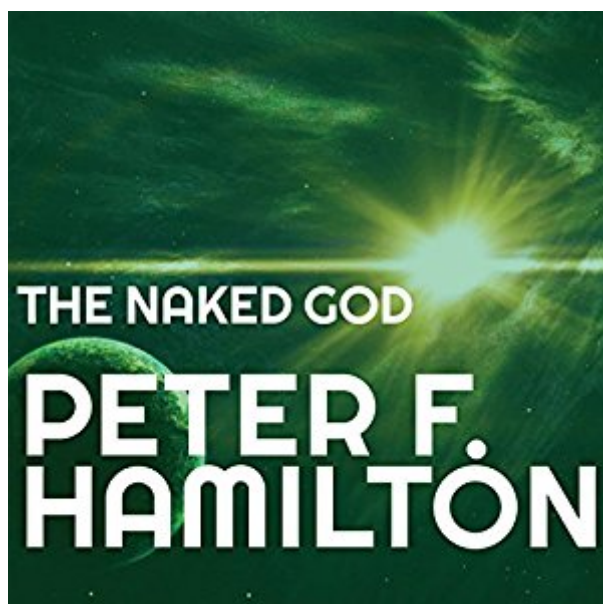


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The Naked God: Night's Dawn Trilogy, Book 3



Synopsis

The Confederation is starting to collapse politically and economically, allowing the "possessed" to infiltrate more worlds. Quinn Dexter is loose on Earth, destroying the giant arcologies one at a time. As Louise Kavanagh tries to track him down, she manages to acquire some strange and powerful allies whose goal doesn't quite match her own. The campaign to liberate Mortonridge from the possessed degenerates into a horrendous land battle, the kind that hasn't been seen by humankind for 600 years; then some of the protagonists escape in a very unexpected direction. Joshua Calvert and Syrinx fly their starships on a mission to find the Sleeping God, which an alien race believes holds the key to overthrowing the possessed. The Naked God is the brilliant climax to Peter F. Hamilton's awe-inspiring Night's Dawn trilogy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I really enjoyed two of Hamilton's recent books (Pandora's Star and Judas Unchained), so I've been planning to read his "Night's Dawn Trilogy" for a while, due to the many positive reviews here. Problem was, it was released as six books back in the Nineties, and they were out of print. Last fall, Orbit republished the series as a trilogy of massive 1300-page doorstops. I dove in eagerly, hoping for a good, long story. Two months and nearly 4000 pages later, I'm finally done. My main impression? Good, but much too long. There's at least a whole third that should have been left out; the entire Neutronium Alchemist thread has nothing to do with the rest of the story. So, right there, the trilogy could have easily lost 1000 pages or so and been a stronger tale for it. As for the remaining 3000-page story, here are my thoughts. (This review treats all three books as one long

story. It can't be read any other way.) The reading of this thing took so long, and I invested so much time in it, it was almost like a small relationship: at first, NDT seemed like a good, meaty space opera, and captured my interest. Hamilton is an excellent writer, with some faults, but he's good enough to make you overlook them. The book began as a standard sf novel, taking pains to sound authoritative and scientifically accurate. But then it suddenly veered off into Stephen King territory, which totally threw me. I had bought all three volumes, was hundreds of pages in, and suddenly I'm reading a story about possession, ghosts, and human sacrifice, along with FTL travel and galactic empires. I opted to see it through, despite some grave (no pun intended) misgivings. I wanted to see how Hamilton managed to explain, in a scientific way, how the "beyond" (purgatory, to you and me) worked. So I kept going. This is one of British writer Hamilton's first books, and it's very British. Planets have names like Norfolk, towns are named Durringham, people have names like Kingsley Prior. I can only imagine that, in his early work, Hamilton didn't imagine he'd have readers outside the Realm. (His later books aren't so provincial.) It's part of Hamilton's Point, I think, that despite 600 hundred years of scientific progress, mankind is still employing the same economic--and cultural--model. The events in the book make people question that their way of life by the end, and that's the Point. Problem is, it isn't until you reach page 3500 or so that you realize he's deliberately painted a picture of a future that still has people saying "jolly good!" and "fab." At first, I thought he was just being lazy or imaginative. But there is a Point. You've just got to hang in there to see that. So suspend your critical thinking when you read about "arcologies" (domed cities on Earth built in response to climatic and ecological disaster), a planet where it may as well be the Green and Pleasant Land of the 1800's, and everyone talks as though they were from the early 21st century. Our main hero is Joshua Calvert, a Han Solo-type of guy who's hard not to like. I would like to see the story rewritten as Joshua's story. This would've made it much stronger as a story, for one thing. As it is, the story is told from so many points of view, it's impossible to keep them all straight. There's literally a cast of hundreds here. Many of these people are not very likable, either, nor worth spending time with. This story (and its Point) would benefit from a good, strong moral main character, and while Joshua does evolve and grow during the course of the novel, he's off-camera too much, and we don't really get inside his head enough. His "conversion", therefore, is a bit unconvincing. He starts out as young guy (early 20's) exploring space ruins to make a buck. His goal is to finance the refitting of his dead father's starship, the (what else?) 'Lady Macbeth'. He makes a big strike, the Lady Mac is quickly up and running, and suddenly, without training or experience, Joshua is the hottest pilot in the universe. (Okay, fine, it's a story and we know our demographic...) Girls fall all over our hero (again, the demographic), and he's not much more

throughout the book than *The Guy We All Wish We Were*. Hamilton could've made him more than just a cavalier space jockey, and focused the story on him more. Things get interesting when he interacts with Lone, the human symbiont of a major habitat. The girl Hamilton focuses on, however is Louise, who comes from Planet England (Norfolk). She's a spoiled aristocratic brat and I didn't like her. The one really interesting sf idea Hamilton describes is the cultural divide between the Edenists and the Adamists. (Where these terms come from, he never explains.) Edenists have adopted bitek, which is biological technology. Space habitats are grown from a seed, and are sentient. They are mated with a human in a symbiotic relationship. Edenist starships (called voidhawks) are similar. Edenists share a telepathic communications link with all other Edenists called affinity. The rest of humanity (the Adamists) reject bitek and affinity, though everyone has a nanotech interface installed which performs much the same function as affinity. Why the Adamists reject bitek is never explained (as far as I could tell, and I was looking), and this is weakness in the book. Though Hamilton is a good writer, his pacing needs work. As I said, this book needs to be a lot shorter. But Hamilton doesn't seem to know how to abbreviate or summarize. Everything is shown in detail, in real time. Some heavy editing would have helped here. For example, every time a spacecraft begins or ends a flight, we are told how it deploys or retracts its "thermo dump panels." Every. Single. Time. The mechanics of things take on too much importance, overshadowing the story and the characters. Even battles are described in mechanistic detail, enumerating exactly how many of each type of weapon, how much force an explosion generated. Do we really need to know how many beds that barracks holds? And that the bathroom is communal? Massive detail and describing every event does not result in verisimilitude; it just makes for a long, drawn-out story. The future seems so much like our present. Perhaps Hamilton was trying to make a point (i.e., humanity has stagnated), but it isn't until the last 100 pages that the reader is let in on the Point, and the reason for the stagnation. There is an awful lot of time spent on Norfolk, but the aristocratic society seems to be shown in, if anything, a favorable light. Louise slowly comes to learn how her idyllic life has been built upon the toiling backs of others, but Norfolk is not like most of the Confederation. Perhaps Hamilton thought it would make his point by being so extreme, but because I didn't know what his point was till the very end, it just seemed like he thought it was cool to have a world that was like jolly old England. Though many reviewers seem to be unhappy with his ending, I thought it was consistent, though rather weak. Hamilton has a message to deliver, having to do with our evolution as a race, and how the fortunate and well-off have a responsibility to the less-fortunate. A rather liberal message, though a bit simplistic. I would have liked the story much better if Hamilton hadn't gone off the science-based rails. I don't like horror, for one thing, and this book spends a lot of time being a

horror story. The metaphysics of possession were completely unconvincing to me, and I read through those sections just waiting for them to be over. No scientific basis for Hamilton's purgatory is ever offered, either. He seems to expect his readers to accept the possibility of souls, purgatory, and an afterlife (of the Frank Tipler Omega Point variety, but still). I'm guessing that, because it's "space opera" and not "hard sf," somehow it's okay to throw in metaphysical hogwash. Perhaps the marketing folks thought it would have more appeal with some horror thrown in. Didn't work for me. I would have enjoyed a more believable, realistic enemy or conflict. Instead Hamilton gives us a parody of Al Capone and a low-life cardboard cutout named Quinn Dexter running around zapping people with "energistic" beams of white fire. I nearly gave up on the book several times in disgust.

The book in a nutshell: The watershed event in our civilization comes 600 years from now when a freak event occurs (an alien species, by some arcane, unclear process, somehow opens a channel up, allowing souls in Purgatory to begin possessing living humans). Then, at the end, a nearly omnipotent entity gives Our Hero unlimited powers, and he puts all to rights in about five pages. So the beginning of the conflict and its resolution are both deus ex machina. Something miraculous happens which sets off a 4000-page chain of events, and we read about every single one of those events, in detail. Then, something miraculous happens once more, ending the conflict. In the end, it turns out that the pressure to change things comes about because people realize that souls are ending up in purgatory (the "beyond") because society hasn't given them a fair chance to develop their potential. Say what?

Conclusion: Hamilton writes like an engineer obsessed with how his machinery operates. At the detail level, it's all very interesting and convincing. It's when you look up from the nuts and bolts (and thermo dump panels) you realize the overall story is a flimsy construction. If you don't mind your science fiction mixed with second-rate horror/fantasy, with a dash of sophomoric social philosophy, then I'd say go for it. And be prepared for a long, slow ride.

I liked the first book a lot, especially the first half of the first book. Like many reviewers, I bought all 3 at once, and plowed thru. All in all, I liked the trilogy except for the ending, although there were a number of weak points.

SPOILERS AHEAD: The main problem for me is how cheap, fast, and rudely he ends this book and the trilogy. After reading 3400 pages, and tracking 4 or 5 main plot lines that you just KNOW are destined to all meet up in some amazing conclusion: they don't. All the way along you have various heroes and heroines exhibiting courage, cleverness, and determination to win the 'little' battles in their plotline. You just KNOW somehow, by winning some of those battles that lesser folks would have surely lost, it will somehow contribute to winning the overall 'war'. They don't.

Halfway thru this last book in the trilogy, I started thinking: Whoa, he BETTER hurry up and

start converging these plots! He's running out of pages to bring all of this together! When I was 3/4 thru and there was NO converging in sight, I started to get confused: What? Is there a 4th book that ties this all up? When I was 9/10 thru and STILL no converging, my heart was sinking. Then in the last 10 pages of the 3rd monster book of the trilogy, literally a miracle happens. Then a few paragraphs are written on each plotline, showing how all is well for the good guys, and how the bad guys all got their just desserts. Bottom Line: I felt like the author just got tired of writing this series, and wrapped it up as fast as he possibly could.

Very impressed with this Kindle release, well organized with an easy to use table of contents. The story itself is still amazing ten years later and now I don't need to carry around 3 HUGE hardcovers. One of the best values on , less than \$8 for several thousand pages of epic space opera. Highly recommended.

I love this Trilogy and was all happy when I saw it on the kindle store. But then the dissapointment of it not being avaiible to my country?? Whats the deal ? get this back so we can read it on our Kindle!!! 5 Stars for the Story -5 stars for it not being on the kindle anymore!

I thoroughly enjoyed this entire series ! These are now in my top 10 favorites of all time, and I've read quite a few different series of books throughout the course of my life. If you have not read these books, my advice is to buy the first one today and check it out ! My husband and I received this trilogy of books for Christmas, and I must admit that I had a hard time beginning to read the first book. As a high school graduate with no college education, I found that there were a Lot of "Big words" packed into the first couple of chapters of the first book that I was having a problem understanding. Purchasing them on my Kindle gave me access to the online dictionary, which helped immensely. And while there are a lot of "Big words" peppered periodically throughout the entire series, they do not take anything away from the numerous storylines, and I can assure you that the entire series is a much easier read after you get past the first couple of chapters. I am about to start the entire series all over again, I enjoyed them that much. Highly recommended series by this reader !!

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