

(Free pdf) Harvest the Fire

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Poul Anderson

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Poul Anderson : Harvest the Fire before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Harvest the Fire:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Starts with conversation with BorgesBy Gary SprandelThis novella begins with I would not envy a poet in their mainstream civilization, Borges murmured. I think my advice would be that he seek elsewhere. Mediocre poet and good pilot Jesse Nicol, does just that. This book offers and adventure, or hijack of anti-matter. Along the way are physical love of a Lunarian, (and a discovery about this relationship),. Perhaps most interesting character is Venator, a downloaded presence, who perhaps desires union with cybercosm. The book ends with Yours is a new world, in a heroic age. Its bards are singing. I can home to be one of them Homer sang of a bygone age .. Shakespeare treated of Cleopatra and Macbeth. Between the start and end, the plot is a little weak. This is the third in history future-history series (Harvest of Stars first)1 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Book three of Anderson's HARVEST OF STARS series is little more than a novellaBy Christopher CulverIn 1993, science-fiction author Poul Anderson published HARVEST OF STARS, the first in a four-volume future history that depicted the human race grappling with machine intelligences. That first volume was mainly a libertarian fantasy about independent spacers evading a tyrannical world government, but it ended with a colony to Alpha Centauri launched just as true AI was appearing on Earth.For Anderson, superhuman intelligences were scary because they might lead to a managed economy, the great bugbear of libertarians like himself. But also, Anderson started off writing science-fiction in the 1950s when everyone envisaged intrepid space cowboys flying their ships all over the galaxy. By his old age, it was becoming evident that automation meant humans would have little direct role in piloting

craft or working any other machines. Furthermore, other forward-thinking authors like Vernor Vinge were suggesting that humanity might even choose to simply stay put and move into a virtual reality instead of expanding outward into the galaxy. This reversal of all he had held dear left Anderson appalled. HARVEST THE FIRE, published in 1997, is the third book in this series, its title being a portmanteau of that of the first book and the immediately preceding volume THE STARS ARE ALSO FIRE. Set in the solar system centuries after the departure of colonists to Alpha Centauri, its plot concerns earthman Jesse Nichols, a poet and dreamer by inclination, invited to join a Lunarian conspiracy to seize an antimatter shipment from Earth's dreaded machine overlords. They aim to bring it to the distant planetoid Proserpina where humans have escaped the control of the AIs. Venator, the villain of the preceding volume, appears again, this time as a downloaded personality. This third book of the series is quite different from the others in that it is essentially a novella, readable in one sitting. When Tor published it in hardback, they tried to compensate for the meagre length by including a series of illustrations by Vincent Di Fate, who did the cover art for this series and has been an acclaimed science-fiction artist since the 1960s. Di Fate's drawings are mainly generic scenes of spacecraft, with only a handful actually reflecting the action in Anderson's book. Not only is HARVEST THE FIRE just a novella, but it also doesn't affect the overall plot of this series. A reader could easily skip from books 2 to 4, and Tor seemed to think the same because this book was less promoted than the other volumes. While I enjoyed the series as a teenager, when I was too ill-informed about the world to pick up on Anderson's political advocacy, on later re-readings I found the first two volumes in the series fatally flawed by the overt libertarian agitprop. HARVEST THE FIRE is superior to the earlier volumes in that it lacks those highly unrealistic dialogues that serve more to castigate "big government" than depict realistic characters. Sure, Anderson works in a dig at income tax and the book continues the series' theme that the rise of AI might quench human ambitions, but the political concerns are no longer so heavy handed. That said, the characters continue to be fairly one-dimensional, and the writing is so simple that I wonder if Anderson was intentionally reaching for a young adult audience. Furthermore, the plot feels repetitive in that our protagonist is again an earthman caught in a big conspiracy out of love for a mysterious, elf-like Lunarian beauty.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Transitional Part of Enthralling Series By A Customer This is partially in response to the review above from Dayton, Ohio. This is not a lengthy novel. Take out the pictures (by di Fate) and it is less than 150 pages, with few words per page. As far as background is concerned, there is little. Again, this is a short book, and follows Harvest of Stars and The Stars are Also Fire. No one could possibly need any more background after reading those two books, which I would give 10's. They are replete with background. As far as the characters are concerned, Nicol is a confused, emotional guy but is likeable. We know Venator from The Stars are Also Fire. Part of what makes good writing is having imperfect - even unheroic - characters. Nicol is not necessarily unheroic, as you may see. The meshing of the characters, who certainly have distinct aims and personalities, is well done. It is rare to say this about so short a book, but I found the first half slow and the second great, and satisfying. I would not advise reading this alone, but as part of the series. You will discover that there is some foreshadowing - when you read Fleet of Stars. As far as saving your money goes, do it: it is a tiny book to pay \$6 for. Buy it used (as this college student wishes he had done). If you are reading the series, do not skip this. It's well worth a couple hours. (Disclaimer: Big Poul Anderson fan)