues. After his brother's death he uses the small window of opportunity where there is no control of his actions to kill the green priest Nira.

Reynald Theron: Theroc. The oldest child of the Theron family he is crowned king of Theroc. His first move is to ask for Cesca's hand in marriage, both because he was taken with her and because it would be a good alliance. However, before he can marry her Theroc is attacked by the Hydrogues. Despite offering a strong defense that manages to take down several Hydrogue war ships it is obvious that the World Forest is doomed, until the Faeros (Beings made of Flame) show up. He is both crushed and burned to death, and Cesca is now free to marry Jess (who get's blown up).

General Kurt Lanyan: Terran: Supreme commander of the EDF he is as stymied as the Ildrian Adar when dealing with the Hydrogues. With his fleet starved for fuel he allows piracy of Roamer vessels carrying star ship fuel. When the Roamers threaten to make it public he casually tells Fitzpatrick that he is leaving the room and if anything happened to the Roamers while he is gone it would not be a terrible thing.

Robb Brindle: Terran: Lover of Tasia he discovers the home location of the Hydrogues that attack Boone's Crossing. During the attack of the home planet he offers to be a diplomat in a last ditch chance for peace. He see's pretty lights and is killed.

Kotto Okiah: Roamer: He is the chief inventor of the Roamers. He spends most of this book trying to make a mercury like planet livable. He fails, but doesn't get burned up.

Sarein: Roamer: The oldest daughter of the Theron family she is made the ambassador of Theroc to the Hansa empire. She is in bed with Basil while trying to get Theroc in bed with the Hanza league. Thinking it would make the unity longer she suggests that she marry King Peter as a sign of allegiance, instead he picks her sister.

Osira'h: Ildrian Unknown Kith: Daughter of Jora'H and Nira. She is born with telepathy thanks to the heritage of the Thism from her father and the world trees priesthood of her mother. Combined this makes the gift strong. She is able to read moods and in some cases minds. She has spent her life in constant work to improve these gifts because she is the one hope for the Ildrian race in the war against the Hydrogues. One night she finds a mind that is familiar to her. Following it she finds herself outside of the breeding pens. Here she is reunited with her mother. The reunification is short but before being dragged off and beaten to death Nira fills Osira'h with her memories.

Del Kellum: Roamer: The owner of the shipyards of Osquivel. He has to hide the ship yards inside the asteroid belt of the planet in order to keep it from being discovered by the EDF in their ill fated raid on the Hydrogues of Osquivel.

Rossia: Theroc. Green priest one of the 20 who volunteer with the EDF. Her only role in the book is to be a communications officer during the Osquivel attack.

Zhett Kellum: Roamer. Daughter of Del Kellum she had a thing for Jess Tamblyn until it became a well known secret that he wanted Cesca. After the battle of Osquivel she saves a EDF soldier named Fitzpatrick from an damaged escape pod. He along with 30 other EDF soldiers are kept in the shipyard unable to be released because they know too much.

Admiral Stromo: Terran. He is in charge of the Zero grid point part of the EDF (Earth). His one high point in his career was when he put down a rebellion. He was in-charge of a disastrous attack on Jupiter against the Hydrogues. During a scientific expedition to Oncier's, humanity's man made star, he observes five balls of flame shoot out of the star and away.

You get all that?

Short Summary: Trees want to grow, Roamers want to trade, Hydrogues want to kill everything and Faeros just want to set the world on fire. And if your plan to survive an apocalypse depends on breeding a five year old super psychic you are probably boned.

Nia Dragin says

The Forest of Stars is the second book of the Saga of the Seven Suns series. Taking place after 5 years, the writer has thrown us into a world where the humans are struggling for survival trying to fight a war that is more than just about the decimation of their gaseous planet. Now this has exploded events into that of an elemental war where beings of fire, water and earth are fighting the Hydrogues, beings of ice and lightning. That's just amazing...

Full Review here:

Andrew says

The plot certainly moves a lot faster in *A Forest of Stars* than it does in its predecessor, but the story suffers for the same reasons - two-dimensional characters and constant retelling of information. In a series where worldbuilding and plot are the main selling points I can understand the writer wanting to really drive in the exposition, but I've heard about the hardness of *Roamers* that many times that it's starting to feel like filler.

There's nice development of the plot and many things going on at once, so it's enjoyable to read, but it feels as if it's written by somebody who doesn't understand people and conversation very well.

Clay says

Five years after the first volume and things are going pretty much as we expect. The Hansa still think they can beat the Hydrogues if they can find a bigger stick, the Ildirans continue to plot and keep the Empire running, and the Roamers are trying new techniques to harvest the critical ekti.

Anderson built the "world" in "*Hidden Empire*" and this book continues the plot threads started there. We get more details about the initial conflict with the hydrogues from 10000 years ago and discover there were more combatants from that war than we knew about. The Hansa try to strike back at a discovered hydrogue planet, several characters are called upon to make tough choices for political and cultural expediency, King Peter continues to push the boundaries of his handlers, the renegade Klikiss robots are still hatching something, and the worldforest has been keeping a secret or two.

I thought this novel might be on cruise control, but there are many exciting encounters and some chapter title characters don't make it. Startling decisions by characters throughout lead to some shocking confrontations and conclusions. There is hope going forward and some discoveries will lead to more interesting situations in the upcoming books. I'm looking forward to reading the next in the series.

Greg says

Fans of Kevin J Anderson who finished the very famous and equally controversial) book one would have gone straight onto book two. I must admit that i did, but I found myself more than a little worried about how the book was shaping up. The first half was very slow, very, very political, and not very actiony. Nor was it very science-y.

But kept the faith, i did, and I kept reading. And as soon as i reached the half way mark of *A FOREST OF STARS*, the action picked up, the chapter ending cliff hangers returned, and massive plot twists began to appear out of nowhere that changed the course of the story line forever, and as an added bonus, gave the reader a cascading series of goose bumps and memories that will not only stay with you for years, but will make you a fan of Mr Anderson for ever.

I said at the end of book one that the reader is not completely sure that the Hydrogues are the story's true bad

guys. Up to that point, they had acted entirely in self defence, albeit with no demonstrable intent to communicate toward the aim of a truce. New evidence and information has since come to the surface that the Hydrogues and the Ancient Forest on Theroc played out an ancient war thousands of years ago. New players in that war have since been discovered (or, re-discovered) and with this information came the book's principle "sense of wonder" moment. The Wentals. Damn, i love me those Wentals... But yet again, we know little of their true intent.

And those damn fools who lead and control the Hanseatic League, who jump at the first glimpse of an advantage, no matter how small minded and desperate it makes them appear to be. And yet love remains a demonstrable force in this book, principally for King Peter and his lovely Queen Estarra, but for others, the chance for true happiness and contentment has gone, for ever.

I compared THE SAGA OF THE SEVEN SUNS to GAME OF THRONES and STAR WARS in my review of book one, but having finished book two only a few moments ago, i dont think this claim is fair to Mr Anderson. Reading SOTSS i get a feeling that the story itself is infinite, just like the genre he is writing in. GAME OF THRONES is fantastic, dont get me wrong, but its set in a universe where we all know the boundaries. They say that in space, no one can hear you scream, but in Kevin J Anderson's exquisite universe, no one can hear it when you inhale a giant lung full of air as you encounter and try to absorb a story defining moment. And that no one can see you cry as you come across a chapter so beautifully written describnig two souls whose love for each other is as infinite as the universe itself.

Four stars for this book. I cant wait to start book three.

Now, do you see.... sci fi isnt just for geeks, its for romantics, too.

Faz says

I have heard a lot of glowing reviews for Mr. Anderson's works, and figured I would start with the Saga of Seven Suns anthology since the premise was right up my SciFi alley. I was severely disappointed. While the basis of the stories was interesting and held great promise, the excruciating details of people, conversations and relationships turned me off. When there was action to be had, it was limited to very little writings, and had none of the depth as in the rest of the book. I 'read' this as an audiobook, and if you didn't pay attention at the right time (even for a second or two), you would completely miss the action sequences. However, you could easily fast forward a few chapters and still get all the details needed for the many and ever growing cast of characters. Why invest in character and relation development (or rather, pages upon pages of descriptive text), only to have that character killed off? I painstakingly suffered through 5 of the books, hoping each would get better, but they got worse. If I had to read the pages instead of listening to the audiobook, I would have probably thrown it away.
