



## Dirge

*Alan Dean Foster*

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**Dirge** Alan Dean Foster

**Chosen by *Science Fiction Chronicle* as One of the Best Books of the Year**

*Bestselling author Alan Dean Foster has written an exciting Humanx Commonwealth adventure that delves deeper into the fragile early years when humans made first contact in this unforgettable world . . .*

In the second half of the twenty-fourth century, diplomatic relations proceed cautiously between thranx and humans. But the insectlike beings are nearly forgotten with the sudden discovery of an ideal planet to colonize—Argus V—and the startling appearance of a new race of space-faring aliens. People are dazzled by the beautiful, glamorous pitar. Then tragedy strikes.

The entire human population on Argus V is brutally slaughtered. Not a single clue remains to identify the unseen executioners. But from a tiny inner moon of Argus V comes a faint signal. On that insignificant chunk of rubble lies the key to the crime—setting in motion a cataclysmic chain of events with deadly consequences for thranx, pitar, and human alike. For their worlds will be changed forever by a colossal battle that is their future and their destiny . . .

## Dirge Details

Date : Published May 29th 2001 by Del Rey (first published 2000)

ISBN : 9780345418630

Author : Alan Dean Foster

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## From Reader Review Dirge for online ebook

### June says

Interesting on some levels; repetitive with information; better editing would have been nice. Storyline is okay.

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### Dan says

[I liked how the thranx and humans get closer but wished the Pitar were still around, just seemed to end with too much finality for them. (hide spoiler)]

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### Bunterbee says

I'd enjoyed reading several of the Commonwealth books back in the days when my local library was full of a wide variety of books instead of computer screens and DVDs, so when I came across Dirge on the book-swap shelves of a swish Spanish hotel I thought this is the one for my holiday reading. Also it was the only one not in German - although I did think I might get by with Perry Rhodan without understanding the language.

Sadly in hindsight Rhodan could have been the better choice. Dirge was disappointing: the bad guys pretending to be the good guys were obvious from the start, the characters were lacking in charisma, the plot development was predictable and too reliant on coincidence, the ethics dubious with the Commonwealth coming close at the end to what a War Crimes Tribunal might consider genocide.

Not that this is a bad book altogether, Foster is a consummate professional and even if routinely knocking off another sequel or prequel to meet a publishing quota his writing standards are high. And I admit I may have skipped a page or two to get to the end - perhaps there was something on those pages to justify the plaudits this book has received elsewhere. But I'm not inspired to go back and find out.

Recommended for holiday reading if you don't understand German.

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### Fred D says

The book starts out kind-of slow, but once the attack on Argus V takes place, things get a lot more interesting. At that point it became a bit of an interstellar murder mystery, and I couldn't put the book down. It was pretty easy to figure out who had done it, but HOW everyone finds out and what the Humans would do about it, and how the Thranx would get involved, was what kept me turning the pages.

It was cool to see the Humans and Thranx working together and even fighting together. It was also interesting to see how sting ships came to be, and the first pairing of humans and Thranx in a military situation.

I gotta say though, I felt a little bit less than satisfied with the end of this book. I felt that certain parts, especially towards the end, were a bit too summarized and could have been fleshed out a little more. Also, a totally different problem I had with the book was that the complete annihilation of the Pitarian race at the end left me a bit sad rather than satisfied that justice was done. The Pitar seemed a bit 2-dimensional: NONE of them surrendered? ALL of them chose to fight to the bitter end and die? Not a single Pitar felt any sort of remorse? To make the story more believable, more realistic, Foster should have made the Pitar more varied, more diverse, with good Pitar and bad Pitar and so on. It would have made the plot more interesting, more complex. As it was, the plot was rather one-dimensional.

And what about baby Pitar? I know there supposedly were not many Pitar children, but there must have been some. Weren't any of them spared? At least the ones too young to fight back or know what was going on? There should have been some Pitar survivors of the war.

The utter annihilation of an entire race is always a tragic thing. In that sense the ending left me less than satisfied.

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### **colleen says**

read 07.22.05

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### **B. Zedan says**

God, the ultimate realisation in this book is creepy as all get-out. Damn Foster and his kick-ass trilogies.

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### **Paul E. Morph says**

'Dirge', the third book (chronologically by story events, if not publication order) of Alan Dean Foster's Humanx Commonwealth series, pulls back from the personal level of the first two books and opens the saga up to a truly cosmic scale. If the previous books were 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind', the third book is 'Star Wars'.

Unlike the previous books, which focus on just one or two characters, 'Dirge' uses an interesting story-telling technique where each chapter presents the story as seen through the eyes of a different character. In most cases, the majority of these POV characters don't even meet each other. I'd have been sceptical if somebody had described this story-telling method to me before I read this book but now that I have, I have to say it works extremely well and adds to the galaxy-spanning feel of the novel. Each event is connected, even if the individuals involved in them aren't, adding up to a very coherent picture.

The stakes are raised as well as the scope and some of the events of this book are truly gut-wrenching. There are two horrific mass-slaughters in that first part of the story leading to a full-on interstellar conflict in the third and final act. None of these events are guilty of glorifying combat; Foster writes them in such a way as to really portray the horror of wide-scale loss of life. I was genuinely moved each time.

I was also gladdened by the steps taken in this story by the humans and the insectoid thranx to overcome their mutual xenophobia and begin forging the Commonwealth. I'm a bit of a hippy really and love to see people coming together through their similarities rather than pushing each other away because of their differences.

All-in-all, this is a great chapter in this lengthy saga and I loved every minute of it. High recommended to lovers of science fiction/space opera (it strikes a nice balance between the two).

Oh, and lest I forget, the cold-blooded AAnn, while not having that much of an overt presence in this volume, are lurking ominously in the background, biding their time until they reveal their sinister schemes... Bum-Bum-BUUUUUUUUMMM!!!

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### **Martha says**

2 1/2 stars. Some content may not be appropriate for all readers.

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### **Norman Howe says**

Foster uses one of the oldest SF plots in existence to show how the human and thranx races developed such a close relationship," and how the Commonwealth was formed. This is simply a fill-in-the-blanks novel. Unlike some other works," this one did not need to be written.

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### **Anonymole says**

Basic test [yes/no:]: Would I recommend you read this book or not. Was it worth the few hours spent reading it? Am I pleased that I spent the time reading it? --- Yes ---

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### **Fredrick Danysh says**

Which expanding in the universe and living among other senient species, humans come in contact with another human-like species that is both adorable and likeable. Things go well until the entire human population of a planet is murdered and butchered. At first no no knows who is guilty or why, but a survivor is found by a shy species. The survivors names the gulty species and war results with unlikely allies.

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### **Tina says**

This book kicks ass. There are a few reviews below that, while they are entitled to their opinion, seem to have missed the point. This trilogy is intended for those of us who have read Humanx Commonwealth novels before and loved them, but had questions about what came before the Commonwealth. This review has spoilers, because I'm also assuming you're familiar with Humanx lore.

I knew going into this novel that the Pitar were assholes, because one of the Flinx novels told me the story already; complaining about them being “obvious” antagonists is like reading a book about WWII and whining about how it was so obvious Hitler was the bad guy. This novel, like any historical book, is about how certain things came about, what small things happened to make changes in society. In this case, it’s what the early human/Thranx relationships were like. The purpose of these three novels is a way for those of us who want to learn more about the founding of the commonwealth to get that. I always wanted to know why and how Thranx/Human SCCAM missiles were created too. And there were other throw-backs to the Flinx novels: Mallory, for example, and his girlfriend Tse. Hmm, I wonder whose grandparents they are?

Truthfully, I fucking loved this novel. I read it in one day because I couldn’t put it down. It’s funny, because there are things about it that shouldn’t have worked. There’s no main character but instead we are given short vignettes sometimes told years apart of small parts of many people’s lives. It was like World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War in a way, and given this was meant to be a history of a time period, it made perfect sense to have the story unwrap in this method. Had there been a central protagonist, it would have been very coincidental for them to have been involved in everything; these small stories helped show progression, differing opinion, and different perspectives during the time. Human/Alien relationships don’t blossom overnight – it would take decades, if not longer, especially given how xenophobic we humans tends to be.

I also appreciated the diversity in the novel. There were just as many woman as men in positions of power and there was a great deal of racial diversity as well. This only makes sense, given it’s 2300 or so, but it was definitely nice to read.

Foster also has a great writing style with a penchant for great dialogue, intriguing concepts, and a knack for explaining technology in a way that is interesting and not boring.

And to the people whining about the genocide of the Pitar – they wouldn’t surrender. If they were going to try to commit suicide when you captured them, why not just let them do it? Made sense to me. It’s not like it was a fringe group of people who were the aggressors like with the Terrans and Thranx xenophobes. Their entire two planets were full of nut-jobs.

And I guess I finally learned that the Chris Pratt look-alike wielding a Pokeball on the cover is supposed to be Mallory. He, like this novel, was also a bad ass.

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## **Notme says**

Started a bit slow, but gained speed along. A bit simplistic and naive, a tad schematic, but a good fun read if you are just expecting a decent entertainment and not a food for thought. Since that is what I need during the summer months, I will move right along to part 3.

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