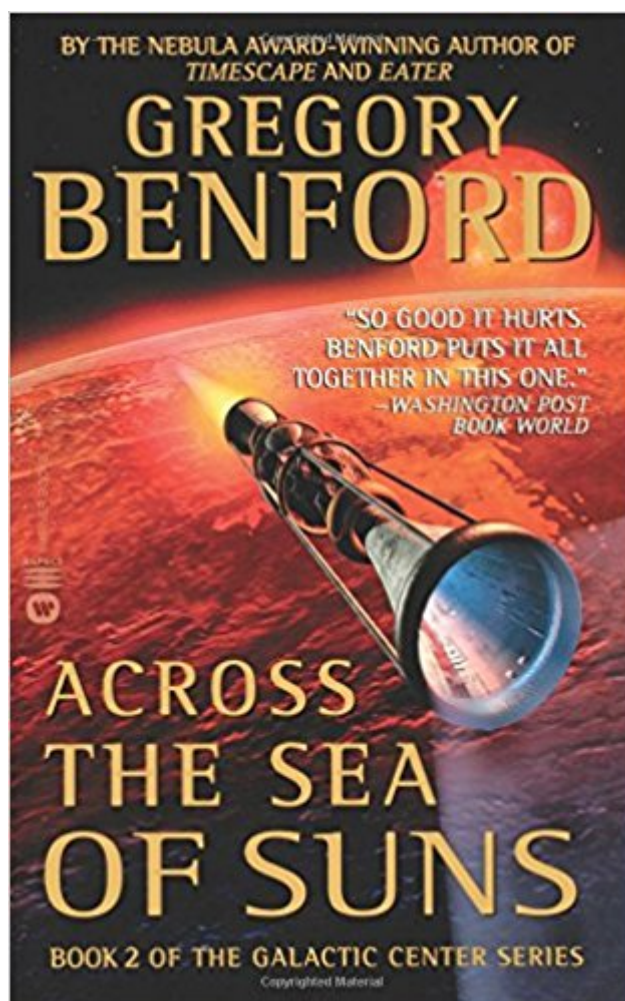


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Across The Sea Of Suns (Book 2 Of The Galactic Center)



Synopsis

From the Nebula Award-winning author comes a newly revised edition of this story in his classic Galactic Center series.

Book Information

Series: Galactic Center (Book 2)

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 29 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

Gregory Benford is a professor of physics at the University of California at Irvine as well as a critically acclaimed author of science fiction. He is also the editor of Nebula Awards Showcase 2000. He lives with his wife in Laguna Beach, California. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In reading science fiction of all kinds for over 25 years, I came across the best novels in the genre and also across some real stinkers. I've been a bit disappointed with my most recent sci-fi reads and have resorted to research reviews at .com to discover some "sure bets". It paid off. I recently discovered Benford's Galactic Center Series and although I wasn't terribly excited with the first book, this one, the second in the series is beyond my wildest expectations. The range of themes Benford explores in this volume is ambitious, but he still manages to deliver a page turner that invites the reader into deep questionings in topics from first contact, to exobiology, to sociology, and even gender issues. What I have come to expect from science fiction (specially in hard sci-fi) is exactly what Benford put in this book: a good amount of speculation based on whatever scientific

knowledge is available at the time of writing. And to his benefit, he does it in a way that fits the story arc and keeps you wanting more. The narrative is linear, but progresses in two different fronts. In one, we follow the discoveries of the Lancer spaceship, which travels the galaxy trying to find life, or the remnants of life, in planetary systems that show potential. What they find is not very encouraging and leads one to hypothesize that biological life has been systematically eradicated from the galaxy by some advanced intelligence. The other front deals with what is happening on Earth as Lancer roams about and what a lot is happening! Alien life forms arrive on Earth and start to thrive in our oceans destroying existing marine life and attacking also large ships. It seems two different populations of beings share our oceans and a survivor from a ship that was attacked tries to make sense of their behavior. Top it off with human, petty political/military intrigue and you have a plot like that contends for the reader attention on equal footing with the galactic exploration. I'm looking forward to reading the rest of the series!

The negative reviewers here in a way reveal something to be aware of in regards to this book. It is a difficult read. It is "science fiction" that not only features space ships and aliens, but also deep themes, challenging literary techniques, and significant amounts of hard science and theory. The negative reviewers have mistaken certain literary and narrative techniques for "bad writing". Their own lack of experience with, or interest in, non-standard formal devices and methods makes them think the writer is unskilled. In fact, far from it, the author is an employer of sophisticated formal means and a highly oblique story-telling method, which these dullard reviewers are incapable of recognizing or appreciating. That's not to say that if this is not your cup of tea, that you are stupid. I found this book challenging and sometimes frustrating. Many readers may grow fatigued: highly suspenseful and complex moments in the story are sometimes difficult to follow, as the reader is forced to decipher what is taking place by shifting through the subjective narrative told from the protagonist's viewpoint. As some reviewers have pointed out, at certain points the text is made up of strings of unattributed, undifferentiated, non-punctuated dialog, and it is up to the reader to plow through it while trying to figure out who is saying what, and to sift lines of significance from lines of verbal static. In addition, nowhere in the book is the reader explicitly told exactly what is happening in the larger narrative. Rather, the reader must piece events together, guessing at some, and in many cases can be confused as to the true nature of events, or the correct interpretation of them, as the only sources of information are the subjective and jumbled thoughts of the characters, and their dialogs, which are usually recorded without commentary or interpretation by the writer. All that being said, the payoff, for those who can make it through, is a unique and moving experience. The writer

creates a grand theme that ties natural evolutionary processes to the fabric of the cosmos, the interaction of species and civilizations, the functioning of social groups, and the biology of individual bodies and minds. This theme is wrapped in a truly suspenseful story of humanity's first encounter with alien life forms and artificial intelligences, its first forays to other solar systems, and the massive and devastating conflict which results. The book incorporates an incredible amount of science, but also an adventurous formal literary structure and technique, with a profound vision of the nature of life, evolution, and humanity's place in the cosmos.

A follow onto "In the Ocean of Night" and kept my interest. GB is pushing an interesting concept that machine life, being long lived, is the dominant type of life. He makes the idea of organic vs inorganic life, the central theme and so far its been an interesting story line. There seems to be more science than the normal sci-fi opera series and so far seems grounded in a sub-light speed universe.

Hard Scifi Fans... this is a series for you. Be ready to settle into a long account that covers generations!!! Some might call it a dull read but I delight in the technical and sociological aspects of this one! A definite singularity that will suck you in and never let you go!!!

I am rereading this series after several year (when it was released initially). It's even better than I remember. Benford has a way of pulling you into the action. These stories leave you pondering 'What if...'. Like Asimov and other great writers, these stories never leave you.

Not well written and certainly did not flow. It came across to me as disjointed, pieced together with barely enough material to keep me interested. I had t finally put it down after wading through the slush of this story. I kept revisiting it trying to give it a chance but the story in the first book takes too long to get moving.

I have had this book in my possession since I was 13. An uncle of mine, a huge scifi fan, I got all of his books and this was one of them, but it was missing the last 75 pages or so, so I never read it until I found a copy of it in a used book store, and was asked by the clerk how I had enjoyed the first book, I had no idea it was a sequel, and so I ordered In the Ocean of Night from here. I enjoyed the 1st book, but greatly enjoyed the Across the Sea of suns more and, I am greatly looking forward to the next segment of Nigel's adventures.

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