

# **Foundation's Edge Study Guide**

## **Foundation's Edge by Isaac Asimov**

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# Plot Summary

FOUNDATION'S EDGE looks at the Milky Way Galaxy halfway through the timeline of the Seldon Plan, as ambitious rulers of the First and Second Foundations vie for total control. The reclusive people of Gaia, who share a common mind, arrange a rendezvous and leave it to intuitive protagonist Golan Trevize to decide the Galaxy's future.

Golan Trevize, a brash freshman, First Foundation Councilman, is exiled from Terminus for treason, for claiming that Hari Seldon's analysis made 500 years earlier matches the current situation too perfectly to be authentic. Trevize and an older companion, Professor Janov Pelorat, are ostensibly to search the great Library on Trantor for information on the mythical planet Earth/Gaia, while, in fact, Trevize is to locate the Second Foundation, which Branno believes is manipulating the Plan. She is unaware that Trantor is home to the Second Foundation and that Councilman Munn Li Comporee, Trevize's betrayer whom she orders to follow him, is a Second Foundation agent, managed by the ambitious Second Foundation Speaker Stor Gendibal.

Gendibal, too, believes that some mentalic force is tinkering with the Seldon Plan, but before he can share his analysis with the Table, he is waylaid by thugs, rescued by a woman, and impeached by his colleagues. Sura Novi's smooth mind proves that someone has been tinkering with exquisite subtlety. Gendibal is acquitted and sent to investigate Trevize, taking Novi along as a mental "early warning system."

Trevize pilots the advanced Far Star to Sayshell, where they learn the few facts and many myths that surround Gaia and decide on a risky visit. Trevize is put off by the Gaians' claims of sharing a common mind and particularly by Pelorat falling in love with a young Gaian, Bliss. She accompanies them into orbit, where they face off with First and Second Foundation spaceships, and Trevize is told he must use his intuition to decide among three alternate plans for the welfare of humanity.

As proponents chorus "Free will!" "Guidance and peace!" and "Life," Trevize chooses the "Galaxia" plan because it alone has a long-range framework, allowing modification and correction. Determined to resume his search for Earth, Trevize is concerned that Pelorat wants to remain behind, having fallen in love with Bliss. Trevize intuits she is a robot, confronts her, and secures a promise to be good to the kindly old professor without admitting that she is a robot.



# Chapters 1-2

## Chapters 1-2 Summary

Chapter 1, "Councilman," opens with Golan Trevize and Munn Li Comporee conversing outside the Executive Council, with Trevize intending to deny that the Seldon Plan has averted a Galactic crisis. Seldon's hologram too conveniently backs Mayor Harla Branno's decision to keep the capital on Terminus, and she forbids doubt or criticism. When Trevize equates this to "thought control," he is arrested for treason, accused by Comporee. Director of Security Lioa Kodell obtains a recording of Trevize admitting that he believes in the Seldon Plan. Off-camera, Trevize says that Seldon's analysis is too perfect. Trevize regrets breaking his rule, "Trust nobody." A uniformed escort protects him from non-existent mob violence. Trevize is already angry to see guards inside his door as Branno emerges.

Chapter 2, "Mayor," shows their confrontation. Branno knows Trevize is—dangerously—correct. Trevize restrains his anger, saying that the last Seldon appearance is too synchronized with reality to be authentic, given Seldon's failure to foresee the Mule. Branno and Seldon's nearly identical words suggest that some Second Foundationers have survived, rebuilt, recruited, and resumed making pawns of the First Foundation.

Trevize clarifies: the Second Foundation wants to control the technology being created by First Foundationers, who should form their own elite. Anyone—including Branno—could be unknowingly under Second Foundation control. Branno draws two conclusions about an organization needing to remain secret: 1) it interferes as little and as unobtrusively as possible, and 2) it eliminates anyone who publicizes it. Having kept Trevize from drawing attention, Branno sends him with Janov Pelorat to find the Second Foundation. They may return to Terminus only when they succeed. Branno tells Kodell that it is a pity to lose Trevize's intelligence. She likes Kodell's image of lightning rod, absorbing energy and protecting.

## Chapters 1-2 Analysis

Chapter 1, "Councilman," introduces four important characters. Three are members of the Executive Council on Trantor Planet: Mayor Branno, and young councilmen Trevize and Comporee. The fourth is Kodell, the Mayor's long-time head of Security. A "Seldon Crisis" has just occurred over the question of moving the capital of the First Foundation away from the edge of the galaxy where it is counted nearly 500 years earlier and closer to the center. Branno is frustrated by her relatively inauspicious career thus far but fiercely rejects radical Trevize's assertion that the Seldon Plan is no longer effective. Note that Branno demands that the Second Galactic Empire, towards which the Seldon Plan supposedly inexorably moves, must remain inviolate. Her official attitude will soon be shown to be a facade. She, in fact, agrees with Trevize, as, it will later develop, does Comporee.



At this point, Compor is painted as a rank betrayer of his supposed friend and colleague, one who has encouraged the development of his radical thinking. Each of the first three scenes ends with a character declaring that Trevize is a fool: Compor and Branno under their breath and Kodell outright. The interrogation scene has as a backdrop the threat of a painful and damaging Psychic Probe. Psychic phenomena become a staple of the novel. Kodell, however, is an amiable cop who wants only to obtain video clips for propaganda purposes, to capture Trevize denying his radical allegations. Trevize takes it all as an assault on civil liberties and, off the record, declares that Seldon's latest message is too accurate to have been prepared 500 years before, given the advances in technology. The advances and the accuracy both become recurring themes. Police, claiming to protect Trevize against mob hostility to his views, deliver him home to house arrest. The chapter ends with a surprise: Branno is waiting to talk with Trevize. A minimum of information about the organization of the galaxy is given, left to be filled in in considerable detail.

Chapter 2, "Mayor," develops background on the history of the Foundations, mentioning the heroic leaders of the early days (Salvor Hardin, Hober Mallow, and Hari Seldon), and major adversaries: Bel Riose and the "Great Enemy," the Mule. As both an historical mythological figure, the Mule runs through the novel and a more benign but mysterious group of psychics are termed "Anti-Mules." Seldon's failure to anticipate the mutant Mule derails the Plan, and yet it gets somehow back on track, to the point that in his last holographic appearance, Seldon mouths virtually identical words with the Mayor. Trevize points out the impossibility. Having read the official histories, Trevize cannot believe that all Second Foundationers are killed off after they put down the Mule. He assumes that any survivors would have rebuilt the enterprise entirely for their own behalf. Second Foundationers want to be the elite that controls First Foundation's burgeoning science and technology, the brilliance of which is soon to be revealed. To Trevize's surprise, Branno agrees: Second Foundationers do survive, want and need to remain undiscovered, and will eliminate anyone who reveals them. She has decided that Trevize is to become a lightning rod to reveal their whereabouts. He is being forced off Terminus until he succeeds.



# Chapters 3-4

## Chapters 3-4 Summary

Professor Pelorat is excited to visit the Galactic Library at Trantor. His obsession with finding Earth has finally gained the Mayor's support. He and Trevize discover complimentary talents and kindred spirits. Trevize sleeps poorly that night thinking about exile and wondering how Earth could be the sole planet on which humankind evolves and populates other worlds. Each legends and most historians dismiss the "Origin Question." Seeing that the cover story of research on Trantor is ingenious, Trevize resolves to look wherever Pelorat's "excellent idea" of Earth's location leads them.

Meanwhile, Branno confronts Compore, ordering him to follow Trevize and Pelorat, using his renown for duplicating hyperspace jumps. With his wife as a hostage, he may return only with hard evidence. Later, Branno and Kodell discuss the mission: Compore's ship houses a trackable, hidden hyper-relay. Based on antique technology, the Seldon Plan is worthless. The Second Foundation must be found or a new path started. The Mayor orders Trevize and Pelorat to leave without fanfare aboard a newly-completed, unarmed pocket-cruiser, the Far Star. Trevize vows to remember the last two days when Branno one day asks him for something—as she surely will.

Chapter 4, "Space," examines the Far Star, sleek on the outside and spacious inside, complete with gravitic engines and advanced computerization. Pelorat cares only that he has his entire library on a single FX wafer. Trevize is sure there must be a concealed Reacher but, searching, finds computer instructions and recalls seeing true whizzes stumped by them. Outlined hands appear, and, as he places his over them, Trevize feels the computer interact with his brain. He sees that he can control every aspect of the ship by willing it. As the computer handles take-off, Trevize removes his hands from contact, feels helpless, and cannot wait to "hold hands" again. Pelorat, meanwhile, is anxious until Trevize explains that antigravity will remove all sensation of movement and announces that they are, in fact, already on the edge of space.

Trevize assures Pelorat of his safety and shows him the Galaxy, using the computer to tilt it from edge-on to right angles to the Galactic plane. The database, he says, contains 30 million stars with populated planets. The computer highlights Terminus' and Trantor's suns finds nothing for Earth's. As they tinker with time, watching for supernovas, Pelorat remarks that the Galaxy looks like a "living thing, crawling through space." Flying on, Trevize does not suspect that they are being followed in a gravitic ship..

## Chapters 3-4 Analysis

Chapter 3, "Historian," introduces Professor Janov Pelorat, who is to be Trevize's companion in exile. Mayor Branno has taken a sudden interest in Pelorat's specialty, the "Origin Question." Pelorat explains to Trevize his theory that humanity must have



evolved from lower life forms on a single planet before dispersing throughout the universe. "Earth" has become mythical, however. Pelorat has always wanted to visit the renowned Galactic Library at Trantor, the former Imperial capital, to research the matter. Branno seems ready to fund the trip.

The chapter provides background on Trantor and its sacking, which remarkably spares the Library. It begins discussing human origins and how history and legend (or myth) interrelate. This becomes an ongoing theme. Pelorat has never been in space and is both nervous and excited. Trevize is, conveniently, an ex-Navy man, trained in navigation and related practical fields. The two meet somewhat warily but soon find themselves bound in a profound friendship. The balance of opposites is developed throughout the novel. That Pelorat has known about the mission for weeks shows the depth of Branno's planning for Trevize's exile, since Pelorat is merely a cover story for Trevize's search for the Second Foundation.

Note Branno's emphasis on the rapid technological advances that the First Foundation has made in the preceding century: mass-detection devices, computers that respond to thought, and mental shielding. She believes that the Second Foundation will not long be able to control them, if it can currently. These devices all figure throughout the novel but are most vigorously presented in the final chapters as Branno moves to control the Galaxy.

Chapter 4, "Space," describes the outwardly sleek and inwardly spacious Far Star spacecraft on which Trevize and Pelorat will travel. Trevize several times explains the virtues of gravitic engines and advanced computerization to an academician incapable of absorbing technical information. Trevize is seen to be far more open to data from the humanities. Far Star (named for Hober Mallow's cruiser in the Trilogy novels) is clearly the latest in First Foundation technology. Trevize, from naval experience, is worried about dealing with the computer system, but it incorporates a "hand holding" interface that works directly with his will. After launch, which antigravity makes undetectable, Trevize gives Pelorat a tour of the Galaxy by computer.

Trevize highlights Terminus' and Trantor's suns, describing the former as on the outer edge of an outer arm and the later as close to the black hole center as possible. He describes how at the time of the Mule, everyone had wondered what Hari Seldon means by "at the other end of the Galaxy" and "Star's End," when designating the Second Foundation's location. No straight line from Terminus suggests a place, but historian Akady Darell recalls that "a circle has no end," and indeed they find the Second Foundation among them on Terminus. When Trevize instructs the computer to find Earth, there is nothing. He discusses the massive database (30 million stars with populated planets) but allows that it is possible that some stars have eluded them. The expansion of humanity throughout the Galaxy becomes a constant theme. Earth's absence from any data source becomes a mystery if not conspiracy, with a good deal of astronomy thrown in. Pelorat mentions that Earth may have another name, but discussion of Gaia is put off for a while. Trevize sees that he must work patiently with the elderly scholar. Note Pelorat's characterization of the Galaxy as a living creature

crawling through space. It becomes crucial in the final stand-off among major characters.





# Chapters 5-6

## Chapters 5-6 Summary

Chapter 5, "Speaker," moves to Trantor, once the center of the Galactic Empire but reduced to ruins 250 years ago by "barbarians." Non-scholars call it "Hame" (a variant of "Home"). Quindor Shandess presides as "First Speaker" over the secretive Second Foundation, whose Golden Rule of "Do nothing unless you must, and when you must act—hesitate," is hard tested in history and now guides and corrects the First Foundation's movement towards establishing a flexible Second Empire. Shandess looks forward to meeting privately with bright young Speaker Stor Gendibal, whose opening statement is, "the Seldon Plan is meaningless."

Recruited as a boy, Gendibal takes to psychohistory and while in university aims at being First Speaker by age 40. At 31, this interview is crucial. Speakers communicate by gestures and mental-change patterns more than by words and cannot mask true opinions. Amiable Shandess, Gendibal knows, expects no crisis and is ill-equipped to deal with one. They study together the "Prime Radiant" to see the "flow of history" not distracted by detail. Seldon's original design is in black, each new First Speaker's contributions are red, and a "Century of Deviation" appears in blue, marking the Mule. It vanishes 20 years after Palver intervenes. Shandess' "Hyper-Plan," which earns him this office, carries the Plan beyond the establishment of the Second Empire.

Gendibal declares that flawlessness is the Plan's fatal flaw, failing to anticipate the Mule, which leads to the First Foundation's obsession with the Second. Trevize has intuited that they exist and for this is exiled. He is more dangerous than the Mule. Gendibal demonstrates this mathematically to Shandess' satisfaction and suggests influence by minds more advanced than the their own are at work: an Anti-Mule, seeking not to disrupt the Plan but to perfect it. Branno may have exiled Trevize under such influence.

Chapter 6, "Earth," shows Trevize annoyed, and Pelorat content, in space, waiting to make a safe Jump. Trevize has failed to find the hyper-relay that he is sure is implanted. They must wait two more days to be far enough from Terminus' mass for a safe Jump. When Trevize asks Pelorat about his interest in Earth, he learns that it goes back to a biology major in college and interest in diversity. Homo sapiens and the creatures with which they colonize other worlds are closely related, differing widely from indigenous species. One world differs from the tens of millions. Before being colonized, Terminus produces only primitive life. Biologists show little interest in the question of what unique conditions would make higher life possible. The discussion frees Trevize of his obsession with the hyper-relay and shows how he can prove that one is not present. While they wait, Trevize wants to talk about Earth.

No straight line or curve plots an answer to Seldon's talk about the Second Foundation being located "at the other end of the Galaxy" at "Star's End." It might, then, be a time reference: Terminus is then the newest world and Earth the oldest as one traces



migrations backwards. Pelorat wants to research on Trantor, the only library he has not studied, but Trevize refuses to go there. Pelorat has computerized diverse data to sift for patterns. He believes that "social inertia" demands that Earth rotate in 22-26 Galactic Standard (GS) hours, which fits the planet "Gaia," probably another human language's way of saying "Earth." After explaining how a primitive planet might develop mutually exclusive languages, Pelorat says Earth/Gaia should circle its sun in one GS year and have a giant satellite that orbits it once a month. A candidate is said to exist in the Sayshell Sector, which is where Trantor decides to go.

## Chapters 5-6 Analysis

In Chapter 5, "Speaker," the focus shifts to Trantor and the novel's second thread. It begins with an adequately detailed exposition of the planet at the height of the First Empire, in decline, and currently in ruins. It succinctly recapitulates the Trilogy novels. An elite of men and women able to read and alter human minds rules. The First Speaker presides over this secretive body ("the Table"), having one prerogative: always to speak first. It is likened to the Mayor's office on Terminus. An ambitious young Speaker determines mathematically what Trevize and Branno have intuited: the Seldon Plan is meaningless, precisely because it is too flawless. This suggests tampering by an intellect greater even than the Second Foundationers—like the Mule's, but benevolent. The Second Foundation must learn in which direction the Anti-Mules are pushing psychohistory.

Speaker Gendibal, who denies that the impulsive Trevize resembles him, but the reader will doubtless disagree. Gendibal is an ambitious and gifted young man. How the Second Foundation recruits talent is shown through his case and its ban on recruiting from Terminus (doubtless in order to lie low) is illustrated in Trevize, whose intuition remains unguided. Gendibal first recognizes how dangerous Trevize can be and suggests that he be followed. Gendibal's connections with Compor remain to be revealed. The youngest speaker is impressed by the First Speaker's willingness to adopt his program and sell it to the Table. Table discussions will continue building up a feeling for what inter-Speaker communications are like. As Asimov says at this point, they cannot be adequately described to those on the outside.

Chapter 6, "Earth," Chapter 6, provides Trevize and Pelorat several free days while pushing through normal space in which to talk before making the Jump. Trevize explains how a "hyper-relay" works, making evasion by an enemy—the Mayor, for instance—impossible. Trevize also explains the basic physics of Jumps into hyperspace, seeking to calm Pelorat's fears. Pelorat throughout the novel is a jumpy man who manages to control his fears to do what is right. Most of the chapter develops Pelorat's theories of evolution on a unique and now forgotten planet. He has worked out the probably astronomical data and believes Earth may also be referred to as "Gaia." Gaia is, of course, the ancient Greek name for the planet Earth and Pelorat's arguments for how in primitive societies (pre-computer and pre-hyperspace) mutually incomprehensible languages develop are sound. Galactic Standard appears to be English, suggesting that the first star travelers speak English. This is soon to be

reinforced by patterns of dialect. CS units of measure illustrate "social inertia" based on earth. Each world also uses local units for convenience. Throughout the chapter, Trevize and Pelorat grow in friendship and admiration for one another's minds.



# Chapters 7-8

## Chapters 7-8 Summary

Chapter 7, "The Farmer," finds Gendibal jogging on a country road thinking about the meeting he has proposed. He is a loner at the Table, envied, ambitious, and defensive. A Hamish farmer approaches. They usually avoid "scowlers" ("scholars") and their minds are left untouched, being the Second Foundation's "unwitting shields." Karoll Rufirant blocks Gendibal's way and mocks his speech. Others gather behind Gendibal as he enrages Rufirant by dodging his punches. Rufirant orders him seized. Meanwhile, at the Table, Delora Delarmi challenges Shandess' delaying the meeting. Finally, tired of waiting, Shandess summarizes and commends Gendibal's mathematics but admits to having only an intuition that Gendibal is correct. Back on the road, Gendibal nearly resorts to controlling Rufirant's mind when a stocky woman, Sura Novi, disperses the bullies and cowards. She escorts Gendibal home, saying that she dreams of being a Scowler and asking if she may write him. Absentmindedly, Gendibal gives his address and rushes to the Table.

Chapter 8, "Farmwoman," opens with Gendibal entering the tense meeting where the First Speaker is on the ropes. Admonished for being late, Gendibal claims "personal privilege" on the grounds that he has nearly been murdered. He narrates his tale and lowers his mind shields so the Speakers can verify the truth. Delarmi and Gendibal trade insults. She riles up fellow Speakers by claiming that they are being implicated in a conspiracy to murder and dismisses Gendibal's "ravings" about a mysterious organization controlling Trevize. Learning that no colleague has read his treatment, Gendibal finds motive for delaying him: halt implementation of a new policy. Delarmi calls this paranoia. Gendibal challenges all—including himself and the First Speaker—to undergo mental analysis. As the meeting adjourns, Gendibal tastes doom for himself and/or the Second Foundation.

Gendibal sleeps poorly and awakes at 8:32 to hear he has an unannounced visitor, a Hamisher. He takes his time getting ready, wondering how a farmer could gain access to the University. He admonishes the "Lowly" proctor for not saying it is a woman—Novi, whose name escapes him. She reminds him that he has invited her to write him and has brought the note in person. He studies the young woman, noting that her hairstyle suggests a virgin, sees her shrink beneath his gaze, feels pity and is grateful for rescuing him. Novi announces that she wants to be a scowler rather than a farm clod, an "earth-lump." She reads and writes, although Gendibal knows that at 25 she is too old to master "mentolics" (mind-control). He asks her to think about falling asleep and lightly touches her mind. She wants to become his servant and have time to read, with no idea to what end. He agrees, telling her she will have to learn to behave properly and arranges for quarters and new clothing. He wants her to realize that this does not mean sex, which Second Foundationers will assume (it is commonplace among them to take spicy Hamish girls). Gendibal sees that Novi is the key to his duel with the Table. Later, cleaned up, Novi is a mixture of bashfulness, pride, embarrassment, and triumph. The



servants have tried to make her attractive. At that moment, the First Speaker communicates mentally, summoning him.

Shandess informs Gendibal that Trevize is passing over a visit to the Library to seek legendary Earth directly. Losing him is dangerous but, worse, Delarmi has called an emergency meeting of the Table to impeach Gendibal. All other Speakers agree. No Speaker has been tried in 300 years, and no trial has led to removal. Gendibal is little fazed, wanting to concentrate on Trevize. Shandess says that the trial must legally take precedence. Fellow Speakers see him as a "clear and present danger, and even if this is Delarmi's vendetta, the trial must move forward. Gendibal demands that it take place immediately. If Shandess opposes conviction, he will have to resign and Delarmi will likely succeed him. Gendibal is confident he will not lose.

## Chapters 7-8 Analysis

Chapter 7, "Farmer," provides background on Gendibal's home planet, the Second Foundation's recruiting system, and how the scholars segregate themselves inside the University from the population at large. Scholars alone are Trantorians; the natives call themselves Hamish. Much of the chapter deals with dialect. "Hame" is the local pronunciation of "Home" and "Scowler" means "Scholar," with perhaps a touch of irony. Gendibal is shown able to break into dialect for effect. Much of the effect comes from striking compound nouns and verbs and from archaisms. Sura Novi is introduced as a feisty defender of the oppressed, fighting off muscle-bound Rufirant. She becomes a major character and through the rest of the novel fights to speak Galactic Standard rather than her native patois. The effect is charming.

This conflict is mirrored at the Table, where Gendibal has no real friends and at least one dedicated enemy. Delora Delarmi pushes the boundaries of decorum at the meeting called for Gendibal to explicate his theory. Instead, the First Speaker has to paraphrase and admit that in the end he has only instinct to rely on in supporting it. The rules of order at the Table are made clear: the First Speaker literally speaks before anyone and has the prerogative to call and adjourn meetings. There are a dozen Speakers as in Seldon's day. The body is thoroughly tradition-bound. Note that in the confrontation with Rufirant, Gendibal is surprised that a Hamish would confront a Second Foundationer. It is out of character and virtually unprecedented. Gendibal rather quickly develops a full-blown conspiracy theory that blows up in his face.

Chapter 8, "Farmwoman," opens with Gendibal arriving late at the already contentious meeting. Even the First Speaker feels obliged to reprimand his breaking a cardinal rule of the Table, but Gendibal requests the floor to explain that he has been waylaid in a way that suggests collusion to keep him from being present. Delarmi takes offense and convinces her colleagues that they have all been insulted. Soon it will be seen that behind the scenes she uses this as a pretext for impeaching her rival.

Meanwhile, however, Gendibal suffers troubling dreams merging Delarmi and Rufirant. He is awakened to hear that a Hamish has come to visit. The Proctor is used to show



the strong class structure of Second Foundation society; he is a "Lowly," susceptible to mind manipulation by a Speaker. Without qualms and as a lesson Gendibal gives him a mild headache—an action he has avoided among the Hamish. Novi, it seems, has always wanted to be a scowler rather than lose her intellect in the lowly life of a farmer. She speaks vividly in dialect devaluing farm life. Knowing that she is too old to learn advanced techniques of mind-control, Gendibal accepts her as his servant and orders her installed. He knows that colleagues will assume it is for sex, Second Foundationer males needing more spice than their females provide.

Speakers are able to link brains in a "Coincidence Effect," communicating simultaneously from remote locations. This becomes important later in the novel. Gendibal accepts the First Speaker's urgent summons to learn that Trevize is not coming, as expected, to Trantor to consult the Library, and losing him would be dangerous. Worse, Delarmi has pushed through a bill of impeachment against Gendibal for acts unbecoming his office. Support is unanimous, and, if Shandess votes against conviction, he would be shamed into resigning, with Delarmi likely becoming his successor. Why Gendibal has no fear of conviction is left mysterious. For some reason, Novi seems to be the key to his defense. This builds the level of tension.



# Chapters 9-10

## Chapters 9-10 Summary

Chapter 9, "Hyperspace," finds Trevize reassuring Pelorat that Jumps are no longer dangerous. Trevize is confident they will emerge in the right sector to find Gaia and will simply ask directions, as they would on Terminus. Trevize makes mental contact with the computer and asks for a two-minute delay. Pelorat nervously counts down but experiences no change as they Jump to the Kalganian Region, where Trevize thoroughly calculates the accuracy of the Jump before continuing onward. Pelorat is amazed at seeing the Milky Way but puzzled by how they can travel faster than light. Hyperspatial Jumps have different rules from Relativity.

Trevize is amazed to find no error in the Jump and wastes a day checking if the computer has lied. He lets it make the remaining 28 jumps to the Sayshell Union and Planet. Pelorat is indexing his Library to distract himself from fears of instant death. Pelorat forgives Trevize in advance in case they hit a black hole and counts each pause between as the computer recalculates. They arrive 3.2 million kilometers from Sayshell Planet and must make the rest of the journey under normal power. Pelorat wonders why the Mayor has given them such a remarkable ship and if the computer is taking them where it wants. Trevize wonders why he plants this ridiculous thought in his mind.

Chapter 10, "Table," describes Gendibal's trial for breaking the "bonds of community." With Delarmi bating him sarcastically, Gendibal cites a confidential source who reveals that Trevize has gone in an unexpected direction at a speed that demonstrates the First Foundation's technological power, accompanied by a scholar devoted to Earth legends. They should logically have visited Trantor (which means that the Mayor does not suspect it is a Second Foundation base) but may not want to be examined and reveal Earth's importance. All references to Earth have been purged from the Library computer. The First Foundation may be close to finding Earth and wants to keep the Second from showing interest. Gendibal has not penetrated the entire web but knows a web exists, and humanity is in danger.

Delarmi demands a vote but Gendibal insists on his right to call Novi as a witness. She finds Rufirant's violence out of character. The Speakers examine her mind, so "simple and symmetrical" that the "Anti-Mules" leave evidence of tampering to make her rescue him and cause his impeachment. A more complex mind would have concealed this. The Anti-Mules' motives must be determined. Swallowing her rage, Delarmi moves to clear Gendibal's record, but then, charmingly, attacks from a different angle. Delarmi moves that Trevize be followed by a Speaker, and since Shandess cannot be spared, Gendibal ought to go.

All agree, but Shandess is outraged at being handled. He rises to speak his mind; he ought to undergo the mission but is too old; Delarmi has the personality to lead and he has the right to name a successor. He chooses, however, to name Gendibal, after he



returns from the mission. Shandess ignores the ensuing bedlam but wonders why Delarmi is calm. Wanting to be First Speaker, she plays her last card, suggesting that on the example of Palver, Gendibal take along Novi. Gendibal announces that that is his intention, for her pure mind will serve as an "early-warning system" of any mentalism. He refuses to divulge specific plans as a security measure.

Alone, Shandess and Gendibal talk about the announcement and the First Speaker's bitterness towards Delarmi. Some colleagues will still insist on her as the better candidate. Shandess' intuition is that Gendibal will succeed. Gendibal realizes that this mission is a sign of ambition but wonders if there is something more behind his excitement.

## Chapters 9-10 Analysis

Chapter 9, "Hyperspace," watches nervous Pelorat and dubious Trevize complete what should be a month-long flight through hyperspace in a half hour. The computer performs flawlessly, and the only discrepancies that Trevize finds are in his own calculations. Trevize attempts by analogies to explain how hyperspace works in the face of the Theory of Relativity, which remains in effect. Before it can get too deep, Pelorat begs off hearing more. The two are becoming close friends.

Chapter 10, "Table," is devoted to Gendibal's impeachment trial. The First Speaker is cool towards the defendant, knowing he must go along with unanimous colleagues in order to remain in office. Delarmi is brasher than usual in challenging his prerogatives and continually snipes at Gendibal, suggesting new offenses to add to the bill of indictment and that they get the ordeal over with; the outcome is a foregone conclusion. Gendibal insists on his right to an adequate defense, and the First Speaker backs him in order that history not judge them badly. Gendibal intimates that he has a covert source in the First Foundation, whose name he must protect. This person's description of Trevize's flight in a state-of-the-art spacecraft suggests that the First Foundation is interested in Earth. The First Foundation seems anxious to keep the Second from investigating Earth.

A substantial excursus on "Imperialization" centuries after the time of the Mule provides context for discussing why all reference to Earth has been purged from the Library databanks, including mythology. These intellectuals tend to mock the "Origins Question" as legends of "Grandmother Spacewarp." Gendibal concludes that Second Foundationers, serving as librarians, must have been involved, their minds directed by some mysterious force, colorfully designated "Anti-Mules."

Gendibal calls Novi as a witness. All the Speakers are taken aback, but Delarmi's reaction borders on denying that the Hamish are human beings. Gendibal makes official note of that for future reference. He ends up being exonerated when the Speakers one-by-one examine Novi's mind, whose contours are so smooth that an Anti-Mule's subtle tampering is obvious. Gendibal had not suspected this when he made his accusation; only when Novi declares that she wants to be a scowler does he examine her mind for





motives and stumbles upon the evidence of tampering. Note that Gendibal in the presence of his peers declines to talk to Novi in Hamish dialect and has to sometimes to translate particularly dense passages of testimony into Standard Galactic for them.

Chapter 10 shows a bit more about how the Table functions, including the First Speaker's right to name a successor. Shandess dramatically builds Delarmi's hopes before crushing them, giving the office to Gendibal. Delarmi had hoped that suggesting Gendibal track Trevize, taking Novi as his companion, would lock her into the office, but Gendibal sidesteps: Novi's virgin mind will act as an "early warning system" of any mind probes. Once his mission succeeds, no one will deny him the First Speakership, no matter how little his colleagues esteem him. In the closing scene, Gendibal wonders why he feels so drawn to this mission. Note that earlier, Gendibal wonders why he feels relaxed in Novi's company. An answer appears at the end of the novel.



# Chapters 11-12

## Chapters 11-12 Summary

Chapter 11, "Sayshell," brings Trevize and Pelorat to the fourth planet in the system. Trevize warns that passing Customs will be tedious, but they make it through without meticulous inspection or bribes. Rather than risk angering officials, they follow a radio beam down to the surface as Trevize wonders why it has been so easy. When Far Side departs, the Customs official reports passing the craft that his psychic boss has seen in a dream but is told to mind his business. He hopes that the second approaching ship is also no trouble. Descending, Trevize and Pelorat talk about nocturnal lighting patterns and the planet's conservatism and independence from the Foundation. The people should be nice to tourists though, because people are easy to understand, Seldon's Plan works. Trevize hopes for sex but promises to put Gaia first.

The spaceport is small but well kept. Pelorat is amazed that the ship can be left without risk. Spaceport ethics are strict and ships inviolate, Trevize explains; plus, he has instructed the computer to kill intruders. Pelorat worries about the rented ground car being bugged and the planet's smell. Trevize tells him that every place and vessels has its distinct odor, to which one quickly adapts. Terminus smells awful. They chat about the survival of indigenous species and local architecture en route to the Tourist Center, where they will find leads as to whom to contact about Origins matters. They park and enter a surprisingly empty building. Pelorat notices the "extroverted garb," while Trevize is amazed to see the traitor Compor.

Chapter 12, "Agent," describes Trevize and Compor's confrontation with Pelorat a mystified onlooker and intermediary. Compor has arrived hours earlier on Sayshell on a special day of meditation. Hearing Trevize talk about the Second Foundation had made Compor fear mind and emotion control being targeted on them, so he turns to the Mayor, not thinking that she would arrest and exile Trevize. Thanks to Branno, Compor has the same kind of ship and computer, which, aided by his intuition, matches the Jumps. His assignment is to follow Trevize, determine what he is doing, and report back via hyper-relay. Trevize is a lightning rod, expendable bait, sent out to tip the Second Foundation's hand, at which point Branno will attack it.

Trevize says that he and Pelorat are searching for Earth, a place Compor claims is no longer habitable. From family documents he knows that the planet in Sirius Sector has been destroyed there by radiation. Comporellon, circling Epsilon Eridani, has detailed histories, from which Compor recalls nothing about a satellite and only vague bits about Bel Arvadan and a failed "Synapsifier" to expand minds. Tired of being cross-examined, Compor breaks off, advising that they go to Comporellon, and stalks away.

Observing that only the Tourist Center is truly deserted—not the city—Trevize suggests dinner. In a novel, inexpensive restaurant catering to off-planet guests with enough background noise to make talking safe, Trevize reveals suspicions that Compor is a



Second Founder. Skeptical, Pelorat warns against paranoia. Seeing Compor and the Second Foundation trying to lure them off Sayshell, Trevize determines to stay until they find a good reason to go elsewhere. Compor, meanwhile, does not recall being recruited as an "Observer," the lowest rung in the hierarchy, a safety system developed after the Mule's surprise. He hopes that when the crisis is resolved he gets credit for pointing out Trevize's ability to reach right conclusions from insufficient data. Only the junior most Speaker, Gendibal, is willing to listen and helps plot Trevize's exile to Trantor. No one foresees his trip to Sayshell.

Compor sends his hypersignal, awakening Gendibal. After checking Novi's mind for tampering by Anti-Mules, Gendibal establishes visual contact with Compor and receives details of the meeting and Compor's estimation that Trevize will stubbornly remain where he is. Compor reports that Trevize now suspects he is influenced by the Second Foundation. Gendibal feels that is inevitable. He forbids Compor to fetch him in his fast—but monitored—ship, lest Terminus grow suspicious and the Mayor dispatch her Navy. When they rendezvous, Compor will take over.

The primitive ship gives Gendibal time to study every report on Trevize, causing him to regret losing such a recruit by silly regulation. Why Trevize is on Sayshell is a vexing question. The Anti-Mules will certainly react against modifying Trevize. Novi interrupts, asking about his strange twitching, which he assures her is no cause of fear. Fear spoils her mental symmetry and must be avoided. He is surprised to feel so pleased about her and considers how a woman, Bayta Darell, is the Mule's undoing. He explains to her how he has been speaking long-distance in "scholar-fashion," which is something that she is too old to learn, but she can still learn many things. Inwardly, he is delighted to renounce the stereotype of the lowly Hamish and self-exalted University people. He pledges never to be separated from Novi.

## Chapters 11-12 Analysis

Chapter 11, "Sayshell," brings Trevize and Pelorat to a planet neither has visited, but Trevize plays the knowing cruise director, pointing things out to Pelorat's excessively innocent babe, asking about everything. Their first encounter comes while still in orbit, being confronted by Customs. Trevize hopes for easy passage but wonders why it is so easy. He does not learn, as does the reader, that the top man in the office is psychic and has dreamed that this particular Foundation spaceship should be passed. Recall Trevize's earlier wondering about why the Mayor gives them such an advanced ship. The Customs officials are named Jogoroth Sobhaddartha and Namarath Godhisavatta, said to be typically Sayshellian names, but an earthly reader finds them Indian sounding. It is probably not coincidental that the Republic of Seychelles is in the western Indian Ocean on lost Earth.

Pelorat has learned not to trust people, but Trevize assures him that the parked ship is safe because a spaceport that does not prevent theft will be boycotted by merchants, to that planet's ruin. Sayshell has computerized cars that handle driving, useful for tourists ignorant of local laws. The lettering used for signs is also not Standard Galactic, adding



to the difficulty. Trevize considers himself on vacation and wants to find female companionship; Pelorat worries that this will interfere with their mission to find Earth. He also fails to understand why the Tourist Center is the best place to start, in order to get a feel for what cultural and educational institutions are available. Clearly, he has conducted all his research over Asimov's version of the Internet, using little shoe leather. Pelorat comments on the planet's smell, leading to an excursus on odors. This becomes an occasional theme for the remainder of the novel. The extinction of indigenous life forms wherever humanity colonizes is mentioned again.

Chapter 12, "Agent," opens with a tense meeting between Trevize and Compor. Pelorat is in the uncomfortable position of listening to his partner rant when Trevize refuses to talk to the cowardly traitor. Compor is anxious to have his motivations known and for Trevize to believe that he had not foreseen the Mayor's reaction. Trevize is unforgiving but mentions that they are hunting for the Earth. Compor appears to know more about the subject than anyone Pelorat has ever met and tells them definitively where to search for more information but to give up on visiting the home world of humanity, for it has been destroyed by radiation. How this happens is the stuff of legends, it seems. Trevize suspects that Compor is trying to get them off Sayshell and stubbornly refuses to go without a firm lead. They can always follow Compor's trail of evidence later. More importantly, Trevize suspects that Compor is controlled by the Second Foundation. Pelorat calls this paranoia, and Trevize wonders if Pelorat, too, is under the influence.

The reader is then told, as though in an aside, that Trevize's hunch is correct. Compor is recruited as a child to the corps of "Observers," second-class mentalics spread throughout the Galaxy and organized in classic cell fashion: no one knows one's peers so no one can betray anyone. Never again will a Mule sneak up on the Second Foundation undetected at a safe distance. Compor reports directly to Gendibal via secure telepathy. Compor recognizes in school that Trevize has an unexplainable ability to intuit based on scanty data and while Trevize cannot be recruited, he must be taken into account as a potent force. Compor brings this to the attention of the Speakers, failing to impress all but the youngest, Gendibal. They stage events to deliver Trevize to Trantor for observation, but somehow he evades them. Compor must observe him until Gendibal arrives to take charge.

The chapter's revelations seemingly concluded, Gendibal calms Novi's nervousness while watching him communicate telepathically with Compor. He needs her mind calm to serve as an early-warning detector. Novi adores him, and he enjoys her company more than he can account for. He suggests going on a first name basis, but she tells him "Suri" designates a slut so she prefers Novi. Later the true etymology of her name is revealed. Gendibal battles with his class prejudice and believes that he prevails but realizes it remains. Fortunately, Compor will not realize that Novi is Hamish. This is the second example of situational ethics in the chapter, the first being when it is convenient when one can tell the truth to attain one's goal.



# Chapters 13-14

## Chapters 13-14 Summary

Chapter 13, "University," opens in the Far Star, which to Pelorat now smells badly. Trevize tells him that the Sayshell Union is nearly surrounded by Foundation Territory and cautious about angering Terminus. Pelorat had never heard about Earth's radioactivity but doubts its truth. This is a common tale in the Galaxy. Every world patriotically claims that its culture is superior and the source of all other cultures. Some scholars seriously claim that Earth is in hyperspace. The question of radioactivity, however, bears the "mark of truth." Trevize objects that Comporell might be lying to lure them away, but Pelorat feels that with no references to nuclear warfare or accidents that might raise radioactive levels, it is worth checking out.

Next morning, the Tourist Center is crowded. They obtain a reference to a Professor Quinteset and head to the University, where the secretary refers to "the planet-that-was-first" and "Gaia" being banished to hyperspace—Pelorat knows the wording of the common tale. Calling one another by their initials, SQ fills a hole in JP's recent article: while humans live exclusively on Earth, they invent robots—humaniform computerized tools—to help explore and populate the Galaxy. After a first wave, Earth's humans rebel, ban robots, and begin a massive emigration. The "Day of Flight" commemorates the robot-free earthmen reaching Sayshell. It is dogma that Earth people settle directly, but SQ thinks it unlikely.

Trevize's request for information on Gaia shakes SQ, but he recovers to invite them home for a vegetarian dinner. As they walk, SQ points out a pentagon of bright stars, "The Five Sisters," the constellation symbolizing success in love and inspiring erotic poems. The dim spot in the center represents unrequited love. After the delicious meal and a chat about ecology, Trevize prompts SQ about Gaia. His wife flees the room and SQ looks pained. He discounts the "gibberish" about hyperspace. Pelorat has figured out that the dim star in the Five Sisters is Gaia. When Trevize threatens to involve the ambassador, SQ tells what little he knows: Gaia must be Earth; it is not colonized by any Union world, and its age relative to Sayshell is debated. While forming the Union and fighting the Galactic Empire, the Viceroy fails to conquer Gaia; the people revolt, and independence is gained ("Union Day"). A century later, Sayshell loses another conquering fleet, and subsequent trade delegations achieve nothing. Gaia stays firmly isolated. The Mule allows only the Sayshell Union neutrality, and a historical anecdote suggests that Gaia is his birthplace. After him, Sayshell ignores Gaia. It may be a planet of Mules. Promising to get coordinates from the astronomy department, SQ warns that going there is suicidal.

Chapter 14, "Forward!" finds Pelorat sorry to leave Sayshell and worried about dying on Gaia. Still, he has faith in Trevize. They talk more lightly until reaching space, where Trevize uses the star map to show that Gaia's dim sun is emitting from the Five Sisters and has probably been suppressed at Trantor. He convinces Pelorat in the absence of



his office records that his knowledge of Gaia is recent and anonymous and comes from Sayshell. Trevize manipulates the computer to prove that the Five Sisters form a pentagon only from Sayshell's perspective and only in the last century.

Trevize then reviews the "extraordinary concatenation of coincidence" that brings him from musing about the Second Foundation in a political speech to encountering Compor on Sayshell and learning about the Five Sisters. Every step reveals the Second Foundation's maneuvering him towards itself. Several times it could have silenced him instead. To make the course irreversible, Trevize has informed the First Foundation ambassador on Sayshell about this flight to Gaia, so Branno can react to any violence against them. To risk attracting such attention to itself, the Second Foundation must want some power that Trevize alone possesses, and he is determined to use it for the right cause. He also feels that Pelorat is essential to whatever it is.

Branno looks drained, even though her tenure as Mayor has been placid. History will not remember her. She studies a three-dimensional holograph of the Galaxy. A third of it forms her Foundation Federation, around it are nominally independent regions under Foundation influence. If she moves to conquer the rest only halfway through Seldon's Plan, she will fail—unless the lightning rod reveals the Second Foundation. Kodell appears, showing no such signs of wear. Trevize's arrest is finally causing a stir, but he can control it. Declaring that she wants independent Sayshell conquered, Branno summarizes what she has learned about Trevize's activities and sudden interest in Gaia, a place missing from the maps. Branno is sure Gaia protects itself by keeping Sayshell quiet and protected. Kodell questions why the shielding has suddenly collapsed now. Branno believes Trevize has "somehow upset things," endangering the Seldon Plan. She does not intend to wage war but wants a flexible strike force on the fringes of the Sayshell Union. Seldon set up his Plan in terms of his own times and could not foresee advances like gravitics. Gaia might be as advanced. Branno refuses to be talked out of being part of the expedition, which she orders forward.

## Chapters 13-14 Analysis

Chapter 13, "University," shows Pelorat meeting his counterpart at Sayshell University, with Trevize as an impatient third party. Seemingly out of the blue, SQ has read a Pelorat article that reveals ignorance of robots. Wishing he could fill in the gap, SQ is delighted to have the author appear. Pelorat is surprised that his materials are read so far from Terminus. SQ summarizes the rise and fall of humanoid computers, rather too quickly for Pelorat and the reader to appreciate it in full. The gist is that humans invent the machines, use them until their aims are met, and then discard them. The subject comes up later and is much more fully developed. At this point, it simply seems odd that someone of Pelorat's academic stature would have heard nothing about robots if they were not a phenomenon strictly limited to the isolated Sayshell Union. Robots seem to belong to the original Earth, Pelorat's specialty.

Piety and/or patriotism have encrusted kernels of historical truth everywhere in the Galaxy, each planet practicing "globocentrism"—considering itself older and more



cultured than others, and even scholars are affected, endorsing official myths like Gaia being banished to hyperspace for evil deeds. Hearing the myth being recited, Pelorat is able to quote the closing moralism from rote: every culture has something like this. SQ himself offers a brief soliloquy on how infected he is by superstition—compare this with Gendibal's lamentations in the previous chapter about racial and class prejudice. Late in the novel it will be seen what a key figure SQ is in bringing together all the principals in orbit over Gaia. At this point, it appears that coincidences are many.

Chapter 14, "Forward!" shows Trevize and Pelorat departing for Gaia's coordinates, which the astronomy department has provided and Trevize has shared with the First Foundation ambassador on Sayshell. Meanwhile, Mayor Branno has decided that her "lightning rod" is not stirring up the Second Foundation sufficiently to reveal itself and concludes she must put pressure on the independent Sayshell Union to determine why Gaia so attracts Trevize. Branno and Trevize are both convinced that Trevize has some unknown and valuable power. Both are determined to go forward to Gaia.

Trevize summarizes for Pelorat (and for the reader, usefully, at this two-thirds point in the novel) the "extraordinary concatenation of coincidence" that have brought them to this point. It all begins with Trevize pandering for undecided votes and then proceeds by steps that suggest to him Second Foundation influence if not outright control. The link to the Mule keeps building, as does the story's tension.



# Chapters 15-16

## Chapters 15-16 Summary

Chapter 15, "Gaia-S," opens with Novi horrified not to be able to find her clothes, which Gendibal has laundered while she showers. She cannot bring herself to call him other than Master as he grows fonder of her. Their ship is very slow Jumping through hyperspace and Novi shows concern. As a scholar, Gendibal is confident he can deal with anything they meet on Sayshell and explains to Novi how he can control minds, while trying not to look like a braggart. Novi cannot explain why Rufirant would attack Gendibal, and Gendibal commends her for stepping into the situation. It kept him from having to harm Rufirant's mind, about which the other scholars would have been angry. Novi asks whether there are rival scholars who might oppose Gendibal. Amazed at her perception, he lies, saying no. He explains how his fellow scholars will stand with him and then discloses her role as an early-warning system. Her key is being honest and guileless. The touch of other minds on hers stands out clearly. If he sees that, he can plan a counter strategy. When Novi walks away, Gendibal wonders how she can be so complex, intelligent, understanding, and courageous beneath her simplicity. He cannot see what lies ahead.

In one Jump, Trevize and Pelorat arrive at Gaia-S (the sun). They will approach cautiously, studying the outer giant gas planets before moving into the inner regions, where rocky planets should be habitable. Trevize hopes someone will come out to them before he has to move in. He lacks the "sureness" that he sometimes feels. The computer shows them the system from far above the planetary plane. There is no radio noise coming from satellites of the outer planets; the radio noise would suggest human life, so Trevize concentrates on an inner planet that looks promising, although it does not have a big enough moon to be Earth. A mini-Jump brings them to Gaia. A space station circles the planet. Again, Trevize waits to be contacted first. If he sees hostility, they will flee to Terminus to report their findings and then, perhaps, return as part of an armed fleet. After a long wait, the alarm sounds, as some power begins drawing them irresistibly towards the space station.

Chapter 16, "Convergence," begins with Gendibal rendezvousing with Compor. The Trantorian spacecraft lacks a undock, forcing Gendibal and Novi to cross by tether. Both are amazed at the luxury of Compor's craft, which they take over for the flight to Gaia, where a First Foundation fleet is converging. Meanwhile, Ambassador Littoral Thoobing tries to talk Kodell, whom he despises, into withdrawing the warships. Kodell insists that it is the Mayor's decision and that they know nothing about a mission to Gaia by Trevize. Thoobing argues against the use of force, which can only tarnish the First Foundation's reputation and rally anti-Foundation forces. Economic dominance is sufficient. Gaia, though independent, is enclosed by the Sayshell Union, and the approach of warships will bring war. Hate-ridden territories cannot be governed, and Gaia probably does not exist outside of legend. If it does, it must be able to manipulate





minds, like the Mule or the Second Foundation. Kodell orders Thoobing to calm the Sayshellians.

Trapped and under alien control, Trevize and Pelorat notice that oddly they feel no panic. Trevize considers that since Gaia has never attempted expansion, it may be inhuman and curious about humanity. A ship leaves the station and approaches. Meanwhile, Branno and Kodell discuss Thoobing and the nature—and threat—of Gaia. Branno is confident that the Foundation can defend against any physical and mental weapons and orders Kodell to keep the fleet ready on the Sayshellian outskirts while her ship approaches Gaia. After she deals with Gaia, Branno will advance on Trantor, home of the Second Foundation.

## Chapters 15-16 Analysis

Chapter 15, "Gaia-S," brings the unarmed ship to the mysterious region of space from which survivors have not emerged. Trevize explains the solar system as they cautiously approach, with the gas giants sounding like Jupiter and Saturn, their moons void of human life. Moving to the inner planets, Trevize describes one as a textbook case for oxygen-based lifeforms. Its period of rotation and axis of inclination are not incompatible with it being Earth, but its tiny moon is. Trevize and Pelorat are both disappointed. The excitement having disappeared, they settle into a routine of waiting to be contacted. Trevize has shown due caution, knowing his advanced craft can elude attackers. He is surprised when some force latches on and begins drawing them towards an orbiting space station. The novel's tension rises again, but in a different pitch.

Chapter 16, "Convergence," weaves multiple threads: Gendibal and Novi interacting, showing her as attractive yet withdrawn, awe-struck, revealing how limited her education has been and how completely she accepts all she has been told. Gendibal does not even attempt to explain the Seldon Plan. They rendezvous with Compor and exchange spacecraft. Gendibal is as impressed with the First Foundation technological achievement as is simple Novi. Gendibal is annoyed by Compor's disappointment at meeting the Speaker, whom Gendibal has for so long held on a pedestal and rather peevishly tweaks Compor's mind to restore the proper respect. Gendibal also reminds himself that physical power cannot compete with the ability to control minds and events.

Meanwhile, the Foundation Ambassador to Sayshell is introduced, having to demand of his old rival Kodell that approaching Foundation warships be withdrawn. He argues against the use of brute force, which creates conditions in which follow-up rule is impossible—a concise critique of Imperialism. Kodell orders him to do his job: report all facts, however inconsequential, and keep the Sayshellians calm. Kodell knows that Thoobing enjoys his comfortable diplomatic post, so the threat is effective, even if the demand is farfetched. The enigma of Gaia surviving independent and peaceful in the midst of the Sayshellian Union continues to grow.

Trevize and Pelorat are being steadily drawn towards the space station. They are surprised to feel neither panic at the prospect of interrogation and death nor the kind of



eagerness to tell all they know that mind control of the Mule's sort would induce. Trevize brings up the possibility that Gaia is non-human because it has never been expansionist. Pelorat's argument that this trait might not be universal among dispersed humans seems weak. Finally, switching to Branno's approaching spacecraft, they develop the themes brought up with the Ambassador and show a degree of turf-minding and resentment at being left out of each other's information stream. Note how confident Branno is about her safety as she prepares for the convergence and that she knows where the Second Foundation is to be found.



# Chapters 17-18

## Chapters 17-18 Summary

Chapter 17, "Gaia," opens aboard the Far Star, being slowly drawn to the primitive-looking space station. Pelorat is sure that having left them alive thus far, the creatures are not violent. A tether snakes out and a figure crosses, enters, and strips off her spacesuit to reveal a graceful, provocative, and vain young woman. Pelorat surprises himself by reacting gallantly, takes over from and pacifies the aggressive Trevize. Bliss, short for Blissenobiarella (Gaians use single-syllable names and the visitors become Pel and Trev) knows about them, admires the ship, and reveals that the Mule is a Gaian who leaves without permission. Trevize quits trying to control the gravitic engines as something guides them down. Bliss accepts vegetarian food, noting that not all Gaians avoid meat.

The ship lands gently in a pleasant locale. Bliss explains that she is Gaia, the whole planet and everything on it is Gaia; all separate organisms share, to varying degrees, an overall consciousness. Every element willingly does what is needed, just as individual cells in the body do what they should. Gaia has captured the ship without any individual Gaian ordering it, as Dom (Endomandiovizamarondeyaso), who has the largest share of the Gaian collective mind, will explain to them. They have worked years to bring them here. Bliss and Pelorat flirt as they walk to meet Dom. Elderly, tall, and thin, with youthful eyes, Dom welcomes questions. Over food, he explains that what is eaten remains part of the planetary consciousness as it is incorporated into the eater's body, which in turn dies to become part of other beings. Mystics talk of past existences, but that would blur the present consciousness. Each new individual contributes something new and one ought not to hasten or delay death. To relieve the somber mood, Dom shows them the "Participations" that he has made, allowing one to see the emotion of inanimate objects. Mention of Earth prompts Pelorat to ask why millions of worlds capable of bearing life would produce only simple life forms? Dressed in a revealing blouse, Bliss returns as Dom tells the fable of Eternity.

An infinite number of Universes exist with individual events taking place (or not) in various ways with various aftermaths. Imagine freezing the Universes to step between them and decide which will be "Reality." Tasked with deciding which Reality is best for humanity, the Eternals choose Earth, freeze that strand, and retire, leaving humans the only intelligent life form. Other Realities probably exist for other intelligences, but these cannot be reached, and the human Reality constantly generates new branches, creating an infinite number of potential one-intelligence Universes. As Pelorat and Trevize debate the point, Dom asks that they stop this unpleasant "logic-chopping."

Dom tells of times when robots and humanity live together, unsuccessfully. Despite the Three Laws of Robotics, robots learn to read human thoughts and make humans dependent on their oversight. Understanding the humans' revulsion, the robots allow humans to fend for themselves, establish Eternity and become Eternals. Humans



emigrate from overcrowded Earth, where they feel humiliated by having been babied, and take no records of that treatment elsewhere. Gaia remembers because it is peopled only by those who learn telepathy. For 20,000 years Gaia develops this craft and group consciousness spreads to non-humans. In gratitude to their teachers, they keep the memory of the robots alive. There is no other world like Gaia or they would detect it, as they detect the Second Foundation at the last time of crisis but cowardly left it to them to take care of the Mule. In this new crisis, Gaia needs Trevize.

Chapter 18, "Collision," finds Gendibal and Novi approaching Gaia. In Novi's mind Gendibal senses a faint glow, a mentalic field for which he can find no source. Meanwhile, on Trantor, worried Shandess is mentally contacted by Gendibal, who requests the rallying—a total mental network to fight danger—perhaps greater than the Mule's. Aboard her ship, ignoring Kodell, Branno prepares to claim her place in history. Two strangers rather than Compor are aboard his ship, showing that Trevize has drawn lightning. She has long suspected Compor of being Second Foundation and has given him a defective computer to reveal his mind reading by the Jumps. From history Branno links the Second Foundation with Trantor. They fail to stop Trevize because 1) he is a very special person, 2) their man Compor is his friend, and 3) Branno reacts unpredictably.

Gendibal assumes that powerful warship seeks Compor and does not suspect a Second Founder is aboard. Otherwise, a megalomaniac controls it. He notices that the mentalic field is not growing more intense as the warship approaches and concludes that it must arise on Gaia. Focusing on the attacker, Gendibal is shocked to encounter a shield against mentalics. As Gendibal's attack registers on the psychometer, Branno hails Bright Star to order surrender or face demolition. Gendibal warns her that the shield is imperfect and his mind can get in but not with sufficient control to prevent massive damage. Branno is irresolute but defiant. There is a standoff. Gendibal warns that derailing the Second Empire by forming a premature Pseudo-Empire will unite Branno's opponents and result in the full 30,000 years of endless warfare, anarchy and barbarism. He begs her to forget the Seldon Plan, whose mathematics she cannot understand, and to think like a politician. She is confident that shields will allow her to fulfill her plans and avoid being a puppet to the Second Foundation. Gendibal switches tactics, talking about Gaia as home of many Mules, who could become both their masters. He proposes a truce until the common threat is eliminated. Novi suddenly declares that they must wait for Trevize.

## Chapters 17-18 Analysis

Chapter 17, "Gaia," introduces two new characters, Bliss and Dom, who speak as units of the planetary collective consciousness. Bliss is a beautiful young lady, well aware of her allure and Dom a man in his nineties but looking far younger. They use analogies of the cells in a body to explain Gaia, where everything animate and inanimate happily plays its necessary role in the whole. Old Pelorat falls for Bliss who seems from the start fond of him. Trevize, who had been looking for some sexual adventure, now looks on his partner wryly as Pelorat preens and postures.



Chapter 17 is much about fables. Pelorat quotes Gennerat's Law: "The falsely dramatic drives out the truly dull." Asimov works into the novel his famous "Three Laws of Robotics," first introduced in a short story in the 1940s, which become a mainstay of science fiction: "1) A robot may not harm a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm; 2). A robot must obey orders given it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law; 3) A robot must protect its own existence, as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law." Dom then fleshes out the stub of a story that Trevize and Pelorat hear from SQ about robots: from helpers they evolve into overbearing helpers, see that they are causing anxiety, do what they can to provide for humans taking care of their own affairs, and retire to Eternity. The discussion of multiple universes necessary to the conclusion of the robots' retreat is a bit confusing, as is the aside about "Participations," which serves to set up talk about the evolution of life uniquely on Earth.

Chapter 18, "Collision," confronts First and Second Foundation spacecraft at a distance of 100 million kilometers, with Mayor Branno's heavily-armed warship closing fast on Compor's Bright Star. Branno wants fame and is confident that shielding against mentalics, 120 years in the making, will win the day. Intelligence reports assure her that Compor has switched spacecraft with what she assumes is a Second Founder. Gendibal knows much less. He assumes that no one would knowingly confront a Second Founder. When he fires first and his mind encounters the shield, he is perplexed. Branno orders his surrender with great bluster and Gendibal replies in kind. Both threaten and posture and a classic stalemate develops. Gendibal has arranged for the First Speaker to unite all the minds of Trantor behind his will but has yet to use it. He lectures about the dangers of imperialism and proposes a truce so that the two Foundations can consider and deal with the new threat from the surface of Gaia. Mild Novi creates chapter-ending suspense by declaring that they must wait for Trevize.



# Chapters 19-20

## Chapters 19-20 Summary

Chapter 19, "Decision," finds Trevize, Pelorat, and Bliss back in space. Trevize would prefer Dom and demands to know his part. Bliss assures him that they dare not manipulate his mind to calm him, lest his value be lost. Pelorat is willing to bear the burden of responsibility for the wellbeing of an entire world simply to please Bliss, but she allows no substitution. She assures Pelorat that she already thinks very well of him. Novi realizes her true Gaian identity and is like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon. Gendibal sees her mind grow complex and impenetrable and asks why she has deceived and lured him here. She communicates in Speaker fashion the essence of Gaia and begs him not to resist. They must remain in a triple stalemate until Trevize breaks it—if he so chooses. Meanwhile, aboard the Far Star, Bliss also sees that Trevize must make a decision.

Branno regrets not waiting until the shield is perfected. As the ships orbit in static formation, Novi establishes three-way contact with Branno and Trevize's minds, declares that she will not tamper with them, but is merely taking advantage of Branno and Gendibal's respective ambitions to let them arrange the good of the Galaxy. To prevent another militaristic Empire a la Terminus or a paternalistic one a la Trantor, Gaia has brought them together to consider a third alternative: "Galaxia." Here, every inhabited planet is alive, forming a greater "hyperspatial life." The old mistakes will be avoided, based on Gaian experience. Trevize, with his unique gift of knowing the right thing to do, must choose among the three. Bound by the Three Laws of Robotics: "Gaia may not harm life or, through inaction, allow life to come to harm," Gaia can neither force its vision on others nor can watch the Galaxy destroy itself. It can, however, follow Trevize's decision.

Branno pleads first, asking Trevize to think of the Foundation's good and not blame it for her earlier actions. As a human he cannot wish to be a cipher, as he would be in either other system. The Foundation can choose not to be a bloody conqueror. Gendibal follows, pleading that Trevize support the Seldon Plan, which the Second Foundation, as guides not despots, has kept alive. Novi agrees that never in history has the First Foundation been free of bloodshed but has seen hatred around the Speakers. Trevize asks Pelorat's advice and, reminded of their vision of the living Galaxy, is sure.

Chapter 20, "Conclusion," opens with Branno satisfied by her state visit to Sayshell, sealing a commercial treaty. Gendibal is also satisfied, believing that he has adjusted Branno's mind to the practicality. He downplays Novi's role but assures her that she will be with him always. Gaia remains masked deep in her mind. Pelorat resolves to stay on Gaia with Bliss. When Trevize asks her privately if she is a robot, she neither admits nor denies it, describes how robots function as benevolent supervisors, and promises to treat Pelorat well. Trevize is happy for them both. Before leaving Gaia, Trevize tells Dom that his decision is purely rationally: Galaxia will take generations if not centuries to



bring about, giving time to avoid or correct errors. To be sure he is right, Trevize must visit Earth. Dom assures him that Gaia is not involved in the senseless purging of data about Earth and asks that he stay long enough for them to puzzle this out together, and then be on his way.

## Chapters 19-20 Analysis

Chapter 19, "Decision," reveals Novi's true identity as a Gaian. Proximity to her native planet activates the collective mind, and she seizes both Branno and Gendibal to establish as it were a three-way mentalic conference call with Branno, Gendibal, and Trevize. The principals struggle with the idea of not needing to speak words. Gendibal feels betrayed by his friend, and Trevize rages at being forced to do something that he cannot. This is the climax of the novel's theme pitting free will against determinism.

Novi explains why and how Gaia has arranged for them to come together. The scene has the air of a legal trial or legislative debate. She sketches three distinct views of how the Galaxy could move forward. Branno and Gendibal then make their appeals, demonizing opponents and claiming that faults in their own approach can be adequately handled. They are perfectly depicted as lobbyists. As he settles to make his decision, Trevize hears competing pithy slogans: "You must." Hearing three slogans, "Free will!" "Guidance and peace!" and "Life." Everyone in the novel, himself included, has said that Trevize has a unique way of making right decisions from insufficient data. Gaia cannot explain his gift, and Trevize resists as long as possible, slowly being battered by a response to his litany of objections: "You must." This is quite an effective passage. In the end, the vision of the living Galaxy that he and Pelorat share before Jumping away from Terminus gives Trevize surety of his decision. What that decision is is left to the Conclusion.

Chapter 20, "Conclusion," provides a rather impressionistic view of the outcome of Trevize's decision. A commercial treaty is struck between Terminus and Sayshell, removing the most immediate need for a military conquest. Brannon pays a state visit and Sayshell's ruler(s) will reciprocate. Gendibal can return in triumph to Trantor to become First Speaker, believing that he has tweaked Brannon's mind just enough to get her to abandon the idea of conquering the Galaxy. He has forgotten his anger at Novi and promises to keep her ever at his side. Neither knows that a part of Gaia is buried deep in her mind. Things he has seen in the others' minds during the "conference call" make Trevize determined to visit Earth to discover something important. He is sad that Pelorat wants to remain on Gaia, where he will never fully fit in and worries that beautiful young Bliss has numbed Pelorat's senses. Trevize asks her straight out if she is a robot. She will not answer but confirms the robots' continuing care for Gaians. When she promises never to abandon Pelorat, Trevize gives his blessing. Trevize's last stop is to talk with Dom about why he adopts the Galaxian plan: it is the only one that lacks immediate and irreversible consequences.



# Characters

## Golan Trevize

The novel's protagonist, Golan Trevize is a brash, glowering, indiscreet 32-year-old freshman Councilman on Terminus. He is black-haired, tall, walks with his thumbs hitched into the sash that he habitually wears, showing a subtle rebellion. Trevize lives alone in the Flexner neighborhood since Flavella, his latest house mate, leaves, growing weary of Trevize's erratic public life. Trevize is the nephew of the First Foundation's Commissioner of Transportation, which helps him get his start in politics. After college, he completes two years' service in the First Foundation Navy as a lieutenant, gaining navigational skills that become important during his flight to exile.

As the novel begins, Trevize objects to the limitation of free speech by Mayor Harla Branno, is arrested for treason, gently interrogated by Director of Security Liono Kodell, purely to obtain a voice recording of him admitting that he believes in the Seldon Plan, and exiled from Terminus. The proof of his thesis, Trevize repeatedly declares, is that Seldon's analysis matches the current situation too perfectly. Dismissed, under guard, Trevize declares that all will some day agree with him. Mayor Branno, who admits that he is right—the Seldon Plan is not functioning properly—gives the voyage a pretext: Trevize and a companion, Professor Janov Pelorat, are to search for the alleged mythical planet Earth/Gaia; in fact, Trevize is tasked with locating the Second Foundation, which Branno believes is manipulating the Plan.

Constantly calming Pelorat, a rookie in space and learning about his theories, Trevize pilots their amazing spacecraft, the *Far Star*, sleek on the outside and spacious inside, complete with gravitic engines and advanced computerization, to Sayshell. There, they learn the few facts and many myths that surround Gaia and determine to visit, despite considerable risk. Trevize is put off by the Gaians' claims of sharing a common mind and particularly by Pelorat falling in love with a young Gaian, Bliss. She accompanies them back into orbit, where they face off with First and Second Foundation spaceships and Trevize is told that he must use his intuition to decide among three alternate plans for the welfare of humanity.

As proponents chorus "Free will!" "Guidance and peace!" and "Life," Trevize chooses the "Galaxia" plan because it alone has a long-range framework, allowing modification and correction. Determined to resume his search for Earth, Trevize is concerned that Pelorat wants to remain behind, having fallen in love with Bliss. Trevize intuits that she is a robot, confronts her, and secures a promise to be good to the kindly old professor without admitting that she is a robot.





## Stor Gendibal

A rising young intellect in the Second Foundation hierarchy, Gendibal is the youngest Speaker in Trantor's history. He is recruited by the Second Foundation at age ten and begins his education at Galactic University at age 15. Gendibal is rather puny, of medium height, with thin lips, bony, restless hands, and dark, humorless eyes that smolder. He jogs and walks to build stamina, made easier because Trantor is smaller than his home planet and its gravity weaker. He rather resembles a young Hari Seldon in photographs and holograms.

Gendibal alone among the Speakers is willing to hear the concerns of First Foundation Councilman Munn Li Compore on Terminus about the strange talents of Compore's colleague, Councilman Golan Trevize. Compore becomes Gendibal's agent, warning him about some force that is tampering with the Seldon Plan, adapting it to current conditions too perfectly after 500 years. Gendibal brings his concerns to aged First Speaker Quindor Shandess and convinces him mathematically.

Gendibal, who regularly likes to take his exercise in the countryside, is waylaid by hostile farmers led by Karoll Rufirant, is rescued by a physical and verbal assault on huge Rufirant by Sura Novi and arrives late for a Table meeting specially called for him to present his theories. The First Speaker is powerless to prevent his being impeached for behavior unbecoming a Speaker, for lashing out at a presumed conspiracy to keep him from the meeting. Gendibal is unpopular with his colleagues, particularly Delora Delarmi, who also covets the First chair.

Before his trial begins, he is visited at home (Speaker's House, Apartment 27) by the farm woman, Sura Novi, whose mind he realizes is remarkably smooth. She testifies on Gendibal's behalf at the trial, bringing about his surprising acquittal and accompanies him on his mission to determine what the exiled Trevize is doing. Shandess announces that upon his return, Gendibal rather than Delarmi will become the next First Speaker, well before his thirtieth birthday, which has long been Gendibal's goal in life. In orbit over Gaia Planet, Gendibal pushes Trevize to put the Second Foundation in charge of the galaxy's destiny but is manipulated mentally into accepting a treaty between the First Foundation and the Sayshell Union and the long-term development of "Galaxia." Returning home, Gendibal forgets his feelings of betrayal, fails to see that Novi retains a portion of Gaia deep in her brain, and pledges to keep her by his side forever.

## Harla Branno

The 62-year-old, hard-driving Mayor of Terminus, nicknamed "The Bronze" for acting with "metallic rigor," Branno has gray hair (usually) carefully arranged, a matter-of-fact face, and strong jaw resembling an "underslung granite block." Branno is only the fifth woman Mayor of Terminus and is the strongest incumbent since the time of the Mule. She has presided over a long and profitable peace, controlling a third of the scattered political units in the Galaxy. She is a capable administrator but not brilliant in the manner of early predecessors Salvor Hardin or Hober Mallow, but also not a ruinous fool like



the Indburs who rule the First Foundation just before the Mule. Branno delivers humdrum speeches but is able to make quick decisions and stick by them for as long as she is convinced that she is right. She lacks obvious charisma but has a knack for persuading voters.

Branno has suffered periods of political unpopularity, but as the novel opens is riding high. She has suggested that she will retire to the role of an elder statesperson unless Hari Sheldon's holograph backs her on the question of retaining the capital at Terminus. He backs her, using nearly her own words. A freshman Councilman, protagonist Golan Trevize (whom she incidentally finds handsome), finds the coincidence too great and deduces that there is no Seldon Plan currently guiding the Galaxy. Branno orders him arrested and exiles him rather than torturing or killing him or blanking his memory. She, too, knows the Plan is being manipulated and wants to use Trevize as a "lightning rod" to draw out the Second Foundation to unmask it.

Terminus having developed a shield against mentalics, Branno moves to the border of independent Sayshell, intending to conquer it. There she is contacted mentally by Second Foundation Speaker Stor Gendibal, who has been pursuing Trevize and ends in a standoff. Gaia brings the principals' minds together and in the end Trevize decides to follow Gaia's path for the development of the universe, eschewing both Branno's imperialism and Gendibal's control. Branno believes she has achieved a profitable commercial treaty with Sayshell and pays a state visit.

## **Blissenobiarella (Bliss)**

A beautiful and alluring 23-year-old Gaian woman, Bliss is serving her "stint" on the orbital space station when the protagonist, Councilman Golan Trevize and Professor Janov Pelorat arrive on their mission to discover the truth about the mystery planet and, they hope, the identity and location of mythical Earth. By mind control Bliss captures the spacecraft, calms the pair, and directs them to the Gaian surface. Aged Pelorat is instantly attracted to flirtatious Bliss and gradually falls in love. Bliss describes to them how every element on Gaia is part of a corporate intelligence. From stories he has heard on Sayshell, Trevize suspects Bliss is a humanoid robot. Without admitting it, Bliss describes how robot supervisors might be involved in helping humans live to the fullest. At any rate, she promises to be kind and loving to Pelorat when he announces he will stay behind on Gaia to be with her.

## **Leonis Cheng**

A small-statured Speaker with an "encyclopedic knowledge of the minutiae of the Seldon Plan" and "myopic attitude" toward the actual Galaxy, Cheng at Speaker Stor Gendibal's impeachment trial lectures pedantically about the period of Imperialization under Emperor Cleon II. Gendibal notes that the University and Library are by then under Second Foundation control, so no purging of resources concerning the "Origin Question" could have taken place without the Speakers' knowledge.



## Munn Li Compore

Golan Trevize's fellow freshman Councilman and supposed friend, Compore, age 34, is a bit of a social rebel, adopting a middle name in defiance of tradition and refusing to change his unfashionable buttery-yellow hair and sky-blue eyes. Seemingly stupid, easily dominated, and ready to agree, Compore helps Trevize improve and hone the opinions which he later denounces as traitorous to Mayor Harla Branno. Compore is born on Smyrno of people who originally inhabit Comporellon in the Sirius Sector (hence his name). He immigrates to Terminus with his father, where still as a child he is recognized for his abilities by the Second Foundation and recruited as an "Observer," a watchdog against dangerous characters like the Mule. He reports telepathically to Speaker Stor Gendibal on Trantor.

Compore becomes friends with Trevize in college, where he is an All-Collegiate Hyper Racing champion, displaying talents that are crucial to his being able to follow Trevize on his flight into exile. Suspecting that Compore may belong to the Second Foundation, Mayor Branno sends him on Trevize's tail with a computer that cannot compute complex Jumps into hyperspace. When Compore succeeds in following Trevize to Sayshell, Branno is convinced.

On Sayshell, Compore tries to convince an angry Trevize that he is not his enemy and gives him clues to the location of the legendary Planet Earth, which he claims to have visited and knows to be destroyed by radiation. Suspecting that Compore wants to get him away from Sayshell, Trevize stubbornly remains until he finds sufficient evidence to take him to nearby Gaia. Compore trades spaceships with Gendibal for the Speaker's fateful rendezvous with Trevize, Branno, and the mind of Gaia.

## Arkady Darell

A figure from the Galaxy's distant past, Darell is the author of historical novels and a biography of her grandmother Bayta that is often mentioned in this novel.

## Delora Delarmi

A brilliant but tactless, irreverent, and ambitious Speaker on Trantor, blue-eyed, round, friendly-faced Delarmi annoys First Speaker Quindor Shandess, whom she hopes soon to succeed. She sees her primary rival as young Speaker Stor Gendibal, and when he is late for a meeting and casts aspersions at his colleagues over possible involvement in detaining him, Delora moves that he be impeached. Certain of victory—because ten colleagues also dislike the brash young man—Delarmi nevertheless fails when Gendibal proves that another formidable "mentalic" power is at work in the galaxy (termed "Anti-Mules"). Determined to get Gendibal out of the way, Delarmi recommends sending him to pursue the exiled Terminus Councilman Golan Trevize, but this plays into Gendibal's hands and Shandess declares that Gendibal not Delarmi will succeed him upon successful completion of the mission. Delarmi's last attempt at hindering



Gendibal proves the most vital to his success: taking along the Hamish woman Sura Novi.

## **Endomandiovizamarondeyaso (Dom)**

An elderly member of the Gaian collective being, Dom hosts Golan Trevize and Professor Janov Pelorat during their visit to the mysterious planet, adding to the explanations offered by Bliss. As an elder, Dom has 253 syllables in his name, but is known simply as Dom.

## **Salvor Hardin**

A figure from the Galaxy's distant past, Hardin rules Terminus as its first Mayor, a half-millennium before Foundation's Edge begins. Terminus is largely frozen in Hardin's time frame. Hardin sets the precedent for turning to the Time Vault in time of crisis to obtain the advice offered by a holograph of Hari Seldon, inventor of "psychohistory." Among his famous aphorisms quoted in this novel are: "Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent," and "Never let your sense of morals keep you from doing what is right."

## **Liono Kodell**

Terminus' Director of Security throughout the administration of Mayor Harla Branno, Kodell is below average height, above average weight, and sports a bushy nearly-white mustache. His bright brown eyes alone stand out from his drab appearance. He is first seen questioning protagonist Golan Trevize, trying to obtain a videoclip that shows he agrees with the Mayor. Kodell is then shown to be the Mayor's constant companion, a voice of prudence and a self-motivated watch dog. They annoy one another by withholding facts from each other but appear very close.

## **The Mule**

A figure from the Galaxy's distant past who has been raised to the level of mythology as the "Great Enemy" of the First Galactic Empire, the Mule is a "mentalic"—someone able to manipulate human emotions and, thereby able to derail the Seldon Plan. He mentally controls the Kingdom of Kalgan and then the First Foundation but fears the alleged mentalic abilities of the hidden Second Foundation. The Mule sets up a Galactic Empire, is eventually defeated by Bayta Darrell, and, being sterile (hence his nickname), leaves no successor bringing the Empire down. The Mule's birth on Gaia (which he leaves without permission) explains why during his wars of conquest, he spares Gaia and the surrounding Sayshell Union. The Gaians share the Mules' mental powers but use it for positive purposes.



## Sura Novi / Suranovirembastiran

A barely literate, 25-year-old Hamish woman on Trantor, Novi saves Second Foundation Speaker Stor Gendibal from a severe beating (if not death) by fellow farmers led by Karoll Rufirant. When a grateful Gendibal agrees that Novi may write to him, she shows up instead at the University saying that she has always wanted to be a scholar. Examining her mind for motivations, Gendibal discover incredible smoothness, which readily discloses tampering. Gendibal shows this to fellow Speakers at the Table and is exonerated at his impeachment trial.

Gendibal takes Novi along on his mission into space to find the exiled First Foundation Councilman Golan Trevize, whom he considers a great danger to the "Seldon Plan." Novi makes great strides at learning the Galactic Standard language and shows great devotion to her benefactor. During the mission, however, as they near Gaia, Novi's mind is transfigured, and she realizes that she is a native Gaian, whose real name is Suranovirembastiran. Novi controls a three-part confrontation that ends in a treaty between the First Foundation and the Sayshell Union with the long-term spread of the Gaian common life throughout the galaxy. Away from Gaia, Novi reverts to her old persona, which Gendibal, destined to be First Speaker, finds pleasing in and of itself.

## Preem Palver

A figure from the Galaxy's distant past, Palver is a First Speaker of the Second Foundation (the 19th and greatest) who puts the "Seldon Plan" back on course after the the Mule disrupts it. Palver deduces that the Second Foundation is, like First, headquartered on Terminus Planet, and it is widely believed that he succeeds in "eradicating" the threat. The present novel shows that this is not the case. Palver's travels in the guise of a farmer with his Speaker wife sets a precedent for Speaker Stor Gendibal in this novel to take Sura Novi along on his quest to learn what First Foundation Councilman Golan Trevize might be doing.

## Janov Pelorat

White-haired at age 52, of average height and weight, usually deliberate in movements and speech, Pelorat is an been in space and is excited to be following his obsession with history. Pelorat begins as a biology major but becomes enchanted with legends of an isolated world and turns to history at age 15. Beginning at age 22, he begins devoting 30 years to solving the "Origin Question"—the search for the legendary Earth/Gaia, the home world of humanity. Although he is apolitical and cares nothing about the "Seldon Crisis" that absorbs her and the planet, Terminus Mayor Harla Branno takes a sudden interest in Pelorat's work as she is planning the arrest and exile of Councilman Golan Trevize. Branno puts them together on Pelorat's first venture into hyperspace.



Pelorat is anxious to conduct research at the University of Trantor, but Trevize flies them instead to Sayshall. There, they pick up clues to the location of Gaia and fly there, despite the danger. When Trevize is forced to decide which of three plans should be adopted to guide the destiny of humankind, he trusts Pelorat's opinion. Meanwhile, Pelorat has fallen in love with a beautiful Gaian, Blissenobiarella (Bliss), not knowing that she is probably a robot. She returns his love and Pelorat remains on the planet.

## Sotayn Quinsentz (SQ)

A Professor of Ancient History at Sayshell University, tall, middle-aged, gray-haired, brown-skinned SQ is distantly descended from people on Askone in the Rim Worlds. He reads Professor Janov Pelorat's article on origin myths in the *Archaeological Review* only weeks before they meet. Although a scholar, SQ confesses that he is nearly as reluctant as his wife to talk to visitors Golan Trevize and Janov Pelorat about Earth/Gaia, but gives them enough information for them to pinpoint the planet that is absent from even the most complete maps and databases. It seems likely that SQ is the anonymous provider of information about Earth/Gaia that Pelorat receives while still at home. For his part, SQ claims to have read and agreed with Pelorat's rather obscure scholarly writings.

## Karoll Rufirant

A bulky Hamish farmer on Trantor (known in the rural language as "Hame"), Rufirant inexplicably accosts Speaker Stor Gendibal while the latter is walking in the countryside for exercise. Unable to land a blow on the "mentalic" professor, Rufirant calls on fellow farmers to restrain Gendibal, but Sura Novi comes to Gendibal's defense with voice and fists and shames them into letting him go about his business. The delay is long enough to make Gendibal late for a crucial meeting of the Table and gets him impeached. Later it appears that this violent behavior is uncharacteristic of Rufirant, and Gendibal suspects First Foundation mind control.

## Hari Seldon

A figure from the Galaxy's distant past, Seldon is the inventor of "psychohistory," and his Plan guides the destiny of the Galaxy towards creation of a Second Galactic Empire. Seldon is a professor of mathematics on Trantor at the time he develops a detailed plan for leading humanity from the First Galactic Empire to the Second along a line of "maximum probability." The Seldon Plan has been in operation for half of its forecast 1,000 years, and already the Second Empire is virtually in operation and some press to move the timetable up. Some also want to shift the capital to a more central planet. Whenever a "Seldon Crisis" erupts, a holograph of Seldon appears to resolve it. Seldon has most recently backed Mayor Harla Branno's plan to keep the capital at Terminus. It is his eighth intervention, and this one so cannily matches the existing conditions that he makes some—including protagonist Golan Trevize—suspect fraud.



## Quindor Shandess

For 18 years the First Speaker of the Second Foundation on Trantor, Shandess is the 25th First Speaker in succession. He believes firmly in the Golden Rule: "Do nothing unless you must, and when you must—hesitate." Shandess' is not a robust administrator and he has often thought of retiring but enjoys the job. The "Hyper-Plan" portion of the "Prime Radiant" governing the future through and beyond the founding of the Second Galactic Empire are largely Shandess' work and gain for him the First Speakership.

When petulant young Speaker Stor Gendibal comes to him privately with a fears about an exiled First Foundation Councilman, Golan Trevize, having power to overthrow the Seldon Plan, Shandess intuitively grasps the proof and calls a special meeting of the Table. Speaker Delora Delarmi, however, diverts the agenda to impeaching her rival, Gendibal, but at the trial loses out and Shandess announces that he will turn over his office to Trevize upon completion of Trevize's vital mission in hyperspace. Gendibal worries through the mission, which proves a success.

## Lt. Evander Sopellor

The lead guard escorting Golan Trevize from Security Headquarters to house arrest in his own residence, Sopellor claims he is only protecting Trevize from possible mob violence but notes that he is authorized to use force. He has not been instructed to lie and as a non-lawyer, he cannot pass judgment on judicial matters.

## Littoral Thoobing

The First Foundation's friendly, 54-year-old Ambassador to Sayshell, Thoobing thwarts custom by wearing a thick brown mustache, enjoys his rich lifestyle, and does not want it threatened by the appearance of warships in Sayshellian territory. A political rival of Terminus Mayor Harla Branno before being bought off with this choice diplomatic post, Thoobing calls Security Chief Kodell, whom he despises, to withdraw the warships. Kodell orders him to report everything promptly and recommends giving Thoobing a long vacation and reassignment.



# Objects/Places

## Earth / Gaia

The hypothetical place of origin of humanity and the carbon-based creatures from which humanity evolves in pre-hyperspatial times, Earth and its sun no longer appear in any computer databank, even in the Galactic Library on Trantor. The "Origins Question" is the unfashionable study of that lost world. The "Sirius Alternative" holds that Earth is in the Sirius Sector, the longest-populated region of the Milky Way Galaxy. Some hold that Gaia is Earth's name in a different, lost, Earth language. Others subscribe to the myth that Gaia has been banished into hyperspace for bad behavior. Protagonist Golan Trevize and his scholarly companion, Professor Janov Pelorat, fly to Gaia, and are told of its settlement by the few humans who do not resent having been taught by robots. Over millennia, Gaians develop the craft of sharing minds and work to bring the First and Second Foundations together to convince its rulers to adopt the Gaian approach to governance. At the end of the novel, Trevize still wants to find Earth but Pelorat remains on Gaia.

## Far Star

The newly-completed pocket-cruiser named for Hober Mallow's cruiser, the Far Star is assigned by Mayor Harla Branno to Councilman Golan Trevize and Professor Janov Pelorat for their expedition to find Earth/Gaia and/or the Second Foundation. It comfortably seats three, is unarmed, and not equipped with a hidden hyper-relay that allows it to be followed. Its computer is the most advanced available, responding to the pilot's brain waves. Protagonist Golan Trevize proves particularly adept at this "hand holding" and only at the end of the novel is told that the computer is far more powerful than he or its maker suspect, having in it a part of Gaia.

## First Foundation / Foundation Federation

The First Foundation is tasked with preserving knowledge of the physical sciences and advancing them, following the Seldon Plan. A group of Encyclopedists settle on a puny planet on the fringes of the Milky Way Galaxy and goes about its business openly. It is unaware of a secret Second Foundation preserving the psychological sciences. The First Foundation comes to rule Four Kingdoms and has little sense that the Seldon Plan is protecting it from the remnants of the failing Galactic Empire. Its first two centuries are a "Golden Age," a "Heroic Era. It continues to grow as a political and commercial entity until, 500 years into its history it has the military strength to establish a Second Galactic Empire, but the Seldon Plan dictates that another 500 years first pass. The First Foundation (simply Foundation on Terminus) rules a Federation that controls approximately a third of the inhabitants of the galaxy. It governs a third of the Galaxy (minus the uninhabitable core), 7 million inhabited worlds that are represented in the





House of Worlds to vote on minor matters. The Federation additionally influences regions just beyond its territory, particularly the Sayshell Union.

## Five Sisters

A pentagonal constellation seen from Sayshall Planet, Five Sisters in local mythology symbolizes erotic love and inspires erotic poetry. A dim star at the center is held by some to be Gaia Planet, but speaking of it is taboo.

## Sayshell

Sayshell is a Union of 86 planets, a planet within that Union, and the capital city of both. The Union is located 10,000 parsecs from Terminus, the capital of the Foundation Federation, with which Sayshell trades but from which it maintains strict autonomy. Local legends maintain that Sayshell is the first planet to be settled by humans from Earth and that the rest of the galaxy is inhabited from there. Sayshell is dominated by religious conservatives and rife with legends and observances. During the disturbances led by the Mule, the Sayshell Union is oddly allowed to remain neutral.

Viceroy of Sayshell have several times attacked and/or attempted to trade with Gaia Planet but are repulsed. Protagonist Golan Trevize and his traveling companion, Professor Janov Pelorat, visit Sayshell while searching for elusive Gaia and realize that spatial coordinates to the unknown planet can only have come from Sayshall, for it alone has the perspective for the Five Sisters constellation to appear pentagonal. They fly on to Gaia for the conclusion of the novel.

Custom officials are named Jogoroth Sobhaddartha and Namarath Godhisavatta and these are said to be typically Sayshellian names, but also, in terms of Earth, Indian. It is probably not coincidental that the Republic of Seychelles is in the western Indian Ocean on lost Earth.

## Second Empire

The Second Empire is the the goal of the "Seldon Plan," the brainchild of Hari Seldon, to occur after a 1,000-year Interregnum following the fall of the First Galactic Empire. Without the Plan, the Interregnum would have lasted 30,000 years. At the 498 year mark, the time of this novel, there are temptations in the First Foundation to declare the Second Empire immediately, which are met by warnings of disaster.

## Second Foundation

The Second Foundation is charged 498 years before this novel with preserving knowledge of the psychological sciences, including psychohistory, and advance them. The Second Foundation is the "fine-tuning agency" of the "Seldon Plan" as it moves



towards restoring the Galactic Empire after an Interregnum of 1,000 years since the latter's demise. First Foundationers are a group of psychohistorians set up to mirror the First Foundation at the "opposite end of the galaxy" and in complete secrecy. At the time of the Mule, a "mentalic" is someone able to manipulate human emotions and thereby derail the Seldon Plan; it is feared that the Second Foundation is an equal threat. Preem Palver deduces that both are headquartered on Terminus and it is widely believed that he succeeds in "eradicating" the Second Foundation's threat. Foundation's Edge shows that this is not the case. The Second Foundation is ensconced on Trantor, the ruined capital planet of the Galactic Empire and site of the famed library, and is working to maintain the Plan.

## Sirius Sector

The longest-inhabited portion of the Milky Way Galaxy, Sirius Sector is said by some to include the lost planet Earth. Because it is not part of the Foundation Federation, it is largely ignored by Terminus. Councilman Munn Li Compore and Mayor Harla Branno both have remote ancestors hailing from Sirius. When Professor Janov Pelorat cautions that the "Sirius Alternative" is only one theory within the "Origins Question," Compore claims that it is the sole reality. Earth has been irradiated by nuclear reactions out of control, possibly explosions, rendering it uninhabitable. Protagonist Golan Trevize and history professor Janov Pelorat intend to visit Sirius but sidetrack to Gaia.

## Terminus

A mild planet with a high water/land ratio and weather control on the very fringes of the Milky Way Galaxy, Terminus is the capital of the First Foundation and Foundation Federation. It is poor in minerals and heavy industry, but good in agriculture and unsurpassed in high technology and miniaturization. It consists of 10,000 inhabited islands, the largest of which bears Terminus City. The Executive Council meets in Seldon Hall. Terminus is founded 498 years before the beginning of this novel by the scholars preparing the Encyclopedia Galactica. It grows into a massive suburban world, "one big park," and comes to rule at least a third of the Galaxy. Some have provoked a "Seldon Crisis" by proposing the capital should move closer to the center of the Galaxy, the the holograph of Hari Seldon has decided against that, siding with Terminus' Mayor Harla Branno.

## Trantor

For 12,000 years the capital of the First Galactic Empire and for 8,000 before that the capital of one of the most important pre-Imperial kingdoms, Trantor is located on the innermost, richly populated sub-ring of the spiral arms that circle the violent, uninhabitable black hole at the center of the Milky Way Galaxy. Trantor had once been completely metal-coated city, covering the planet and housing 45 billion people. Mountains had been leveled and chasms filled; oceans had become huge underground



cisterns. The planet had been dependent on Outer Worlds for resources and had made extensive use of recycling and solar energy. Then came the appalling barbarian sack. Still standing 250 years later is the Galactic Library (formerly the Imperial Library), the most extensive, albeit outmoded, in the Galaxy. Except for the scholars there—who form the Second Foundation—the natives of Trantor are farmers. They reject the name Trantorian, preferring Hamish, from their pronunciation of the word "home." No First Foundationer has visited Trantor in 15 years, when Mayor Harla Branno of Terminus hopes her "lightning rod" will go there seeking information on the Second Foundation and Earth.

# Themes

## Ambition

The central theme of *Foundation's Edge* is the "extraordinary concatenation of coincidence" that guides the major character's behavior. It is too finely calculated, in fact, to be coincidence, and results from a seemingly unambitious race, the Gaians, bringing together two highly-ambitious political leaders in order for a politician of lesser ambition—but what politician can be unambitious?—to decide the destiny of the Galaxy.

At age 62, Mayor Harla Branno has long been the real power behind figurehead mayors and has presided over a period of peace and prosperity. She worries that history will pass her by. She is only the fifth woman Mayor of Terminus and is the strongest incumbent since the time of the Mule. She controls a third of the scattered political units in the Galaxy as a capable administrator but lacks the brilliance of her early predecessors. Quick to make decisions and firm in sticking by them until convinced that she is wrong, Branno realizes that in her latest victory, the backing of the holograph of Hari Seldon is too perfect for the Seldon Plan not to be undergoing subtle manipulation. She intuits that the supposedly defunct Second Foundation still exists and arranges for brash young protagonist Golan Trevize to be sent into exile to find it. When he inexplicably visits Sayshell and then heads for mysterious Gaia, Branno leads a military convoy to the outskirts of that system, determined to make her mark on history by conquest.

Second Foundation Speaker Stor Gendibal is easily Branno's match in ambition. Long ago he sets as his goal becoming First Speaker by age 30, and currently sits at the Table as the youngest Speaker in history. The elderly First Speaker has presided over a lackluster administration but is fond of his job. Gendibal faces a strong challenge from the ambitious and far more charming and conniving Speaker Delora Delarmi. Gendibal is not liked by his colleagues and is nearly impeached for conduct unbecoming a Speaker. He survives the trial and departs to find Trevize, who he is certain is the most dangerous figure in the Galaxy.

Brought together by the Gaians, Branno and Gendibal, each make eloquent pleas for why their political philosophy alone should rule the Galaxy. Predictably, they demonize their opponents and minimize their own faults, and reduce the matter to pithy slogans: "Free will!" (Branno), "Guidance and peace!" (Gendibal) and "Life" (Gaia). Everyone in the novel, himself included, has said that Trevize has a unique way of making right decisions from insufficient data. He struggles and then opts for the least dangerous alternative, the Gaian view, which has no immediate implications and allows for long-range corrections if these are warranted.



## Folklore

Much of Foundation's Edge is dedicated to the search for Earth, the legendary home world of humanity. History and folklore intertwine, according to Gennerat's Law: "The falsely dramatic drives out the truly dull." Exiled from Terminus, protagonist Golan Trevize is tasked with finding the supposedly-defunct Second Foundation, accompanied by Professor of Ancient History and Mythology Janov Pelorat, a dedicated researcher of the rather unpopular "Origin Question." Pelorat has gathered and computer-analyzed sufficient physical data from folkloric sources to determine what Earth's solar orbit and rotation must be. The most easily visible factor is an extraordinarily large moon. Given millions of habitable planets throughout the Milky Way, they cannot search at random. Pelorat wants to research the Galactic Library at Trantor, but Trevize refuse to go there, turning rather to Sayshell.

At Sayshell they collect bits of information, which are gathered into formulas so uniform and familiar that Pelorat can quote them verbatim in the new context. They see the old tales provoking fear, which tends to suppress facts in favor of superstitious rituals. The myths create an orthodoxy to which conservative politicians and religionists adhere, while the sophisticate urban population gives it only lip service. Many scientists buy into such ridiculous stories as Gaia being consigned to hyperspace for some alleged misdeeds. On Sayshell, they first hear about robots, with whom humans on Earth coexist but who are overthrown and no longer exist. Surprisingly, Pelorat the scholar has never heard of robots. Earth is said to have turned into an uninhabitable ball of radiation, but no one knows how or when. Pelorat detects in this myth "the ring of truth."

Reaching Gaia, they are told how robots, obeying the "Three Laws of Robotics"—"1) A robot may not harm a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm; 2) A robot must obey orders given it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law; 3) A robot must protect its own existence, as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law"—become overwhelmingly helpful to humans, sense their discomfort, and withdraw to another Universe. Humans emigrate from Earth and only those who go to Gaia, cherishing the "mentolics" taught them by robots, preserve memory of them and mother Earth. Everyone else, feeling shamed at having been treated as children, repress the memories. A Gaian sage describes how multiple universes can exist and why humans are the only intelligent life form in this Universe. Parallel universes cannot be touched.

## Cosmology

Foundation's Edge pictures the Milky Way as uninhabitable black matter at its dense center, surrounded by billions of stars feathering out into multiple arms. Millions of stars have "ecospheres," regions in which conditions are favorable for the development of life. Human beings, probably originating on one such world, have made their way to virtually all these planets but have found nothing more than primitive life forms evolving indigenously. Most of these have perished under pressure from the newcomers.



Professor of Ancient History and Mythology Janov Pelorat supports the single-planet origin of human life based on genetics and a web of folkloric signs. Radiation apparently is a factor in accelerating genetic mutation by which a multitude of organisms evolves, one of which—homo sapiens—develops intelligence and, after mastering the science of hyperspatial travel, emigrates far and wide. Earth is said by some to have perished when radiation rises to a lethal level, although history provides no explanation for how this might have happened.

On Gaia, a planet long hidden and/or ignored, humans have over millennia developed a common mind, which they share with other sentient beings and the planet itself. One spokesman, Endomandiovizamarondeyaso (Dom for short), explains how his people understand Eternity. An infinite number of Universes exist, with individual events taking place (or not) in various ways, with various aftermaths. Imagine freezing the Universes to step between them and decide which will be "Reality." Tasked with deciding which Reality is best for humanity, the Eternals choose Earth, freeze that strand, and retire, leaving humans the only intelligent life form. Other Realities probably exist for other intelligences, but these cannot be reached, and the human Reality constantly generates new branches, creating an infinite number of potential one-intelligence Universes.



# Style

## Point of View

Isaac Asimov tells the story of Foundation's Edge in the third person, past tense, using a great deal of first person dialog to drive it along. As a narrator he assumes no personality but, like the "Second Foundationers" and "Gaians," can enter characters' thought processes. He describes at length how the Second Foundationers communicate rapidly and super-efficiently with the verbal component playing a minor role. Never does he attempt to display such communications. He loves convoluted mystery, however, and the belated revelation of useful facts.

The novel finds the mysterious Gaians bringing years of covert effort to a climax. The ambitious leader of the First Foundation is close to the point of establishing a Second Galactic Empire 500 years before the "Seldon Plan" predicts it should occur. An ambitious young Speaker of the Second Foundation hopes soon to become First Speaker and to move the secretive organization, responsible for maintaining the Plan, into a more dynamic role in the life of the Galaxy. From the start, the Second Foundation knows of the First Foundation's existence but underestimates its technology. Late in the novel it is revealed that the Second Foundation has spies, which calls this shortsightedness into question. The First Foundation supposedly has eliminated the Second Foundation centuries before, but another young hot-shot believes this is not the case and his boss, the ambitious Mayor sends him searching—while making him believe it is a political exile. She conveniently later suspects the Second Foundation spy.

Meanwhile, it is a third group, the Gaians, who are orchestrating everything. They are somehow guided by robots, lost to the rest of humanity and have over millennia achieved a common mind. The Gaians' spokespeople struggle to explain it and philosophical considerations about human evolution to beings marginally capable of grasping it. The Gaians at least are not condescending. The biggest surprise occurs when a dull farm woman turns out to be a Gaian, called to mediate the fate of the Galaxy through a man with a unique but undefined ability to make correct judgments based on insufficient data. These various points of view, mediated and unified by the single narrator, neatly present a three-choice decision, and in the end the protagonist is allowed to explain the reasoning by which he arrives at it.

## Setting

Isaac Asimov's Foundation's Edge is set on various planets in the Milky Way Galaxy and aboard spaceships flitting among them in hyperspace. The time frame covers a few months in 498 FE (Federation Era).



The major planets are Terminus, capital of the Foundation Federation (also known as the First Foundation), which rules approximately a third of the galaxy; Trantor, the capital of the fallen Galactic Empire and in its University the current headquarters of the secretive Second Foundation; Sayshell City, capital of Sayshell Planet and the Sayshell Union, an independent region in the galaxy completely surrounded by the Foundation Federation but fiercely independent of and rather hostile towards it; and Gaia, a planet and its sun, Gaia-S, missing from all galactic maps and computers but the subject of widespread myths and legends, including that it has somehow vanished into hyperspace. "Gaia," of course means "Earth" in ancient Greek, and part of the plot is a search for the legendary planet on which humankind evolved before dispersing through the universe. It is never found and some say it has been destroyed by radioactivity.

A good deal of the novel is spent aboard a late-model First Foundation spacecraft that operates by gravitics. Character Golan Trevize, an old Navy salt, talks about how far space travel has come even in his lifetime to novice traveler Janov Pelorat.

## Language and Meaning

Foundation's Edge is filled with Isaac Asimov's wonderful ear for language and interest in all areas of the human experience, including astronomy, biological evolution, the Theory of Relativity and faster-than-light realities ("tachyons"), censorship, and thought control.

Much of the book is written on a very high intellectual plane but is not meant to be inaccessible to the average reader. There is a wide enough variety of characters that someone is constantly remarking that they do not understand a concept to give readers a sense of assurance that they are not alone and the more learned characters an opportunity to explain and give examples. Things like hyperspace and telepathy are simply givens that need not (and cannot) be explained in context.

Asimov not only describes various local dialects of the "Standard Galactic" language (presumably English-based), but has characters lapse in and out of their native forms. The most extended example is when Speaker Stor Gendibal is confronted by farm ruffians and has to adjust his speech to theirs in order not to offend them. The simple farm woman Sura Novi attaches herself to him and learns halting Standard Galactic. Mayor Harla Branno speaks "with an unashamed Foundation accent." Sura Novi and fellow Hamishers speak with throaty "R's" and have a unique way of compounding words with a rustic effect. A customs official at Sayshell changes "sh" to "s." Trevize remarks that there are as many dialects as there are planets and everyone simply speaks his or her own.

## Structure

Foundation's Edge is, according to author Isaac Asimov's Afterword, a self-contained continuation of The Foundation Trilogy, written thirty-two years earlier. The novel consists of a Prologue, which summarizes in three pages the earlier novels and what





has transpired in four centuries since Second Foundation closes, twenty numbered and titled chapters, and an Afterword by the author explaining how his other science fiction writings fit into the "Foundation universe."

The chapters are: 1) "Councilman," 2) "Mayor," 3) "Historian," 4) "Space," 5) "Speaker," 6) "Earth," 7) "Farmer," 8) "Farmwoman," 9) "Hyperspace," 10) "Table," 11) "Sayshell," 12) "Agent," 13) "University," 14) "Forward!" 15) "Gaia-S," 16) "Convergence," 17) "Gaia," 18) "Collision," 19) "Decision," and 20) "Conclusion. Each chapter is broken into numbered scenes. There is no larger division of the text.

The novel intersperses in chronological order three parallel journeys: 1) Golan Trevize's from his arrest and exile from Terminus through hyperspace with Janov Pelorat to Sayshell Planet and on to mysterious Gaia; 2) Second Foundation Speaker Stor Gendibal's mission to determine what Trevize is up to, beginning from Trantor and ending in orbit around Gaia; and 3) Mayor Harla Branno's military mission to see that Trevize and Gendibal meeting does not harm the interests of the First Foundation, which she governs.

At several points, revelations come from nowhere: Munn Li Comporee, Trevize's erstwhile friend and betrayer, is a Second Foundation agent; simple farm woman Sura Novi is a Gaian; beautiful Gaian Bliss is most probably a robot. Looks back at galactic history are frequent and well enough explained for readers not to need to digest the trilogy before enjoying this novel.



## Quotes

"They stared at each other. Branno in gray, Trevize in multishade brown.

Trevize said, 'What kind of an agreement?'

'Ah. You're curious. That's better. Then we can engage in conversation instead of confrontation. What is your point of view?'

'You know it well. You have been crawling in the mud with Councilman Compore, have you not?'

'I want to hear it from you—in the light of the Seldon Crisis just passed.'

'Very well, if that's what you want—Madam Mayor!' (He had been on the brink of saying 'old woman'). 'The image of Seldon was too correct, too impossibly correct after five hundred years. It's the eighth time he has appeared, I believe. On some occasions, no one was there to hear him. On at least one occasion, in the time of Indbur III, what he had to say was utterly out of synchronization with reality—but that was in the time of the Mule, wasn't it? But when, on any of those occasions, was he has correct as he was now?'

Trevize allowed himself a small smile. 'Never before, Madam Mayor, as far as our recordings of the past are concerned, has Seldon managed to describe the situation so perfectly, in all its smallest details.'" Chapter 2, "Mayor," pg. 25.

"One more question. What if, by some chance, Trevize finds the Second Foundation, and we learn of it through him, or through Compore, or if we gain reason to suspect its existence—despite the deaths of both?'

'I'm hoping the Second Foundation does exist, Liono,' she said. 'In any case, the Seldon Plan is not going to serve us much longer. The great Hari Seldon devised it in the dying days of the Empire, when technological advance had virtually stopped. Seldon was a product of his times, too, and however brilliant this semimythical science of psychohistory must have been, it could not rise out of its roots. It surely would not allow for rapid technological advance. The Foundation has been achieving that, especially in this last century. We have mass-detection devices of a kind undreamed of earlier, computers than can respond to thought, and—most of all—mental shielding. The Second Foundation cannot control us for much longer, if they can do so now. I want, in my final years in power, to be the one to start Terminus on a new path.'

'And if there is, in fact, no Second Foundation?'

'Then we start on a new path at once.'" Chapter 3, Historian, pgs. 55-56.

"He did and he could not help his muscles tightening with the effort of will he was exerting—as though he were taking hold of the Galaxy and accelerating it, twisting it, forcing it to spin against terrible resistance.

The Galaxy was moving. Slowly, mightily, it was twisting in the direction that should be working to tighten the spiral arms.

Time was passing incredibly rapidly as they watched—a false, artificial time—and, as it did so, stars became evanescent things.

Some of the larger ones—here and there—reddened and grew brighter as they expanded into red giants. And then a star in the central clusters blew up soundlessly in a blinding blaze that, for a tiny fraction of a second, dimmed the Galaxy and then was



gone. Then another in one of the spiral arms, then still another not very far away from it. 'Supernovas,' said Trevize a little shakily.

Was it possible that the computer could predict exactly when stars would explode and when? Or was it just using a simplified model that served to show the starry future in general terms, rather than precisely?

Pelorat said in a husky whisper, 'The Galaxy look like a living thing, crawling through space.'" Chapter 4, Space, pgs. 75-76.

"Gendibal's commentary was clear and incisive and the First Speaker abandoned the game. He was won over and said, 'I do not recall having seen an analysis of this nature. Whose work is it?'

'First Speaker, it is my own. I have published the basic mathematics involved.'

'Very clever, Speaker Gendibal. Something like this will put you in line for the First Speakership, should I die—or retire.'

'I have given that matter no thought, First Speaker—but since there's no chance of you believing that, I withdraw the comment. I have given it thought and I hope I will be First Speaker, since whoever succeeds to the post must follow a procedure that only I see clearly.

'Yes,' said the First Speaker, 'inappropriate modesty can be very dangerous. What procedure? Perhaps the present First Speaker may follow it, too. If I am too old to have made the creative leap you have, I am not so old that I cannot follow your direction.'

It was a graceful surrender and Gendibal's heart warmed, rather unexpectedly, toward the older man, even as he realized that this was precisely the First Speaker's intention." Chapter 5, "Speaker," pgs. 95-96.

"The First Speaker said, 'Speaker Gendibal. I don't think you understand the situation. We have had impeachments before—not many, just two. Neither of those resulted in a conviction. You, however, will be convicted! You will then no longer be a member of the Table and you will no longer have a say in public policy. You will not, in fact, even have a vote in the annual meeting of the Assembly.'

" 'And you will not act to prevent that?'

" 'I cannot. I will be voted down unanimously. I will then be forced to resign, which I think is what the Speakers would like to see.'

'And Delarmi will become First Speaker?'

'That is certainly a strong possibility.'

'But that must not be allowed to happen!'

'Exactly! Which is why I will have to vote for your conviction.'

Gendibal drew a deep breath. 'I shall demand an instant trial.'

'You must have time to prepare your defense.'

'What defense? They will listen to no defense. Instant trial!'

'The Table must have time to prepare their case.'

'They have no case and will want none. They have me convicted in their minds and will require nothing more. In fact, they would rather convict me tomorrow than the day after—and tonight rather than tomorrow. Put it to them.'

The First Speaker rose to his feet. They faced each other across the desk. The First Speaker said, 'Why are you in such a hurry?'



'The matter of Trevize will not wait.'

'Once you are convicted and I am rendered feeble in the face of a Table united against me, what will have been accomplished?'

Gendibal said in an intense whisper, 'Have no fears! Despite everything, I will not be convicted.'" Chapter 8, "Farmwoman," pgs. 154-155.

"No no, the reason I advanced for taking her is a true one. She will be an early-warning system and I am grateful to Speaker Delarmi for pushing me into realizing that. The woman will prove very useful, I'm convinced.'

'Good, then. By the way, I wasn't lying, either. I am truly certain that you will accomplish whatever is needed to end this crisis—if you can trust my intuition.'

'I think I can trust it, for I agree with you. I promise you that whatever happens, I will return better than I receive. I will come back to be First Speaker, whatever the Anti-Mules—or Speaker Delarmi—can do.'

Gendibal studied his own satisfaction even as he spoke. Why was he so pleased, so insistent, on this one-ship venture into space? Ambition, of course. Preem Palver had once done just this sort of thing—and he was going to show that Stor Gendibal could do it, too. No one could withhold the First Speakership from him after that. And yet was there more than ambition? The lure of combat? The generalized desire for excitement in one who had been confined to a hidden patch on a backward planet all his adult life? — He didn't entirely know, but he knew he was desperately intent on going." Chapter 10, "Table," pgs. 195-196.

"Gendibal considered this and decided that Compdor was correct. He said, 'I am satisfied. You have done well. Your tale of Earth's radioactive destruction was cleverly chosen to help produce the proper reaction without the need for direct manipulation of mind. Commendable!'

Compdor seemed to struggle with himself a short moment. 'Speaker,' he said, 'I cannot accept your praise. I did not invent the tale. It is true. There really is a planet called Earth in the Sirius Sector and it really is considered to be the original home of humanity. It was radioactive, either to begin with or eventually, and this grew worse till the planet died. There was indeed a mind-enhancing invention that came to nothing. All this is considered history on the home planet of my ancestors.'

'So? Interesting!' said Gendibal with no obvious conviction. 'And better yet. To know when a truth will do is admirable, since no nontruth can be presented with the same sincerity. Palver once said, "The closer to the truth, the better the lie, and the truth itself, when it can be used, is the best lie.'" Chapter 12, "Agent," pgs. 235-236.

"Look at that, Janov,' said Trevize. 'Would you say that was a regular pentagon?'

'Clearly lopsided,' said Pelorat.

'And is Gaia at the center?'

'No. It's well to the side.'

'Very well. That is how the asterism looked one hundred and fifty years ago. One and a half centuries, that's all. —The material you received concerning "the Pentagon's Center" and so on made no real sense till this century anywhere, not even in Sayshell. The material you received had to originate at Sayshell and sometime in this century, perhaps in the last decade. And you got it, even though Sayshell is so close-mouthed



about Gaia.'

Trevize put the lights on, turned the star map off, and sat there staring sternly at Pelorat. Pelorat said, 'I'm confused. What's this about?'

'You tell me. Consider! Somehow I got the idea into my head that the Second Foundation still existed. I was giving a talk during my election campaign. I started a bit of emotional byplay designed to squeeze votes out of the undecided with a dramatic "If the Second Foundation still existed—" and later that day I thought to myself: What if it did still exist? I began reading history books and within a week, I was convinced. There was no real evidence, but I have always felt that I had a knack of snatching the right conclusion out of a welter of speculation. This time, though—" Chapter 14, "Forward!" pg. 279.

"As robots grew more intelligent and versatile, they interpreted these Laws, especially the all-overriding First, more and more generously and assumed, to a greater and greater degree, the role of protector of humanity. The protection stifled people and grew unbearable.

'The robots were entirely kind. Their labors were clearly humane and were meant entirely for benefit of all—which somehow made them all the more unbearable.

'Every robotic advance made the situation worse. Robots were developed with telepathic capacity, but that meant that even human thought could be monitored, so that human behavior became still more dependent on robotic oversight.

'Again robots grew steadily more like human beings in appearance, but they were unmistakably robots in behavior and being humanoid made them more repulsive. So, of course, it had to come to an end.'" Chapter 17, "Gaia," pgs. 361-362.

"The warship still approached—quite rapidly now—and still did nothing. Finally Gendibal calculated that the strength of his push would be sufficient. There would be no pain, scarcely any discomfort—all those on board would merely find that the large muscles of their backs and limbs would respond but sluggishly to their desires.

Gendibal narrowed the mentalic field controlled by his mind. It intensified and leaped across the gap between the ships at the speed of light,. (The ships were close enough to make hyperspatial contact—with its inevitable loss of precision—unnecessary.)

And Gendibal then fell back in numbed surprise.

The Foundation warship was possessed of an efficient mentalic shield that gained in density in proportion as his own field gained in intensity. —The warship was not approaching out of ignorance after all—and it had an unexpected if passive weapon."

Chapter 18, "Collision," pgs. 378-379.

"Dimly, then more strongly, Sura Novi knew that she was Surano-viremblastiran and that when she was a child, she had been known as Su to her parents and Vi to her friends. She had never really forgotten, of course, but the facts were, on occasion, buried deep within her. Never had it been buried as deeply or for so long as in this last month, for never had she been so close for so long to a mind so powerful.

But now it was time. She did not will it herself. She had no need to. The vast remainder of her was pushing her portion of itself to the surface, for the sake of the global need.

"Accompanying that was a vague discomfort, a kind of itch that was rapidly overwhelmed by the comfort of selfness unmasked. Not in years had she been so close



to the globe of Gaia.

"She remembered one of the life-forms she had loved on Gaia as a child. Having understood its feelings then as a dim part of her own, she recognized her own sharper ones now. She was a butterfly emerging from a cocoon." Chapter 19, "Decision," pgs. 392-393.

"Trevize said, 'There are three things I might have done. I might have joined the First Foundation, or joined the Second Foundation, or joined Gaia.

'If I had joined the First Foundation, Mayor Branno would have taken immediate action to establish domination over the Second Foundation and over Gaia. If I had joined the Second Foundation, Speaker Gendibal would have taken immediate action to establish dominion over the First Foundation and over Gaia. In either case, what would have taken place would have been irreversible—and if either were the wrong solution, it would have been irreversibly catastrophic.

" 'If I joined with Gaia, however, then the First Foundation and the Second Foundation would each have been left with the conviction of having won a relatively minor victory. All would then have continued as before, since the building of Galaxia, I had already been told, would take generations, even centuries.

'Joining with Gaia was my way of temporizing, then, and of making sure that there would remain time to modify matters—or even reverse them—if my decision were wrong.'

Dom raised his eyebrows. His old, almost cadaverous face remained otherwise expressionless. He said in his piping voice, 'And is it your opinion that your decision may turn out wrong?'

Trevize shrugged. 'I don't think so, but there is one thing I must do in order that I might know. It is my intention to visit Earth, if I can find that world.'" Chapter 20, "Conclusion," pgs. 422-423.



## Topics for Discussion

Why does Professor Janov Pelorat's "Origin Question" require that humankind evolve from lower life forms on a single, unique planet? What are the indications? Are there any counter-indications?

How do the Executive Council on Terminus and the Table on Trantor compare and contrast. How do their presiding officers - Mayor Branno and First Speaker Shandess, respectively - compare and contrast, functionally and personally? How has tradition shaped their destinies?

How does Compor's service as a Second Foundation "Observer" enhance Speaker Gendibal's character? What new aspects does it show? How does Gendibal view the "letter of the law" that excludes Trevize from Second Foundation service?

Why do Gaians differ from humans on all other planets in their attitude toward robots? Are robots right to secretly maintain their role as guardians? What role might they play in Galaxia?

How does ambition play into the resolution of the Galaxy's destiny?

Is Pelorat, as the Mayor declares, a naïve fool? What roles does he play in holding the novel together?

What is the Mule's role in this novel—and the other great figures of Galactic history? Does Asimov provide enough detail to make it possible to read and enjoy Foundation's Edge without having first read the Trilogy?