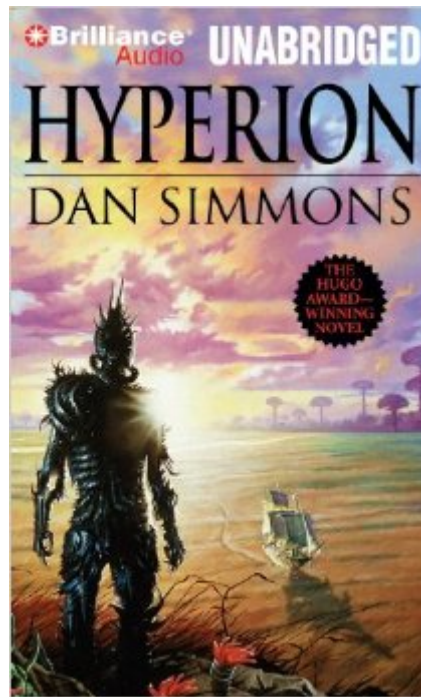


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Hyperion (Hyperion Cantos Series)



Synopsis

On the world called Hyperion, beyond the law of the Hegemony of Man, there waits the creature called the Shrike. There are those who worship it. There are those who fear it. And there are those who have vowed to destroy it. In the Valley of Time Tombs, where huge brooding structures move backward through time, the Shrike waits for them all. On the eve of Armageddon, with the entire galaxy at war, seven pilgrims set forth on a final voyage to Hyperion seeking the answers to the unsolved riddles of their lives. Each carries a desperate hope and a terrible secret. And one may hold the fate of humanity in his hands. A stunning tour-de-force filled with transcendent awe and wonder, Hyperion is a masterwork of science fiction that resonates with excitement and invention, the first volume in a remarkable new science fiction epic by the multiple-award-winning author of The Hollow Man.

Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #4,353,499 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 in Books > Books on CD >

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Fantasy

Customer Reviews

Though 'Hyperion' is dependent upon its sequel and ends with a tooth-grinding cliff-hanger, it is in its way self-contained. 'Hyperion' is centered on the six pilgrims' tales, their pasts, the terrible needs which drive them to confront what is almost certain death--or worse. Each of the tales is written in a unique style, and each introduces a new element to bind the story as a whole. All are wrenching, even disturbing in their intensity, in their focus on the deepest possible of human suffering. Do not read this book if you're looking for a light, fun read. In fact, forget it. This book defies all

expectations, serves up horrors that were hitherto unimaginable if you are even remotely sane. Dan Simmons is in this book exploring a world that has lost its soul and is decaying by inches. To underscore that decay, the tales focus on the underpinnings of humanity--death, love, parenthood, art--and twist them into the most horrific contortions possible. The tale of the cruciform, for example, investigates with terrifying clarity the possibility of there being a fate far, far worse than death. As a result, the quest of each pilgrim has a greater significance than being merely a quest; in the empty world which Simmons creates, they are pioneers searching for a depth beyond the tested parameters of their rotting civilization. The atmosphere of the book is overshadowed by the horror of the Shrike, yet does not completely dim the hope of what might be. Steeped in the tangled sorrows that drive them, the characters do not always engender sympathy. I found Kassad shallow and difficult to relate to, and the explicit sex a turn-off. However, Martin Silenus, Sol Weintaub and the Consul--to name a few--are fully realized, complex characters, and even at their worst moments, still by their very existence encourage the reader to keep reading simply to learn their fates.

An account of six tales from seven disparate travelers as they make a pilgrimage to Hyperion to seek out one of the most terrifying monster ever created in fiction, the Shrike. They all have various reasons to risk their lives, and all hold the belief that whoever survives the Shrike, one prayer will be granted. All six stories (novellas in their own right) are brilliantly conceived, and every reader here has his or her own personal favorite. While the priest's tale is one of the most harrowing I've ever read, I was personally moved by the tale of Sol and Rachael. As a parent, I found this tale especially haunting. As another reviewer mentioned, I will not think of the words "...later alligator...while crocodile..." in the same light ever again. This is science fiction told in a grand scale. It is sweeping in scope and Simmons' narrative is extremely imaginative, often fanciful, yet sometimes yawn inspiring. It is not an easy read. For those that know little or nothing about the poet, Keats (me included), much of the narrative may become ambiguous or boring. But despite that (or because of that), Simmons spins a masterful tale of the travelers and of the great war against the Hegemony and the Technocore. Unfortunately, "Hyperion" is only the first part of a two-part story, and ends unfinished. One has to purchase (unknowingly) "The Fall of Hyperion" to complete the story. My suggestion would be to purchase them both at the same time and enjoy--it's well worth the money. Although this novel won't be to everyone's taste (what novel is?), I thought it to be one of the best novels I've read in many a year. Between 1 and 10, I give "Hyperion" a solid 8. Had the novels been double bound and sold as one (as they should have been), I would have given "Hyperion" an enthusiastic 9.

Hyperion and the rest of the series is the best science fiction series yet written. I do not make this claim lightly. I have read a lot of science fiction and the only books that I would say that come close are *The Sparrow* by Maria Doria Russell and *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card. Although *Across the Sea of Suns* and the rest of the Galactic Center series by Gregory Benford was another favorite. Hyperion is one planet in a large federation of planets which are at their political peak. This book is the story of 7 people picked to go on a pilgrimage to the time tombs on Hyperion to see if they can figure out what is happening. The time tombs are guarded by a creature called the Shrike. The Shrike can move forward and backward through time at will and seems to be invulnerable to any type of weapon. The 7 people are strangers to each other, but they have one common link, they have all encountered the Shrike before and been allowed to live. There is a legend and even a cult religion that has grown up around the Shrike for hundreds of years. It is said that the Shrike can grant any wish. Pilgrims that go searching for the Shrike must travel in groups of prime numbers or everyone will die. They must approach the time tombs on foot or everyone will die. According to legend, the Shrike somehow interviews everyone in the party if they have followed these rules and one person will have their wish granted and all the other party members will be killed. Also, the time tombs are moving backwards in time, and the fear is that once the time tombs stop that a whole army of tens of thousands of Shrikes will be unleashed. But this is just one thread in the vast tapestry of the story which grows in complexity with each book. What is happening on Hyperion is at the center of the collapse of this federation of thousands of planets that is on the brink of collapse. It is a fascinating tale. Enjoy.

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