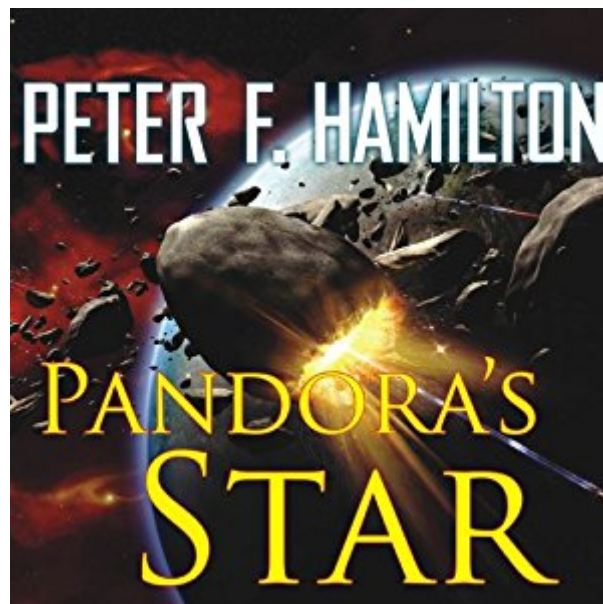


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Pandora's Star



Synopsis

Critics have compared the engrossing space operas of Peter F. Hamilton to the classic sagas of such SF giants as Isaac Asimov and Frank Herbert. But Hamilton's bestselling fiction "powered by a fearless imagination and world-class storytelling skills" has also earned him comparison to Tolstoy and Dickens. Hugely ambitious, wildly entertaining, philosophically stimulating: the novels of Peter F. Hamilton will change the way you think about science fiction. Now, with *Pandora's Star*, he begins a new multivolume adventure, one that promises to be his most mind-blowing yet. The year is 2380. The Intersolar Commonwealth, a sphere of stars some 400 light-years in diameter, contains more than 600 worlds, interconnected by a web of transport "tunnels" known as wormholes. At the farthest edge of the Commonwealth, astronomer Dudley Bose observes the impossible: Over 1,000 light-years away, a star vanishes. It does not go supernova. It does not collapse into a black hole. It simply disappears. Since the location is too distant to reach by wormhole, a faster-than-light starship, the *Second Chance*, is dispatched to learn what has occurred and whether it represents a threat. In command is Wilson Kime, a five-time rejuvenated ex-NASA pilot whose glory days are centuries behind him. Opposed to the mission are the Guardians of Selfhood, a cult that believes the human race is being manipulated by an alien entity they call the Starflyer. Bradley Johansson, leader of the Guardians, warns of sabotage, fearing the Starflyer means to use the starship's mission for its own ends. Pursued by a Commonwealth special agent convinced the Guardians are crazy but dangerous, Johansson flees. But the danger is not averted. Aboard the *Second Chance*, Kime wonders if his crew has been infiltrated. Soon enough, he will have other worries. A thousand light-years away, something truly incredible is waiting: a deadly discovery, the unleashing of which will threaten to destroy the Commonwealth and humanity itself. Could it be that Johansson was right? --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 37 hours and 26 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Tantor Audio

Audible.com Release Date: December 10, 2008

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B001NNC0K6

Best Sellers Rank: #87 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Science Fiction > Adventure #355 in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Space Opera #421 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Science Fiction

Customer Reviews

Most readers know Peter Hamilton from his Night's Dawn trilogy, published in this country in six volumes. Pandora's Star is the first volume in another sprawling (and I do mean sprawling) series. The book begins with the discovery that two distant linked solar systems have been isolated by a force field. Because the observation is made visually, this means that the event occurred hundred of years ago. This event leads the Commonwealth, an organization of the human planets, to investigate. Whoever could put a force field around such a tremendous area would be very possible. And what is the motive? Is the force field meant to keep others out, or those living in the system in? In a break from Hamilton's early books, as Pandora's Star opens, humanity does not use star ships for faster than light travel. Rather, wormholes are used to link distant worlds. Thus, one of the first things that must be done is to build a ship capable of faster than light travel. Other aspects of Hamilton's future are near-immortality, a terrorist group obsessed with the idea that an alien has taken over the government, and various alien races that seem indifferent to human population, and whose motives are not apparent. Those who've read Hamilton's Night's Dawn trilogy will not be surprised at his practice of introducing many characters and separate plot lines that will (one hopes) converge eventually. Some of these plots are so separate from the main plot as to seem to exist only to establish background of the characters. Indeed, at time the books seems to consist of short stories set in the same future but having no other connection. For example, we follow a police inspector investigating a 40 year old murder case relates to the main plot in a tangential (at best) way.

OK usually I don't do spoilers, but here I will transcribe a portion of the second-to-last sentence of this book: "You've got to be f***ing kidding me!" Actually that's the reaction I had when I got to about the 95% point of this behemoth, when I realized there was no possible way the author was going to tie it all up in the remaining space in the book. It's the length of three normal books and he still couldn't manage to finish his story. This thing is so bloated with side plots and characters with superfluous backstories and storylines that don't appear to go anywhere, that it was a real chore to read. It was only mildly interesting for about the first 50% (which mind you is equivalent of about 500

pages). Then it got a bit more interesting. But with still a lot of filler and uninteresting characters and side plots, that it's hardly worth it. What is worth it, for a while at least, is learning about the Dyson aliens. What's not worth it are (a) all the Commonwealth politics with the grand families and so forth, and (b) the boring family that lives on Elan, and (c) probably other things that I've already forgotten. Anyway, the last sci-fi novel I read where at about the 95% point I said, "dang, he's not going to be able to wrap this up in the space remaining" was "Hyperion". And I felt compelled to immediately throw down my money and buy "Fall of Hyperion", that's how interested I was to know what happened next, even though it was drawn out over an entire novel. With "Pandora's Star" I am much less excited to throw down my money to read the next one, which is probably another 1000 pages of which 200 will be worth reading. As to the novel itself - apart from the ridiculous length - parts of it are genuinely interesting and intriguing.

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