



## Beyond the Blue Event Horizon

*Frederik Pohl*

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## **Beyond the Blue Event Horizon** Frederik Pohl

In Book Two of the Heechee Saga, Robinette Broadhead is on his way to making a fortune by bankrolling an expedition to the Food Factory--a Heechee spaceship that can graze the cometary cloud and transfer the basic elements of the universe into untold quantities of food. But even as he gambles on the breakthrough technology, he is wracked with the guilt of losing his wife, poised forever at the "event horizon" of a black hole where Robin had abandoned her. As more and more information comes back from the expedition, Robin grows ever hopeful that he can rescue his beloved Gelle-Klara Moynlin. After three and a years, the factory is discovered to work, and a human is found aboard. Robin's suffering may be just about over....

THE HEECHEE SAGA

Book One: Gateway

Book Two: Beyond the Blue Event Horizon

Book Three: Heechee Rendezvous

Book Four: The Annals of the Heechee

*From the Paperback edition.*

## **Beyond the Blue Event Horizon Details**

Date : Published November 7th 2000 by Ballantine Books (first published 1980)

ISBN : 9780345446671

Author : Frederik Pohl

Format : Paperback 336 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Space, Space Opera

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# From Reader Review Beyond the Blue Event Horizon for online ebook

## Tobin Elliott says

If the whole book had been written like the last couple of chapters, this would have been a five-star rating.

Unfortunately, the first three-quarters, while having the odd flash of entertainment, was reasonably boring. Even if Pohl had gone for more of a Ringworld-type feel, with uncertain explorers discovering new and exciting things. Yes. There was a bit of that, including the revelation of the Heechee prayer fans, but overall, it felt mostly stilted and dull.

And there was, like Gateway before it, an unusual amount of time spent discussing sex. It would have been fine had this led anywhere. I mean, you had a very young girl trying her best for four years to seduce her sister's husband. You have a young survivor who's so ridiculously horny that the first time he sees a woman, he whips it out and jacks himself off.

So when Pohl finally brings these two together? They wait. The girl suddenly, inexplicably gains a mature attitude.

But it wasn't just with them. Robin's wife actually risks bodily danger to be able to hump her husband.

To me, it felt like much of this was written by a very horny fifteen-year-old virgin.

On the other hand, the last three chapters of the novel, unfortunately telling much more than showing, took us on a whirlwind expansion of the entire universe. We learn much about the Heechee and what they can do. It's worldbuilding and it's fascinating.

So, as I said, had Pohl been able to incorporate those elements much sooner, and stayed away from the boring day-to-day minutiae of Robin's life, and added more zip into the exploratory sections, I would have enjoyed the book.

On a side note, it's stunning how dated this book has become, from the mentions of all the tapes still used in computers and video, to the one chapter that details a few seconds of the inner workings of one of the computer personalities ad nauseum. I'm sure it was all very cool and fascinating when the book was first released, but it's actually torturous to read now.

Because of this book, I have serious doubts as to whether I'll read any more of the Heechee saga.

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## Ali Berk Çetinbudaklar says

4,5/5

Pohl'un klasik Hiçi serisinin 2. kitabı. 1. kitaptan farklı olarak bu kitap daha iyi buldum denebilir. 1.ci kitaptaki az biraz Uzayda geçen "Uzayda Piknik" hissini alıyorsunuz.

Aslında 2.kitabı okuyunca 1. kitabın biraz daha giri? bölümü oldu?u, bu ilham kısmında temelleri olu?tururken fazlaca kullanıldı?? anla?ılıyor. 2. kitaba gelindi?inde artık bunu kabullenmi? oluyor ve bunun üstüne asıl hikayeye girmeye ba?lıyoruz. Ama o da ne?! Pohl bizi bu kitapta ?a??rtarak 1.ci kitaptan beri gizemlerinin çözülmesini iple çekti?imiz Hiçi ?rk?n?n üstüne beklenmedik ?eyler de servis ederek, asıl bombanın bir sonraki kitaplarda olaca?n?n sinyalini veriyor.

Kitabın ilk kitaptan farklı olarak yeni karakterler sunuyor ve olaylar? onlar?n gözünden ya?ama ?ansın? bize veriyor. Bu daha aktif bir sunum olarak okuyucuya geri dönüyor, sıkılmadan dikkat da?ılmadan okutturuyor kendini.

Son 30 sayfada daha bir güzelle?en kitap, bu güzelle?mesini aslında sonunu çok iyi ba?lamasına de?il de, bazı bilimsel teorileri kitaptaki olaylarla birle?tirip, bize "hard sci-fi" hazz?n? aslında çok da a??r olmadan damarlar?m?za enjekte etmesinden kazanıyor (Bir K. Stanley Robinson beklemeyin, bu kötü oldu?u anlam?na gelmiyor; edebi de?erini kaybetmeden bu bilgileri okuyucuya birle?tirmesi iyi yapan etkenlerden).

Ender Serisinden sonra 2. kitabın? 1. kitabından daha çok be?endi?im bir seriye daha kavu?tum denebilir. Umarım bu özelli?i kümülatif olarak di?er devam kitaplarında da sürer(3'te sürsün de ?imdilik, en son o Türkçe'ye çevrilmi? :D ).

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## Jon Norimann says

Pohl here continues the Heechee saga with more of the same. Book 2 in the series is a small part human archeology of alien technology, a solid dose teenage sexuality, a touch of facing death and quite a lot of stupidity. Some of the tech in the book is way beyond what can ever be reasonably expected to become reality and it seems to only get more and more speculative.

Beyond the Blue Event Horizon is not too long, an easy read and quite entertaining despite all the flaws. Although it makes no lasting impression it was just good enough to make me read part 3 of the Heechee saga, sometime, with no must reads on the shelf.

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## Gavin says

Beyond the Blue Event Horizon was a solid sequel to Gateway. Frederik Pohl's engaging writing style makes it easy for the reader to get caught up in the stories of his characters even when those characters themselves are not the most likeable.

Robinette Broadhead struck it rich in his time as a Gateway prospector but is still suffering from the feelings of guilt at how his last mission ended. He no longer goes on Gateway missions himself but has sponsored many other adventurers. One such group is a family of four. Their mission is to fly to newly discovered Heechee outpost in the Oort Cloud and attempt to move it closer to Earth. Broadhead and other suspect it might have been a food making facility of some sort and hope it can be used to ease the resources plight on Earth.

The story was interesting. The Heechee still remain a bit of a mystery but their technology is still pretty cool and we do learn a few of their secrets in this one. The POV cast was a lot more diverse. We got viewpoints from Broadhead, all four members of the family he sent to space, from a human boy who was discovered living on the Heechee facility, and even from a non-human!

As with the first book the characters are far from perfect examples of humanity but most of the time you find yourself rooting for them despite their actions.

This was a good sci-fi story. The Heechee Saga is definitely one of the better sci-fi series I've read over the years. It has the right balance between the characters and the harder sci-fi aspects of the story.

Rating: 4 stars.

Audio Note: Oliver Wyman gave a fantastic performance with the audio production.

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### **Marvin says**

Not nearly the equivalent of *Gateway* but that would be like asking Ken Jennings to win 74 Jeopardy games in a row. Oh Yeah. He did that.

Speaking of Jeopardy, back in the 80's I was browsing through the credits of the TV game show and noticed that one of the show writers was Frederik Pohl. "OMG" I thought, (I didn't actually think "OMG!". The internet was still in its infancy and so was internet speak) "He's writing questions on a game show now! I knew Sci-fi writers didn't make much money but Damn!". A year later I went to a Jeopardy taping as a friend of mine qualified as a contestant for the game show. I asked if I could meet Mr. Pohl and a man substantially younger than me (I was in my thirties) introduced himself. It was, of course, Pohl's son. We did have a nice but brief conversation.

OK, I'm done.

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### **Kevin says**

This is re-read for me. I first read the novel when it came out and I was barely an adult. At the time I thought it was the middle book of a trilogy and that the story suffered a bit for it, but now we know there were to be five books in this series and I have no idea why I ever thought it had middle volume syndrome. It's quite immersive!

The character motivations make a good deal more sense reading it now from a more mature perspective. The novel is far more upbeat than *Gateway*, thus far more enjoyable to me, but I can see why some found it not as groundbreaking. It is however solid science fiction the way it used to be during my own golden age. Some of the cosmology is already a little out of date, but the characters are interesting. Some of them I might like to hang out with -- if not in a stinky cramped spacecraft for three years as in the story.

My favorite character is probably Albert (Einstein), a much more lovable computer program than the

Sigmund von Shrink of the first book. It is well worth getting through the first three quarters of the novel featuring mostly character development (not a boring task by any means) to get to roughly the last quarter where great big awe inspiring vistas of time and space open up in ways only science fiction can achieve.

This is the good sense of wonder stuff I find so lacking in much of today's genre fiction.

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## Rafal Jasinski says

Drugi tom cyklu "Gateway" zaczyna się równie smakowicie, jak wstąpi do pierwszego odcinka drugiego sezonu serialu "LOST" - a co najważniejsze ma podobną strukturę i impakt. W pierwszej części serii postawiono masę pytań, tu już na samym początku poznajemy - trzymając się "lostowej" analogii - "mieszkańca bunkra", czyli mamy typowo "hitchcockowskie" tajemnice, następnie poznajemy kilku nowych, jakże interesujących bohaterów, po czym akcja gwałtownie zabija się z wydarzeniami z pierwszego "Gateway" i na scenę powraca ten sam - a jakże inny - Robinette Broadhead.

Jeśli już przy analogiach jesteśmy - to już w trakcie lektury tomu pierwszego - nie możemy oprzeć się wrażeniu, że twórcy gier Mass Effect czerpali pełnymi garściami (coś, a z czego? to oni nie czerpali?, można spytać) z tego właśnie cyklu Pohla. W "Za bieżącym horyzontem zdarzeń" wrażenie to się pogłębia. Nawiązanie w tej serii gier do cyklu "Gateway" jest całkiem masowe. Coś, wypada tylko pogratulować jej twórcom tego, że dobrze odrobili lekcje i "ciągali" od najlepszych, bowiem oba uniwersa chłonnie się z zapartym tchem.

Wracając do książki. Konstrukcja fabularna sprawia wrażenie miejscami nieco poszarpanej, jakkolwiek sposób budowania napięcia i rozciąganie uniwersum, wzbogacenie go o nowe zagadki i podanie kilku satysfakcjonujących wyjaśnień (mających, swoją drogą, solidną podbudowę teoretyczną) sprawia, że jestem kolejną z książek Pohla po prostu oczarowany. Od czasu, kiedy kilkanaście lat temu pochłonęłem klasyczny trylogię "fundacyjną" Asimova, nie doznawałem podobnych wrażeń i emocji w obcowaniu z literaturą science-fiction. Owszem, po drodze był Simmons, ale jednak...

Może się powtarzam, ale w "Gateway" jest wszystko, czego oczekuję od fantastyki. Przygoda, pewna bezpretensjonalność (ale nie tandeciarstwo), tajemnica a za nią jeszcze większa tajemnica, a potem kolejna, i tak dalej.

Uwielbiam!

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## Olethros says

-“Pórtico” no debería haber tenido secuelas para pasar a la historia como una novela todavía más grande de lo que ya es.-

Género. Ciencia-Ficción.

Lo que nos cuenta. Robinette Broadhead es un hombre potentado con unas inversiones muy sólidas pero sigue abierto a enriquecer su fortuna y, en el fondo, sigue amando a Klara y su recuerdo no le abandona. Cuando decide financiar una expedición a la Factoría Alimentaria heechee situada en la nube de Oort,

desencadena una serie de acontecimientos de consecuencias importantísimas. Segundo libro de la saga de los Heechees.

¿Quiere saber más de este libro, sin spoilers? Visite:

<http://www.librosdeolethros.blogspot...>

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## tENTATIVELY, cONVENIENCE says

review of

Frederik Pohl's [Beyond the Blue Event Horizon](#)

by tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE - July 6, 2015

I read Pohl's [Gateway](#) 1st in this [Heechee Saga](#). My review's here:

<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/15...> . I'm somewhat surprised to see that I read it 3 yrs ago. That's one of those time-flies-when-you're-not-having-fun-just-getting-older thingies. Skimming over my [Gateway](#) review I think I was more impressed by that one than I was by this sequel - wch isn't to say that I thought this was 'bad', it just didn't seem quite as inspired.

One idea that caught my fancy is that of "Gosh numbers":

"Gosh numbers are numbers which represent more than one quantity, so that when you perceive the coincidence you say, 'Gosh.'" - p 45

"“Ph, well,” said the Dead Man gloomily, “all right. Point-five degrees is the angular diameter of both the sun and the Moon as seen from Earth. Gosh! How strange that they should be the same, but also how useful, because it is partly because of this coincidence that Earth has eclipses. Minus-forty degrees is the temperature which is the same in both Fahrenheit and Celsius scales. Gosh. Two thousand twenty-five is the sum of the cubes of the integers, one cubed plus two cubed plus three cubed and so on up to nine cubed, all added together. It is also the square of their sum. Gosh.[“]” - p 45

""One. The quantities Tiny Jim referred to as 'gosh numbers'. These are numerical quantities, mostly of the sort called 'dimensionless' because they are the same in any units you measure. The mass ratio between the electron and the proton. The Dirac number to express the difference between electromagnetic and gravitational force. The Eddington fine-structure constant. And so forth. We know these numbers to great precision. What we do not know is *why* they are what they are. Why shouldn't the fine-structure constant be, say, 150 instead of 137-plus? If we understood astrophysics—if we had a complete theory—we should be able to deduce these numbers from that theory.[“]” - p 289

SO, of course, I had to do at least some cursory research on Gosh Numbers wch led me to:

<http://mathtricks.org/gosh-numbers/go...> where [Beyond the Blue Event Horizon](#) is discussed & quoted & then this follows:

"Well, that was a rather lengthy introduction, so I will not delay any further the first Gosh Number:

"1729

"1729 is the least number expressible as the sum of 2 cubes in two different ways:

" $1729 = 12^3 + 1^3 = 10^3 + 9^3$ "

"1729 is also the 3rd Carmichael number

"1729 is also a centered cube number, a dodecagonal number, a 24-gonal and 84-gonal number. The creators of the television cartoon Futurama thought so much of 1729 that they included it within the show on several occasions.

"GOSH!!"

The author of the above is one Steven Pomeroy.

One of the Heechee artifacts found in Beyond the Blue Event Horizon is a "couch" that enables a person to broadcast their dreams: "[...]We know that in human history many of the great inventions sprang up all over the world, apparently independently, maybe simultaneously. Are they Heechee suggestions, via the couch?" (p 87) Zeitgeists fascinate me, I'm sure I've been part of many. A more Ockham's Razor explanation for them than Pohl's fanciful suggestion might be that certain mindsets reach the same conclusions at the same time b/c they're 'obvious' next steps in the mindset's progression. In other words, Marconi & Tesla shared a similar cultural background & education that led to an 'obvious' next step being the radio. W/o this shared cultural & educational background this zeigeist wdn't've occurred. In other words, radio wasn't suddenly conceived of & made by a farmer w/ no scientific training. That, however, doesn't necessarily explain Tesla's ability to completely visualize inventions *before building them*:

"[...]I was about seventeen when my thoughts turned seriously to invention. Then I observed to my delight that I could visualize with the greatest facility. I needed no models, drawings or experiments. I could picture them all as real in my mind." - p 33, My Inventions, Nikola Tesla, 1995, Barnes & Noble Books

It might be interesting sometime to develop whole vast theories based on deliberate acceptance of probable typos & misprints as not accidents. EG: the above Beyond the Blue Event Horizon quote from p 45 re Gosh numbers begins "'Ph, well," said the Dead Man gloomily" w/ the "Ph" presumably intended to be "Oh" (as Pomeroy quotes it in his article).

Then, on p 129 it's printed: "But the relationship had been of suppliant and monarch" in wch "suppliant" was presumably meant to read "supplicant". But was it? After all, a "suppliant" is "a person making a humble plea to someone in power or authority" & a "supplicant" is "a person who asks for something in a respectful way from a powerful person or God". SO, what's the difference? According to <http://dictionary.reference.com/brows...>, the etymology for "suppliant" is "1400-50; late Middle English < Middle French, present participle of supplier < Latin supplic?re to beseech, supplicate" & *can be confused w/ "supplicant"*. The same source, <http://dictionary.reference.com/brows...>, provides an etymology for "supplicant" as: "1590-1600; < Latin supplicant- (stem of supplic?ns), present participle of supplic?re to supplicate; see -ant; doublet of suppliant".

& what's a "doublet"? According to Wikipedia:

"In etymology, two or more words in the same language are called doublets or etymological twins (or possibly triplets, etc.) when they have different phonological forms but the same etymological root. Often, but not always, the variants have entered the language through different routes. Because the relationship



between words that have the same root and the same meaning is fairly obvious, the term is mostly used to characterize pairs of words that have diverged in meaning at least to some extent.

"For example English pyre and fire are doublets. Modern words with similar meaning but subtle differences contribute to the richness of the English language, as exemplified by the doublets frail and fragile (both from the Latin adjective fragilis): one might refer to a fragile tea cup and a frail old woman, but never frail tea cup, whilst fragile old woman adds a dimension of meaning by implying emotional infirmity rather than physical." - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doublet...>

The point is, I don't see where suppliant & supplicant have diverged, they seem to have the same meaning - w/ suppliant coming 1st. What is Pohl really up to here? It's obvious to me that everything in this novel is just a smokescreen to hide the combined significance of "Ph" & "suppliant". Don't believe me? That's b/c yr pH balance is alkaline & I'm acid-tongued (both literally & figuratively). Further supporting my theory is this: ""That's not exactly a tenth of a number, Robin," said Sigfrid." (p 230) The careful reader will note that the psychoanalyzing program is credited w/ this sentence when it shd clearly be the science program, Albert.

("If you think back to high school chemistry class, you may recall that pH is an abbreviation for potential hydrogen. A pH number measures from 0 to 14 how acidic or alkaline a liquid is -- anything above 7 is alkaline and anything below 7 is acid. Water has a pH level of 7 -- it's neutral, meaning it has the same amount of acids and alkalis, which balance each other out." - <http://health.howstuffworks.com/skin-...> )

I don't want to give too much away about the story of Beyond the Blue Event Horizon - hence my punning tangent above. Shucks, I'm not really acid-tongued. Nonetheless, I 'can't' resist quoting this:

""They're called 'prayer fans', Wan."

""No, no," he shrilled crossly, taking it away from her and marching crossly into the chamber. "You do not pray with them. You read them. Like this."" - p 138

Let that be a lesson to you: the Bible & the Qur'an were meant to help keep kafirs like myself cooler in hot desert environments - *they're not for reading*. All those silly religious fanatics have got it all bass-ackwards.

The Heechee Saga is epic. "After more than three-quarters of a million years of rolling slowly around Earth; very distant sun, the artifact pulled itself into a new orbit and surged away." (p 202) That may seem a bit *too* long-term to wrap yr head around but think of this: Mayflies have an average lifespan of 24 hrs & their lifespan can be as short as 30 minutes ( <http://www.itsnature.org/what-on-eart...> ), humans in the US have an average lifespan of 78.2 yrs. Interestingly, the US is 38 in the list of longest-lived & Japan's at the top w/ 82.6. The average expectancy independent of country is 67.2 (males 65, females 69.5). ( <http://www.disabled-world.com/calcula...> )

SO, contrast a Mayfly living 30 minutes to a human male making it to 65: the human male lives 1,129,580 times longer than the Mayfly who "depending on the species and after hatching [...] mate, lay eggs and die." ( <http://www.itsnature.org..> again) We have time to notice them but do they even notice us? It's completely reasonable, if still only speculative, that there's another critter out there to whom we're naught but a Mayfly.

"Not much development occurred in the fifteen years between the removal of the colony from its prehistoric African home and Squint's death. The Heechee were not discouraged. In fifteen years, they did not expect much. They had much longer plans than that." - p 262

"They tidied up behind them, as they always did. Then they went away and allowed the rest of that particular experiment, among all their experiments, to run.

"For eight hundred thousand years." - p 262

Putting that in the human / Mayfly scale again: If the human male lives 1,129,580 times longer than the Mayfly by making it to 65 then the above "eight hundred thousand years" wd put the human male at age 46.

Thank you, Frederik Pohl, for stimulating me to do the above research.

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## **Rob says**

...I guess you could say Pohl took a bit more conventional approach in writing *Beyond the Blue Events Horizon*. It makes the book less groundbreaking than *Gateway* was and probably is part of the reason why it didn't win any of the awards it was nominated for. The scope of it is obviously much wider too, and the many switches in point of view makes it appear a bit less structured than its predecessor. If you view the story as the unveiling of (part of) a mystery, it makes more than enough sense to me. In the end I guess I agree with many of the critics that it is not quite as good a novel as *Gateway* was. I also think it would have been nice if it had been a little more self contained; if it were fantasy I'd say this book suffered from the middle book syndrome a bit. That being said, it is a good science fiction novel in the classic sense. Plenty of hard science, scientific speculation and a much larger scope than the first book in this series offer their own attractions. I guess it depend on what you want out of a novel but I thought it was an enjoyable read.

Full Random Comments review.

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## **Oscar says**

La historia, continuación de esa obra maestra que es 'Pórtico', tiene dos escenarios. Por un lado tenemos a Robin Broadhead, el que fuera protagonista de 'Pórtico', que financia una expedición hacia un artefacto Heechee, la Fábrica Alimentaria, que se encuentra en la nube de Oort, capaz de transformar ciertos elementos del universo en alimentos. Su intención es utilizarla para acabar con el hambre en la Tierra. Y por otro lado, está la propia expedición y sus miembros, que llevan viajando tres años y medio para llegar a la Fábrica. Ambas tramas me parecen interesantes, tanto lo que sucede con los artefactos Heechee, como lo que acontece en la Tierra con Robin.

'Tras el incierto horizonte' (*Beyond the Blue Event Horizon*, 1980), del norteamericano Frederik Pohl, sin llegar al nivel de excelencia de 'Pórtico', me ha parecido una muy buena novela. Me ha interesado todo lo que me ha ido contado, manteniendo mi interés hacia un final abierto al tercer volumen de la saga.

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## **Elar says**

A little bit slower paced and more philosophical than first book in the series. Fortunately readers learn many new details about ancient Heechees.

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## Jeraviz says

Es muy difícil hacer una continuación de un gran libro como es *Pórtico*, pero Frederik Pohl hace un digno trabajo en esta segunda parte. Continúa con las tesis principales que plantea en el primer tomo y gracias a que el punto de vista va cambiando nos permite conocer más detalles de los Heechee y de su tecnología. También sabemos más sobre el protagonista, quien tiene una evolución del primer al segundo libro muy interesante.

Y el elemento estrella vuelve a ser los programas informáticos que ayudan al protagonista en su vida diaria. Al igual que en *Pórtico* conocimos a una especie de Sigmund Freud que le psicoanalizaba; aquí conocemos a la copia de Albert Einstein, su asesor personal que permite a Robin, y al lector, conocer todos los detalles necesarios para seguir avanzando en la trama.

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## César Bustíos says

Ha sido casi tan bueno como *Pórtico*, los últimos capítulos del libro se vuelven emocionantes y terminé dándole un 4.

Robin, ahora millonario por los eventos ocurridos en el primer libro, financia una expedición a una nave Heechee que funciona como una Factoría Alimentaria. En este segundo libro se dan a conocer nuevas cosas sobre los Heechees y también sobre los motivos por los que Robin inició la expedición en primera instancia. Es, sin duda, un gran libro. Pohl es un maestro de la ciencia ficción.

Esta imagen parece ser el interior de una nave Heechee con ese azul tan característico.

Imagen creada por Vidom

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## Alex says

Si *Pórtico* funcionaba muy bien apelando al sentido de la maravilla con esa civilización del todo desconocida, esta segunda parte parece aportar algo de luz a los misterios. Continuamos con nuestro protagonista y añadimos unos nuevos que nos ayudan a profundizar en la misteriosa civilización Heechee. Si algo se le da bien a Frederik Pohl en esta saga es su capacidad de hacernos elucubrar e imaginar. Porque realmente, si hay alguna respuesta, esta apenas se esboza y casi se deja para el siguiente libro.

Entre los principales aciertos encontramos lo que rodea a las inteligencias artificiales, al personaje de Wan (que por desgracia casi desaparece en la segunda mitad de la novela) y sobre todo el diván de sueño, que aporta conceptos muy interesantes.

En conclusión, Tras el incierto horizonte supone una continuación que sabe mantener el tipo ante la mítica primera parte, da algo de luz a los misterios planteados y nos deja en ascuas para continuar con la tercera parte de la saga.

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## Alina says

Totally loved it!!

Lots of questions from Gateway are answered here, but in the end you have a lot a brand new ones - I'm looking forward to find out more about Heechee.

P.S. Glad to see that Rob has become a much more likeable and mature character.

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## Sub\_zero says

En *Pórtico*, aprendimos que la humanidad ha dado un salto tecnológico tan espectacular como fortuito gracias a los artefactos que una antigua y ya desaparecida civilización alienígena —los Heechee— ha dejado a su paso por nuestro sistema solar. El único inconveniente es que la utilidad de estos hallazgos escapa por completo a nuestra comprensión y su empleo conlleva una serie de riesgos que resultan letales en la mayoría de casos. No obstante, empujadas por las precarias condiciones en que se halla la Tierra (superpoblación, hambrunas, contaminación, inestabilidad económica, etc.), cada vez más personas se embarcan en misiones suicidas a bordo de estas naves alienígenas con la remota esperanza de realizar nuevos descubrimientos y llevarse un exorbitante botín por ello.

Por haber sido el único superviviente de una expedición cuyos miembros (entre ellos, su mujer) permanecen aislados del tiempo en el interior de un agujero negro, Robinette Broadhead ahora disfruta de una incontable fortuna. Gracias a ella decide financiar un proyecto que se dirige a la Fábrica Alimentaria, una nave Heechee que vaga perdida por el espacio y es capaz de transformar elementos sencillos en alimentos para el consumo, todo ello con la intención de erradicar para siempre el hambre en la Tierra. Sin embargo, al llegar allí los tripulantes de la nave enviada por Broadhead se topan con que la Fábrica Alimentaria se encuentra habitada por un adolescente delirante que asegura mantener contacto con otras formas de vida y que de vez en cuando provoca una especie de locura colectiva a través de sus sueños.

No es esta la única, pero sí quizá la más potente idea que sobrevuela las páginas de *Tras el incierto horizonte*. Frederik Pohl reflexiona de manera magistral sobre los límites del conocimiento y de cómo este, bajo manos inexpertas o inadecuadas, en realidad se convierte en una monumental fuente de (literales) quebraderos de cabeza. En su insaciable y desesperada búsqueda de la verdad, de los secretos que esconde el universo, el ser humano no concibe la posibilidad de causar más estragos que beneficios con sus acciones, y por eso ejecuta empresas tan ambiciosas como kamikazes sin calibrar correctamente las potenciales secuelas. El resultado, y de ello es buen ejemplo el protagonista, es un lastre de titánicas proporciones que acarreamos bajo la apariencia de arrepentimiento y culpa. Por otra parte, los personajes de Frederik Pohl suelen manifestar sin motivo aparente una sexualidad sin ambages que puede incluso llegar a niveles retorcidos. El resto de la novela, hilvanada de manera sobresaliente a través de diversos puntos de vista, es pura especulación y sentido de la maravilla que empuja hasta sus últimas consecuencias los postulados del autor en materia de astrofísica, ingeniería o inteligencia artificial, sin perder nunca el tono divulgativo.

En líneas generales, *Tras el incierto horizonte* me ha parecido una novela igual de adictiva que su predecesora, una historia marcada por un ritmo trepidante y un aumento constante de la tensión que ningún aficionado a la ciencia ficción debería perderse. Los personajes, aunque no son el foco de la obra, poseen una

carga emocional bastante importante y rebosan el carisma propio de quien despacha a diestro y siniestro líneas memorables. Después del brillante y apoteósico final que remata la obra, no puedo contener las ganas de hincarle el diente al siguiente volumen de la saga y averiguar por fin qué más sorprendentes descubrimientos sobre los Heechee nos tiene preparados el gran Frederik Pohl.

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## **Wanda says**

"The story begins when the hero of Gateway finances an expedition to a distant alien spaceship that may end famine forever. On the ship, the explorers find a human boy, and evidence that reveals a powerful alien civilization is thriving on a transport ship headed right for Earth..."

Beyond the blue horizon  
Waits a beautiful day.  
Goodbye to things that bore me.  
Joy is waiting for me.  
I see a new horizon.  
My life has only begun.  
Beyond the blue horizon lies a rising sun.  
(Beyond the Blue Horizon, Jeanette MacDonald)

I wonder if Frederick Pohl had these song lyrics in mind with the title of this book? Or whether he had any say in the title at all, a clever combination of the song title and the event horizon of a black hole, a consuming preoccupation of Robin Broadhead, the main protagonist.

I found myself fully engaged in this novel from the first few pages—trying to figure out what the heck was going on. I find that authors who engage my curiosity, rather than telling me too much, keep me reading more quickly and with more persistence. I really enjoyed the vagueness of the threat which Pohl used to keep the reader hooked—not knowing exactly which details are significant or what exactly they mean. Who are the Dead Men? Are they really dead and if so, how do they carry on conversations? Who or what are the Old Ones? Are they really a threat to our intrepid explorers?

Of course, all of this is layered on top of the basic questions asked in the first novel, Gateway—who or what are the Heechee, where did they go, and can we expect to find them?

There is rather a lot of theoretical physics discussed, in the guise of having a computer program explain it to Robin, our billionaire protagonist. Those sections drag a little bit, being barely disguised info dumps. Despite those chunky bits, this book carried me along very quickly.

My only disappointment was how quickly things resolved in the final chapters—details that I would have liked to know were glossed over, steps were skipped in my opinion, some things tied up a little too neatly, others seemed neglected. I guess Pohl must have had a third book in mind and needed a platform on which to begin the next installment. I have many questions about what went on and where the characters go from here, so undoubtedly I will carry on to the next book in the series.

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## **Oliver Wilson says**

Given the riotous success of Gateway, I was surprised at how difficult it was to get a copy of this, the sequel (it's basically out of print).

Having found a second-hand copy, the reason became clear: this book is a feeble shadow of its predecessor. Terribly disappointing, avoid.

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## **Tomislav says**

This book is part of a series:

Gateway (1977)

Beyond the Blue Event Horizon (1980)

Heechee Rendezvous (1984)

The Annals of the Heechee (1987)

The Boy Who Would Live Forever: A Novel of Gateway (2004)

The Gateway Trip (1990) collection of short stories

I've read this now for the second time after about 33 years. Other than the very memorable Wan, a boy raised alone on board the Heechee Food Factory in the Oort Cloud, I had forgotten nearly everything about this sequel to Pohl's Gateway.

This is concept-driven science fiction, and the mysteries of Pohl's Heechee universe are drawn out and fascinating. This volume reveals the answers to a lot of concepts left hanging at the end of Gateway, regarding the nature of the Heechee artifacts strewn throughout the Solar System, while opening a small number of new ones.

The book has grown somewhat dated in science and technology. Especially, regarding computers and software - but also in its pre-Inflationary Cosmology conception of a cyclical universe. But truthfully, it would be a small adaptation to move from logging in to powerful central computers to networked local devices - and the mystery of dark matter remains unexplained in current physics. The plot and concepts would survive an update.

Robinette Broadhead remains at the center, improved, but still just a sophomoric psychoanalytic sketch of a personality. And his new wife is nothing more than a stereotype. However, the family crew of newly introduced characters are mostly quite likeable, and save the story on a character level.

I expect I will go on with re-reading the entire series, at this point. I am enjoying it, and remembering enjoying it the first time.

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