



City of a Thousand Suns

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In a city halfway across the galaxy an alien intelligence was addressing the strangest delegation since time began: "We have called you here to help us. Our universe has been invaded by the Lord of the Flames. He has been gathering information on many worlds for a full-scale attack. He is now preparing his final effort to make the planet Earth his initial beachhead..." On Earth, the Empire of Toromon, the highest hope of a radioactively blasted world, was unaware of the danger. But three persons within the empire suspected, the three who together would bear the brunt of a defense against a monster antagonist that had never given or asked quarter.

(Source: back cover)

City of a Thousand Suns Details

Date : Published 1965 by Ace Books

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Author : Samuel R. Delany

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Erik Graff says

I didn't get much out of this, but then I hadn't known of or read the preceding volumes--the publishers not making a point of this.

Gary Ellingson says

Samuel Delany City of a Thousand Suns

Initially, I found the concepts in City of a Thousand Suns difficult to grasp. However, once that obstacle was over, I became thoroughly enthralled in the story telling. Delany is a genius of imagery.

Teri says

This book was fantastically written. I have once again done that thing where I read a book from a series without realizing there were others I should have read first. My only issue with the book was that it wasn't so clear about what was going on in the overall plot sometimes (like I wasn't quite sure what the council from the other galaxy had to do with the whole story.) I suspect though that this is because I missed the first two books, which probably provided an explanation. That being said, my main reason for liking this book so much is the eloquence of the prose. This was a level of poetic writing most people can only hope to achieve and is almost entirely lost in contemporary writing. I'm glad I have a few more books of his waiting to be read on my shelves.

Gary4278 says

Delany writes in an expansive mystical manner that takes concentration on the part of the reader. Delany paints in vibrant colors. He masterfully captures the neurotic ramblings of a young Bipolar-esque literary protege in the character of Vol Nonik, an ex-gang leader and poet. Thoroughly enjoyable! Classic Delany. Thoughtful and poetic science fiction.

David B says

This final novel of Samuel R. Delany's trilogy about mankind facing a potential enemy from another galaxy is better than the previous two novels. Delany grew enormously as a writer over the course of this series, producing prose that is frequently poetic. The Lord of the Flames is a truly fascinating alien being. His book, however, becomes unfocused and loses dramatic tension as he becomes more interested in concluding his big statements on the nature of Man without attending adequately to the nuts and bolts of anchoring them in a compelling narrative with a satisfying climax.

Elysa says

I found this story very entertaining, and I loved Delany's simple yet elegant writing style. I read it in one sitting because it just kept pulling me through to the end. I highly recommend it.

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Nathaniel says

“You are trapped in that bright moment where you learned your doom.”

*

“Free to build or destroy they, too, approached the City of a Thousand Suns, to be struck by blue smoke, dispersed by sudden lightning, dropped from a web of silver fire...the red of polished carbuncle...the green of beetles' wings...”

David Bonesteel says

This final novel of Samuel R. Delany's trilogy about mankind facing a potential enemy from another galaxy is better than the previous two novels. Delany grew enormously as a writer over the course of this series, producing prose that is frequently poetic. The Lord of the Flames is a truly fascinating alien being. His book, however, becomes unfocused and loses dramatic tension as he becomes more interested in concluding his big statements on the nature of Man without attending adequately to the nuts and bolts of anchoring them in a compelling narrative with a satisfying climax.

Joe Santoro says

I think my favorite part of this book is the cover. While there is a plot, it's mostly just a box in which to put some (IMO) dated philosophy in... the main plot doesn't really go very far, and ends in a sudden and unsatisfying way.

While Delany does turn a few cool phrases, and there's one particular exchange between Jon (the main character) and an old soldier that was really profound, most of it was a lot of hot air. Granted, this is apparently the 3rd of three books, but the lack of having read the other two definitely wasn't an issue. Other than vague mentions of a 'war', there was really no connection.

The intro states that Delany was 22 when this was written, so perhaps he gets more coherent later, but this one is an easy pass.

James Proctor says

These early Delany novels are excellent. City is third of a three-parter and the peak of a satisfying saga. His character focus and attention to telling details in any given scene transcend genre. I often forgot I was reading stories of a far-flung future Earth. The author's linguistic-philosophic concerns are here in their nascency -these books were written in the early 60's- lending poetry to sections that might fall prey to being merely plot progression in a different writer's voice. Samuel Delany is singularly distinctive and can write of palatals and labials in a propaganda shibboleth without breaking either a sweat or the rhythm of the prose.
