

The Stars My Destination Study Guide

The Stars My Destination by Alfred Bester

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Plot Summary

The Stars My Destination is a tale about the power of imagination that focuses on the exploits of a very unlikely protagonist. He starts off as a goal-less refugee, endures as a hunted, marked man seeking his destiny in vengeance and closes the tale as an evolutionary marvel, a messianic character ready to lead humans to the next stage of their existence.

Gully Foyle is not a hero. Gully Foyle is not an anti-hero. Gully Foyle is an uneducated, skill-less, merchant marine who survives 170 days in the airless vacuum of space aboard the wrecked Nomad. He is not a likeable man or character, but the brutality of his bare survival is an engaging opening into an entirely new world.

Bester's world of the future is one where people can "jaunte" thousands of miles with just a thought. Mechanized transport becomes a thing of the past as people can travel 5, 10, 20 or 200 miles with just a thought—but there is a catch. The person must know the location of where they are going and no one can jaunte across the vastness of space. Gully Foyle's ship is wrecked in an attack he can barely remember. He wakes up in the only locker aboard the ship that still has some air.

He uses his own knowledge of the ship to travel out in a space suit with just five minutes of air to retrieve new air tanks every few days. It is a gamble, because he never knows if he can make it there and back in his 5 minutes without suffocating and he never knows if the air tank he retrieves is one that will provide him with the necessary oxygen.

In many ways, The Stars My Destination is a science fiction version of Alexandre Dumas' The Count of Monte Cristo. Gully Foyle has no great ambition and he has no imagination. According to some details, Bester based his story in part on a newspaper clipping from World War II. The story detailed a sailor who drifted for 133 days on a raft in the middle of the Pacific. He went un-rescued because other ships feared he was a lure for submarine attack.

Gully Foyle also goes un-rescued and when a ship—the Vorga—passes close enough by to see his signal flares and continues on, abandoning him; revenge takes root and blossoms to life with a fury. Suddenly Foyle has a purpose and a reason to live. He finds a way to make his ship work and launches it across the vastness of space to 'chase' the ship that abandoned him.

The Nomad crashes into an asteroid comprised of the wreckage of crashed ships. The offspring of those wrecks' crews live on the asteroid. They call themselves the 'Scientific People' and they tattoo masks on their faces of names. They do the same to Foyle, dubbing him with the name of his ship and calling him Nomad with the "o" reminiscent of the symbol for males. The tattoo is fierce and awful and gives Foyle a horrendous visage.



He escapes from the tribe and the wife they try to foist on him by stealing one of the somewhat operable space yachts.

Back on Earth, Gully disguises himself and begins his plans to attack the Vorga. It is all he lives for. He wants to destroy the ship that abandoned him in space. He hides in plain sight among students learning to jaunt by touring locations. His plan is foiled by the instructor who has telesend (think telepathy, but only one way). He forces her to help him and there is an implication of rape at the end of their encounter.

Foyle's attack against the Vorga goes horribly awry and he ends up in custody. He is questioned extensively about the whereabouts and fate of the Nomad, but his single-minded obsession with revenge drives him to keep the details to himself. In an effort to extort the information from him, he is condemned to a prison located underground. The location puts them in the pitch black so they cannot see where they are and they cannot jaunte out.

The acoustics within the prison allow Foyle to communicate with a female prisoner. She becomes a lifeline for him and despite his crudeness and rough nature, he also becomes her lifeline. When the authorities continue to press Foyle for information, he learns why they are so desperate to locate the Nomad. It contains a vast treasure trove. Foyle sees the treasure as another opportunity to fulfill his destiny in destroying the Vorga

He breaks out of the prison and takes the female prisoner with him. They escape and he undergoes a desperate procedure to remove the tattoo from his face because it makes him so noticeable. There is a bitter love-hate relationship that exists between his female companion and himself. Together they set off in search for the Nomad but are separated when he has to abandon her or face capture.

He returns to Earth under the guise of Geoffrey Fourmyle of Ceres and poses as a dandy who dazzles society with his crazy circus of an entourage and ridiculous antics. He blackmails the telesending instructor to assist him in his endeavors and he finally meets Presteign, the man who owned the Vorga and the Nomad. He falls in love with the Presteign's daughter, Olivia.

Despite his love, his obsession with destroying the Vorga and the person responsible for abandoning him drives him onward. He discovers the Captain of the Vorga resides on Mars, a victim of total sensory disrepair. Foyle sees his revenge close at hand and he travels to Mars and kidnaps a 70 year old child-telepath to torture the information he wants from the Captain.

The true tragedy of the interrogation leads Foyle to discover that it was Olivia who ordered the Vorga to ignore the Nomad's distress. Choking on remorse, pity, rage and helplessness, Foyle begins to regret all of the bad decisions he has made. He tries to work with a lawyer who turns out to be a double agent. He discovers that the authorities on all sides are interested in a secret cargo that was aboard the Nomad. The isotope PyrE is extremely volatile and could turn the tide of any war. However, the lawyer was

more interested in Foyle himself, because when the Nomad was attacked; they observed Foyle jaunting across space. Since jaunting in space is believed to be impossible—the real treasure of the Nomad turns out to be this unremarkable man with his remarkable gift.

The discovery of his ability sends Foyle spiraling off on another journey through space and time. It is a journey of self-discovery that reveals why a Burning Man appears at several key points in the text (the Burning Man is Foyle himself). Foyle can jaunte forward and backwards in time as well as across the vastness of space. The revelation leads him to a sense of inner peace and he returns to his own time where he promises the world he will teach them all to jaunte as he has, but they have to find him first. They will have to discover their own full potential as he did. They will have to become the tiger or die in the attempt.

At the close of the novel, Foyle jauntes back to the Scientific People where he waits for the human race to awaken to what he has already discovered and they embrace him and wait for his revelations to be given.

Prologue

Prologue Summary

The Stars My Destination is a tale about the power of imagination that focuses on the exploits of a very unlikely protagonist. He starts off as a goal-less refugee, endures as a hunted, marked man seeking his destiny in vengeance and closes the tale as an evolutionary marvel, a messianic character ready to lead humans to the next stage of their existence.

Gully Foyle is not a hero. Gully Foyle is not an anti-hero. Gully Foyle is an uneducated, skill-less, merchant marine who survives 170 days in the airless vacuum of space aboard the wrecked Nomad. He is not a likeable man or character, but the brutality of his bare survival is an engaging opening into an entirely new world.

It is the golden age of the human race with all the habitable worlds (three planets and eight satellites) occupied. It is a time of freaks and wonders and discontent as romantics look for new frontiers. At the turn of the 24th century, a researcher named Jaunte accidentally sets fire to himself and to his work bench. Desperate for help, he amazes himself and his colleagues when he vanishes from the bench only to reappear 70 feet away next to the fire extinguisher.

The Jaunte Effect becomes the most documented and wild discovery of its time. Everyone from psychologists to neurologists to physicists begin to investigate how Jaunte did it. Jaunte cannot repeat the performance without a near death experience and it seems his fellow researchers are bound and determined to kill him to recreate the effect.

Through a series of trials and errors (the errors usually resulting in death) Jaunte begins to teach his teleporting method to others. It takes several decades, but eventually the first school for jaunting is opened by Jaunte himself. There is never a satisfactory explanation for how a person can jaunte, just that they can if they imagined the right conditions and they can learn how to do it because it is a natural aptitude of all humans. Jaunting is compared to vision, infants have to learn how to see and they have to learn how to jaunte in order to access this talent.

Ultimately the prologue explains the facilities and the facts behind jaunting; including the fact that jaunting changes the world by eliminating the need for mass transit except between planets because jaunting in space is impossible. There are jaunte classes and ratings for the different levels of jaunting whether it is 5 miles, 50 miles, 500 miles or 1,000 miles.

The advent of jaunting also creates chaos within the criminal element until a prudery resembling the Victorian age reasserts itself. It is also during this time that war breaks

out between the Inner Planets (Venus, Mars, Earth and the moon) and the Outer Planets (the eight satellites) all over the disruption of harmony created by jaunting.

Jaunting disrupts the universe and creates an age where freaks, grotesques and spectacles are a way of life and war is ever brewing between the Inner and Outer Planets. It is this universe that sets the background for the story of Gully Foyle.

Prologue Analysis

The Prologue sets the stage for the universe of *The Stars My Destination*. It is important to note this story was written in 1956. The idea of humans spreading out across the solar system due to population explosion is par for the course in science fiction now, but in 1956 man had not walked on the moon yet. The tale, however, still holds up because it is a tale of humanity, imagination and the desire to be something more. Who does not wish for the power of teleportation and a world free of the pollutants caused by vehicles?

The instability of the political situation and the brewing war is something all generations can understand whether it is referring to World War II, Vietnam, the Gulf War or the War on Terrorism. This type of instability adds an element of fear.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

The main character of Gully Foyle is introduced in this chapter. He is described as a thoroughly unremarkable man who was raised in a gutter school and speaks in a gutter tongue. He has survived in space for 170 days since a catastrophe destroyed the vessel he served aboard. A nursery jingle repeats in his mind as he continues his struggle for survival:

Gully Foyle is my name

And Terra is my nation.

Deep space is my dwelling place

And death's my destination.

Gulliver Foyle is a Mechanic's Mate 3rd class. He is about 30 years old and he is going nowhere. He is content with his lot in life until his ship is destroyed. Now he lives in the only sealed area left on the ship, a tool locker. He travels out periodically to fetch air tanks to refresh his air supply. It is a gamble because his space suit can only hold 5 minutes worth of air. His choice of suffocating in the suit or in the locker—four feet wide, four feet deep and nine feet high with no lights—was hardly a choice at all.

Hallucinations plague Foyle as he continues his existence. He survives on the dried stored food and what little water he can melt. He experiences oxygen deprivation regularly and blacks out regularly, never knowing which blackout will be the last one.

After nearly six months in this bleak existence, Foyle spots a ship flying on a sunward vector which will bring it right past his own ship. He utilizes the DISTRESS button to fire signal flares. When the ship's engines are cut, he knows he has been seen. There is a moment of elation, because he is going to be rescued. He heads back to the locker to refill his air supply and rushes back out to wait for his rescue.

The ship comes nearly abreast of the Nomad and he notices the ship is the Vorga, a sister vessel to the Nomad. In the next moment, the Vorga's engines fire up, abandoning Foyle to his fate. In five seconds, the Vorga does what six months aboard in the tool locker failed to do—it breaks Foyle's mind. The unremarkable man is consumed by a fiery need for vengeance and he swears, "I rot you. I kill you, Vorga. I kill you filthy."

It takes him two more days, but Foyle combs the wreckage for what he needs to get the Nomad moving. With a thirst for vengeance fueling his fury, he and the Nomad dart forward into the abyss.

Chapter 1 Analysis

The primary character of the book is introduced in this chapter. Gully Foyle is not an every man character. He is not designed to be someone understandable to the average person reading the book. Gully is uneducated, crude and lacks imagination, drive or even the potential to go anywhere in life. It is only his situation that makes him sympathetic.

He is trapped aboard the wreckage of a ship, a lone survivor, and risks his life every few days to retrieve an air tank. A World War II sailor survived for 150 days at sea in perilous conditions and no one would come to rescue him for fear of being targeted by a submarine. Gully's perilous story is similar in nature. His desire for revenge is born in this chapter and hints at the journey he will be taking.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Foyle awakens on the Sargasso Asteroid, a colony comprised of wrecked vessels. The offspring of the original research scientists marooned in the asteroid belt 200 years before are now known as the Scientific People. They are considered savages by Inner and Outer Planets alike. Joseph, the leader of the Scientific People, welcomes Foyle and has him tattooed as Nomad because he survived. Survival is the first rule of Darwin and they consider him to be most scientific. They give him a wife named Moira.

Foyle is out of it for a few days, but when he comes to himself, he shoves Moira away from him and escapes the asteroid aboard a stolen ship once a part of the asteroid. An Inner Planets vessel rescues him 90,000 miles from Mars. He wakes in a hospital where an orderly gives him a mirror and he can see the tattoo that now makes a monstrous mask on his face. This makes him even angrier and feeds his rage and fury at the Vorga.

Chapter 2 Analysis

The Scientific People are introduced in this chapter. They are a strange lot, even by this universe's standards and they follow a barbaric way of life. They tattoo Foyle and give him the name Nomad. They mean this as a badge of honor, but for Foyle, the monstrous mask is a curse directly related to the bane of his existence.

The mask is an externalization of his internal crisis. His obsession with the Vorga will drive him away from the Scientific People. Despite his hateful actions, Foyle displays an unexpected shred of humanity when he warns them to get away before he launches the ship he plans to steal. His obsession is powerful, but he shows some consideration for the people who rescued him.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Robin Wednesbury is described as a 'tall, lovely Negro girl, brilliant and cultivated, but handicapped by the fact that she was a telesend' and she is conducting a group of students (including Foyle) on a jaunte tour of New York City as a part of their re-education. Foyle seems to have misplaced himself and she encourages the other students as she tries to find him.

Patients suffering from head injuries often require re-education in jaunting, including tours to the local jaunte pads so they can properly visualize the destination. When Foyle rejoins the class, he explains that he has been practicing. Robin tries to sympathize with him, though she is revolted by him, but when she feels his wet clothes she realizes he has been jaunting much further than he let on he could.

Foyle threatens Robin and forces her to meet him at her apartment. There he interrogates her for what she knows about him and blackmails her into silence because she has family on the Outer Planets and she could be arrested as a sympathizer. He forces her to do as he wants her to and then forces himself on her.

Meanwhile, the Presteign (named for being the head of the Presteign family and excessively wealthy) retains two powerful men who no longer handle private cases. He mentions PyrE as the reason he is retaining them. His daughter, Olivia, is an albino and she holds court while her father heads to his office.

From his office, Presteign travels with his entourage to christen a new vessel. During the christening ceremony, an attempt is made to destroy the Vorga and he orders the culprit caught and brought to him immediately.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Robin Wednesbury and The Presteign are introduced in this chapter. Both will have a profound effect on Foyle's journey and represent two ends of the spectrum manifesting the internal effect on the external.

In Robin's case, she is a telesend, she literally cannot contain her thoughts. Her mind is an open book, broadcasting her intimate and general thoughts. She tries to control it, but she cannot keep it bottled up. The Presteign on the other hand is a picture of measured control, he is a puppet master and is determined to control and create the situations as he sees fit.

Foyle's journey collides with Robin's and when she learns some of Foyle's secrets and reveals some of her own, she unwittingly places her fate in his hands. Foyle also

collides with the Presteign when he tries to blow up the Vorga and finds his fate, literally, in the Presteign's hands when he is captured.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

A meeting takes place in the Star Chamber of Castle Presteign between the Presteign, his attorney Regis Sheffield, Sheffield's assistant Bunny and Captain Peter Y'ang-Yeovil of Central Intelligence. Y'ang-Yeovil wishes to have custody of Gulliver Foyle, who was apprehended trying to destroy the Vorga.

Y'ang-Yeovil wants custody of Foyle. However, the Presteign and Sheffield are able to block Y'ang-Yeovil due to the arrival of Dagenham. Dagenham is a physicist who previously conducted an experiment that left him dangerously radioactive. He cannot be around people for longer than 30 minutes. The triumvirate of personalities is enough to dissuade Y'ang-Yeovil for now, but he plans to get a warrant. Dagenham plans to interfere with his efforts.

The three men discuss how to extract the Nomad's location from Foyle. Dagenham has a plan. Currently, Foyle is being taken through sensory deprivation and then fed scenarios to get him to reveal the Nomad's location so they can retrieve the cargo aboard it. Foyle's obsession with revenge is too powerful, however, and he does not give in.

Chapter 4 Analysis

The torture that occurs during this chapter explores how to alter an internal reality to generate an external result. Ultimately, the characters of Dagenham and Presteign want Foyle to reveal the location of the Nomad. Driven by his powerful obsession, he refuses to give them the information they want.

Using psychiatric drugs and manipulation, they try to alter his internal perceptions in order to provoke the response they want. Foyle's internal sense of what constitutes his reality is too powerful, however, proving their methods unsuccessful. It is an interesting irony that revenge has given Foyle the sense of purpose that he was so lacking in the first chapter.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Foyle is sent to Gouffre Martel prison, located near the Spanish-French borders in a deep abyss. The caverns provide the right acoustics for keeping prisoners trapped and unable to jaunte because they cannot get their bearings and the depths of the prison are kept in total darkness.

He learns about blue jauntes from the other inmates. A blue jaunte is when a prisoner can no longer bear the conditions and tries to jaunte out blindly. An explosion occurs and the patient is never seen or heard from again. Prisoners are kept in paper outfits and herded out daily for sanitation, meals and then rehabilitation. Foyle ekes by in this existence, sustained by his need for revenge.

He makes contact with a female inmate named Jisbella McQueen thanks to the acoustics. They converse through the pitch blackness. Together they plot to escape. She encourages him to not be so brutish and to actually think his actions through. She also advises him to stop thinking about smashing the Vorga, but to target the person who gave the order to leave him behind. After all, a ship is inanimate.

Dagenham arrives to see if Foyle has changed his mind after the weeks of incarceration. When he reveals the treasure aboard the Nomad to Foyle, Foyle attacks him and attempts his escape blindly. He fights his way through the prison until he gets to Jisbella. Together they go on a terrifying flight through the darkness of the caves, into an icy underground river and then out. Miraculously, they survive and find themselves outside the prison, above ground and safe—for now.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Foyle's journey into Gouffre Martel is an allegory for a descent into one's self. Like Foyle, the prison is dark and without definition. There is no way to recognize where one is, preventing escape. Foyle is a prisoner inside the Gouffre Martel, but he is also a prisoner inside himself.

His lack of imagination is addressed by a fellow inmate, Jisbella McQueen. She challenges Foyle to think outside the box, to be more imaginative. Through his relationship with her, he begins to think more and this actually leads to his escape from the prison. For the first time, Foyle no longer thinks about destroying the Vorga but rather about looking for the ones who gave the orders.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

On the run with Foyle, Jisbella meets with a Doctor named Harley Baker. The doctor supplements his small practice with his Freak Factory. The Freak Factory consists of monstrosities created from grafting skin, muscle and bone into grotesques. He will do anything for anyone. Jisbella wants him to remove Foyle's tattooing. The art of tattooing appears to have been lost by this time, but she is confident Baker has the skills and tools to do the job right.

He charges her a small fortune and she is very bitter about paying it. She had no idea when she made contact with Foyle that he was such a grotesque individual, but she is determined to pay her debts. Foyle is with an old compatriot of Jisbella's named Sam Quatt. He is towing Foyle around from jaunte point to jaunte point to keep just ahead of the police.

When Foyle arrives at Baker's, she tells him that he is going to have to work on his self-control. He will have to work on keeping quiet and maintaining while Baker surgically removes the tattoos with needles. The procedure is torturous for Foyle, but he maintains. It is Jisbella who can no longer take it and she finally consents to pay the fee to cover the anesthesia and Foyle is knocked out. While Foyle is under, he reveals the treasure hidden aboard the Nomad and Jisbella is furious Foyle kept this information from her.

When the authorities close in on them, Sam takes a blow to the head and urges Jisbella to go on and take Foyle with her. He remains behind to cover their escape. Foyle and Jisbella take Sam's starship yacht and go to salvage the Nomad.

Chapter 6 Analysis

This chapter focuses on Foyle's control or lack thereof. Jisbella keeps telling him he needs more control. He needs to control himself and his emotions, something he is sorely lacking. His Neanderthal tactics and bludgeoning ways will sabotage his own personal efforts if he does not learn some self-control.

Dr. Baker is removing Foyle's external markings (the tattoo) and Jisbella is trying to get Foyle to cover up his internal markings as well. Foyle endures great agony during the procedure. This is Jisbella's fault because she would not pay for anesthesia. Foyle's control proves greater than Jisbella because he does not give into the pain before she succumbs to her own guilt about it.

Once the anesthesia is given, however, Foyle reveals secrets he was holding in reserve. The anesthesia releases him from the pain, but it also robs him of his control.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

The journey to the Nomad is spent mostly in silence. Jisbella helps Foyle remove his bandages 7 days after the procedure. It seems to have been very successful. When she continues to harp on him about keeping the secret of the Nomad's cargo from her, he admits he did plan to tell her later. Despite Jisbella's rancor, they are lovers during the journey. Foyle's facial scars show up when he is angry and his face turns mottled, revealing the former tattoo. Jisbella hopes this will encourage Foyle to control himself better.

They discover the Scientific People survived Foyle's escape and he warns them off as he and Jisbella travel to the Nomad and discover the safe containing the treasure. It is too large to move so they back the ship up and Jisbella maneuvers the safe into position. However, it gets jammed in the airlock door and she cannot get aboard. With the authorities closing in, Foyle abandons her.

Chapter 7 Analysis

The removal of the tattoo allows Foyle some freedom because none of his pursuers know what he looks like without it. But the scarring leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy—whenever Foyle loses control, his face lights up with a red and white mask that mimics the tattoo. Jisbella tells him that he has to learn control now or he will never be able to hide who he is.

The relationship between internal and external is complete. Foyle's journey is just beginning because where he lacked purpose and direction, he now possesses both. Where he seemed to lack control, he now gains control and when he is forced to abandon Jisbella, he feels regret. This is a huge leap forward in Foyle's personal evolution.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

The war between the Inner and Outer Planets is becoming known as the first Solar War. It is a terrible time with armies requisitioning great stores of supplies and hope seemingly in short supply. Into this bleak time comes the Four-Mile Circus. The circus is the entourage of the wealthy buffoon Geoffrey Fourmyle of Ceres.

Following his recovery of the treasure from the Nomad, Foyle undergoes extensive surgery that boosts and enhances his body to becoming a modern fighting machine—more machine than man. He has learned from Jisbella, however, and is working on a plan to locate whoever ordered the Vorga to abandon him. For his plan, however, he needs Robin Wednesbury, the telesending instructor he met months earlier. He goes in search of her and finds her apartment gutted. She is in a hospital, under suicide watch. She recognizes him despite all the changes and is terrified when he offers her a position to come and work with him. She is skeptical at first, but he promises to make it worth her while. All she has to do is show him how to behave, by telesending the proper responses so he will be more suave than buffoon. She is reluctant and hates him, but agrees.

Chapter 8 Analysis

This chapter launches Part 2 of *The Stars My Destination* and is a literal new start for Gully Foyle in the guise of Geoffrey Fourmyle of Ceres. He has recovered the treasure from the Nomad and, after reconstructive surgery that enhances his physical form, he sets out to remake his external image. He does not want to be an uneducated merchant marine, but rather a wealthy buffoon because it provides him with the perfect cover to continue his obsession.

His imagination, borne through Jisbella's encouragement and advice, is about half-formed now. However, he is using relative intelligence to realize he needs help to accomplish the full transformation he craves. To do this, he fetches Robin Wednesbury. Her telesending will provide him with the internal stimulus he needs to make the connections he wants. While his creativity has developed, Foyle's obsession has not waned.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Robin's presence in the Four Mile Circus is very successful. She proves Foyle right, smoothing the way for Fourmyle as he charms the rich and the wealthy at a New Year's Party. She tells him to be honest about some of his answers, including the question for how much his entourage costs him—\$40,000 a day. Foyle and Robin jaunte together to the Aussie Cannery in search of a man named Steve Forrest—he was aboard the Vorga and Foyle wants information from him.

They arrive at the home where Foyle expects to find him. There is a warning on the residence indicating that it is man-trapped. The security system is extreme, but Foyle engages his special enhancements and breaks in to shut it down. The house contains two sections, cellar Christians (religion is apparently outlawed) and Analogue. Steve Forrest is found at the Analogue party where they take psychiatric drugs and become like animals they admire.

Foyle and Robin jaunte Forrest off to a beach where Foyle has to torture him out of the analogue effects. While on the beach, Robin is repulsed by Foyle's methods. He interrogates Forrest, but the man dies before he can give Foyle an answer. Foyle and Robin then see a Burning Man who seems to try and talk to them and then vanishes again.

Robin identifies the Burning Man as Gully Foyle burning in hell.

Chapter 9 Analysis

The addition of the Burning Man to this chapter introduces a new element to the landscape of imagination—fear. Robin believes the Burning Man to be the image of Gully's doomed future of burning in hell. Foyle does not have a problem with this belief and does not care if it means he gets his revenge. His single-minded obsession, though tempered by his creative approach, remains intact.

The sympathetic block is another sign of the internal affecting the external. It seems Steve Forrest served aboard the Vorga and Foyle is delighted to be able to extract the information he so desperately craves from him. Yet Forrest literally cannot talk about it. When he tries, the sympathetic block in his mind kills him. This is a demonstration of the passive aggressive nature of the mind and what happens when someone else dictates how you can and will think. For Forrest it means death to reveal what someone else does not want revealed.

Foyle is frustrated by this turn of events, but he is not discouraged. If anything, the frustration fuels his anger and his desire to find the truth. Does Foyle even realize why

he desperately needs the truth or revenge at this point? There is no indication Foyle even cares about life beyond obtaining his revenge.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Fourmyle and Robin make an appearance at a Shanghai party where Foyle dazzles the crowd with his nearly naked companion, shocking to the prudery of the time. When he reveals his date is an android, the crowd is delighted at the curiosity. After their party appearance, Foyle and Robin travel to a Shanghai address where they are looking for Dr. Sergei Orel. He was the pharmacist's mate aboard the Vorga.

Foyle uses his superior strength and abilities to subdue the doctor. He questions him rapidly, demanding answers about the Vorga:

"Who gave the order to pass me by? Who was willing to let me rot and die? Who was aboard the Vorga? Who shipped with you? I'm going to get an answer. Don't think I'm not."

Orel protests the questioning and says he cannot answer him. When he does offer to talk, he dies. Foyle realizes that both Forrest and Orel have sympathetic blocks. These are mental blocks that trigger death if they try to reveal information. The Burning Man appears to them again and this time Foyle is shaken by the frightening visage.

Robin and Foyle travel to the Spanish Steps to search for another Vorga link—Angelo Poggi. Foyle is hopeful that Poggi, the Chef's Assistant from the Vorga, can answer his questions because Poggi does not seem as afraid as the first two men he questioned. Foyle offers him money and more to answer any questions. Robin picks up on discrepancies in Poggi's manner, accent and language choices. She warns Foyle that this is not Poggi.

Foyle reacts by trying to escape, but he is not successful until once more the Burning Man appears and shocks the crowd and Foyle's captors. Foyle speeds up, destroys all their film evidence and jaunt away—leaving Poggi to be revealed as Captain Y'ang-Yeovil from intelligence.

Chapter 10 Analysis

There is an interesting hypocrisy addressed at the very beginning of this chapter. Fourmyle attends a party with a nearly nude woman on his arm. To the prudery of the time, this is the ultimate in vulgarity and repulsive. The naked woman is baring all of herself to the guests and it is as though it strips them naked of privacy. Yet when it is revealed the nude woman is in fact an android, it becomes merely a curiosity and not a threat to the personal and intimate landscape of the individuals involved.

The imagination of another character threatens Foyle in this chapter. Y'ang-Yeovil, the intelligence officer who wants to obtain the PyrE has figured out Foyle is hunting the

shipmates of the Vorga so he lays in wait, posing as one of them. Foyle is so eager to find someone who can or will talk to him that he leaps at the opportunity and is nearly taken into custody due to the deception.

If not for the appearance of the Burning Man, Foyle's journey might very well have ended here.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Fourmyle makes an appearance at the Presteign Castle by arriving aboard a train with a single observation car. Presteign of Presteign is amazed by the method of transport (since all the showy families arrive in some odd contraption or another). It is Fourmyle's first chance to step inside the Presteign Castle. He suggests to the Presteign that they might be related.

During the party, he encounters Olivia Presteign, the beautiful albino daughter of the Presteign. He is enamored of her, but feels like he is tripping over his own tongue. When he sees Jisbella at the party and she recognizes him, he panics and tries to hide himself. They talk for the first time since he left her behind.

Their reunion is strained and Foyle surprises Jisbella with news that he is still planning to give her whatever is left over from the treasure once the Vorga is destroyed. He is certain she has betrayed him to Dagenham. But she has not. There is an attack on the city from space as the war continues to rage. He steps outside and finds Olivia Presteign watching the bombardment. Olivia is blind and can only see in infrared. She is delighted by the light show and charmed by Foyle's company.

Robin finds information about a Rodg Kempsey—a shipmate on the Vorga who is on the moon. She offers to exchange the information for her own release. Foyle agrees and then backtracks immediately because he still needs Robin as his romantic advisor in wooing Olivia Presteign. Robin is furious over the betrayal.

Chapter 11 Analysis

There is much made in the book about how the wealthy travel, because the truly wealthy and noble families do not bother with jaunting. Instead, they travel by some archaic form, the showier the better. Fourmyle (Foyle) demonstrates his understanding of this need for creative expression by arriving on a train to the Presteign Castle. He speaks with the Presteign and all of his transformations are rewarded as Presteign does not recognize him.

This chapter also brings Foyle into contact with Olivia Presteign. Her uniqueness and complete difference from Foyle himself makes her very attractive. He finds himself actively wanting to impress her so that he may spend time in her company. He wants to romance her and though he bludgeons his way through it, he backtracks on an agreement with Robin (who has been helping him) so that she will stay and help him romance Olivia. Where Robin sees a grotesque (in both Foyle and Olivia), Foyle only sees hope and for the first time, there is another emotion competing with his desire for revenge.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Robin abandons Foyle and goes straight to Peter Y'ang-Yeovil. She reveals Foyle's plans and more. She is worried about being an alien belligerent (her family is from the Outer Planets) but Y'ang-Yeovil puts her mind to rest.

Olivia Presteign reveals to her father that she is enamored of Fourmyle. She also reveals that he has an odd visage and scarring on his face that says Nomad. The Presteign is stunned. Dagenham and Jisbella are lovers; they can only spend a few minutes together each day. Their bedrooms are separated by 3 inches of lead glass and they are obviously very much in love.

Foyle travels to the moon where he gets his hands on Rodg Kempsey by telling him that Orel sent him. He beats Kempsey unconscious and then performs a rude surgery to bypass the sympathetic block so Kempsey cannot die during questioning. Foyle interrogates him and discovers that the Vorga was running refugees from the Outer Planets. They spaced all of them.

He gets a name for who gave the order: Captain Lindsey Joyce of the Skoptsy Colony, Mars. Foyle sees the Burning Man once again and is tormented with how he will get the information out of Lindsey because a Skoptsy cannot feel pain because they are already dead. He tells Kempsey he will not kill him, he wants to keep him alive, but he still jets off towards Mars.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Twice now, Foyle's quest has met a dead end due to the sympathetic block. In this chapter, Foyle reminds the reader that he has been learning, changing, and focusing. When he finds another Vorga shipmate, he does what he needs to in order to interrogate the prisoner and keep him from dying due to the sympathetic block.

His actions are horrible and the results for Kempsey are horrible. But Foyle's efforts are rewarded with a name of the Captain of the Vorga, the one who gave the order and Foyle is elated to believe that he is nearing the end of his journey and then his elation turns to devastation when he discovers the Captain is a Skoptsy now, because it has robbed him of a way to maim, torture and kill the person who left him to die.

In the meanwhile, Robin has abandoned Foyle to his mad quest. She goes to turn herself in and by extension Foyle. In doing so, she not only finds her freedom, but also hope as Y'ang-Yeovil does not want to arrest her for being an alien belligerent and he is very interested in what she knows about Foyle.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Presteign, Dagenham and Y'ang-Yeovil begin deconstructing Fourmyle's Circus and questioning all of his employees in their hunt for PyrE. Kempsey dies from injuries related to his condition and the acceleration Foyle travels at.

Foyle travels to Mars and kidnaps Sigurd Magsman. Sigurd is a 70 year old child telepath, the strongest on Mars. Foyle takes him with him to the Skoptsy Colony. Those who enter the Skoptsy Colony do so voluntarily and submit to a surgery that severs their sensory nervous system. They live out their days without speech, sound, sight, smell, touch or taste. Foyle forces Sigurd to ask Joyce the questions he wants to know—why did she give the orders to space the refugees and abandon him. Sigurd learns that Joyce did not give the order. The man-child wants to go home, but Foyle forces him to continue.

The Burning Man appears once more and this time, he speaks to Foyle. He complains that it is too loud. When he is gone again, Foyle learns from Sigurd and Joyce who gave the order.

Olivia Presteign gave the order. Foyle is staggered by the information. Pursued by law enforcement and private guards, Foyle returns to his ship. He throws the man-child up as a distraction and fights to get aboard his own ship as the Outer Planets launch their own attack on Mars.

Foyle is still in turmoil as he accelerates away and realizes the woman he loves is the woman he has sworn to destroy. He blacks out due to the acceleration.

Chapter 13 Analysis

In this chapter, Foyle's imagination and internal landscape explode. His obsession with revenge collides with his love for Olivia Presteign. The discovery that she is the one who gave the orders has a debilitating effect on him. It robs him of his drive, his passion and his fire. For in Olivia Presteign, he has found the source both of his worst nightmare and his desperate hope for a new dream.

When he accelerates away from the bombing of Mars, he tries to run away from himself but, as his blackout attests, that is not possible.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Foyle awakens aboard the Vorga and Olivia Presteign is there. She tells him "This time, we picked you up." Foyle is stunned to learn Olivia steals her father's ships regularly. She believes they are a species set apart and she will not explain her motives. She hates regular humans because of her own condition. She hates receiving everything second-hand. Foyle spoils her fun because he is no longer the savage who would have enjoyed the attack with her. He wants nothing to do with her now and wants to go back to Earth.

Dagenham, Jisbella, Captain Y'ang-Yeovil and the Presteign all meet in the Presteign's star chamber. They discuss the problem with Gully Foyle and the fact that they cannot seem to pin him down. They also discuss the PyrE. Presteign has an epileptic seizure. He then reveals the secret of PyrE—the substance is so volatile that unless it is shielded properly, all that is required to detonate it is the thought and the will. It is a substance that can change the world.

They conceive of a plan to draw Foyle out by using Robin to detonate some of the PyrE they believe is located at Old St. Pat's where the Four Mile Circus is camped.

Foyle goes to meet with Sheffield. He wishes to purge himself of his guilt, because he has come to realize he has made a number of heinous errors. Sheffield's assistant Bunny recognizes Foyle as Fourmyle. Sheffield has been programmed to react to Foyle's name. He strikes so quickly that Foyle is incapacitated before he realizes it.

Sheffield takes Foyle away to the Four Mile Circus and reveals a terrible truth. The Outer Planets destroyed the Nomad. They took Foyle, the only survivor at the time, back with them. They outfitted him in a space suit and set him out as a lure to catch an Inner Planet ship. Their plan was to destroy it when they tried to rescue him.

Something amazing happened. Foyle jaunted away. He jaunted across space—something never done before. He jaunted himself back to the wreckage of the Nomad. Sheffield wants the secret of space haunting as well as the PyrE.

Chapter 14 Analysis

Foyle's journey is complete. The man, Gully Foyle, the uneducated and crude lout left stranded for 170 days and nurtured back to health only at the breast of revenge has died. That Foyle is killed during the discovery of Olivia's treachery. In that moment, Foyle develops a conscience, a soul and regret. Though he is in Olivia's arms, he does not want to be there, because he sees in her the monster that he was. Instead, he returns to Earth intent on seeking punishment for his crimes.

He delivers himself to Sheffield and strips himself bare to confess his sins and reveal all the controlled thoughts he has hidden away. He is being honest about himself and with himself for the first time in his life and he is blind-sided by Sheffield's reactions.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

As Fourmyle, Foyle sent small slugs around the world to be examined to determine what PyrE was and what it could do. Robin's sending of the thought and the will detonates these pieces around the world. Old St. Pat's goes up in flames and pulverizes the block. They cannot rescue Foyle because he has fallen beneath and appears to be on fire. They tell him he has to jaunte himself out.

Foyle goes mildly mad from the pain and when he tries to jaunte the world spins out. He jauntes forward in time. He jauntes backwards. He becomes the Burning Man who appeared to him. He jauntes across space. He jauntes back. At some time in the distant future, Robin tells him how to save himself and return to his own time.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Gully Foyle, Geoffrey Fourmyle, Nomad—he is known by many names, but even he did not know he could space jaunte. When this is revealed to him during the course of this chapter, he learns it was not the Vorga that was responsible for his incarceration aboard the Nomad nor was it directly the fault of the Outer Planets' raiders that destroyed the ship. As it turns out, it was Foyle himself who jaunted to the Nomad some 600,000 miles away across the vastness of space.

It was some internal act that he did not realize he could do and over which he has no conscious control. In the meantime, much is made of the PyrE and the need for Thought and Will to activate it (element also needed for jaunting). The detonation of the PyrE serves as both a death and rebirth for Foyle who becomes unstuck—jaunting forwards and backwards in time as the Burning Man he saw in previous chapters. It is during this jaunting across space and time that he comes to new realizations and what is left of that first Gully, that awful Gully, is forever transformed.

Gully learns his mind can take him anywhere and to any time he desires. He is no longer the imagination-less oaf of the beginning of the book.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

When Foyle comes to his senses again, he is in the Star Chamber with the others. Everyone seeks to procure their agenda. Foyle wants punishment for his crimes and redemption from his sins. Presteign wants his PyrE returned to him. He is willing to make Foyle his heir for this and he is willing to give him Olivia. Captain Y'ang-Yeovil wants the PyrE for the government so they can win the war against the Outer Planets. He offers to make Foyle a hero.

Jisbella wants Foyle to destroy the PyrE because it is too dangerous and she wants him to have his redemption. Dagenham wants the secret of space jaunting. Most of all, they want this all kept secret. Foyle will not agree to any of it. He returns to Old St. Pat's where he gathers up the lead isotope box containing the PyrE and then jauntes all over the world distributing it.

He explains that now the world has the ability to destroy itself, but it has no defense. They must not be children anymore and must all take control of their destinies. His experiences have lead him to an epiphany. He jauntes away, abandoning them to their fate. He controls his jaunting and it lets him go back in time to the beginning and then to the future and across millions of space miles to other stars.

Finally, Foyle returns to the Scientific People where his wife Moira takes care of him as he falls into a troubled slumber. The Scientific People treat him as a revelation and there he waits for the rest of the human race to find him—when they are ready.

Chapter 16 Analysis

In this final chapter, Gully's journey is done. He knows who he is. He knows what he can do. He has discovered the limitless nature of his imagination. He wants to share that opportunity with others. He wants them to throw off their own chains and discover who they really are and to open themselves to the possibilities. His methods are as harsh and brutal as ever (spreading PyrE around the world and telling everyone how to detonate it), but then is not nature brutal? Nature applauds the survival of the fittest. In this case, the fittest has the most powerful imagination and with his mind, he can go anywhere.

Characters

Gully Foyle, Geoffrey Fourmyle, The Burning Man, Nomad

Gully Foyle is the last remaining survivor of the Nomad, a merchant spaceship attacked in the war with the Outer Planets and left drifting in space. Foyle is a living zombie, a man who has not bothered to explore more than the minimum potential of his abilities. Driven by a mad desire for revenge, he suffers a period of time in prison before remaking himself into Geoffrey Fourmyle. He is known as Nomad to the Scientific People and, by the end of the tale, the Burning Man as he discovers his amazing ability to space jaunte.

The Presteign

The head of the wealthy Presteign clan, the Presteign of Presteign owns the Vorga and the Nomad, the two central space ships of the narrative. The first is the star ship that abandoned Gully Foyle to his fate aboard the destroyed second ship. The Presteign is also the owner of the volatile substance PyrE that can be detonated by Thought and Will.

Olivia Presteign

The daughter of the Presteign. Olivia is an albino who is also blind to normal sight. She sees things in infrared. She turns out to be the one who ordered Gully Foyle abandoned when she was ferrying refugees from the Outer Planets on the Vorga. She orders the passengers spaced as well. A cold and calculating woman, she touches Foyle's heart and his love for her nearly destroys him as it collides with his revenge.

Robin Wednesbury

Robin is a telesend, a telepath limited to only broadcasting her thoughts and not reading the minds of others. She is teaching a jaunte re-education class for head trauma patients when she first encounters Gully Foyle. She learns quickly that he has been deceiving everyone and he threatens to expose her own secrets (she is an Alien Belligerant because her family is from the Outer Planets). Later, Foyle forces her to work for him as he cultivates his image as Geoffrey Fourmyle, a wealthy buffoon. She is the one who telesends the Thought and the Will that detonates the PyrE. She also encounters the Burning Man in the future where she gives Gully the message on how to save himself. She forms an attachment with Peter Y'ang-Yeovil and there is a suggestion of marriage in the future as she identifies herself to the Burning Man as Robin Yeovil.

Jisbella McQueen

Jisbella McQueen is incarcerated at the Gouffre Martel at the same time as Gully Foyle. She makes contact with him via the acoustics of the prison. When he makes his escape, she is taken along with him. Her relationship with Foyle is one of affection and revulsion. She takes Foyle to a surgeon, Henry Baker, to have his tattoo removed. Together, they travel to the wreckage of the Nomad to retrieve the treasure hidden aboard it. Jisbella is abandoned by Foyle, but meets Dagenham with whom she forms a deep attachment and bond. She offers Foyle an opportunity to find redemption.

Saul Dagenham

A great physicist in his time, Dagenham suffered a terrible accident that left him extremely radioactive. He cannot have physical contact with anyone for longer than 5 minutes or be in a room with them for longer than 30 minutes without endangering them. The government pays him to stay away from others and to leave his own research alone. He builds a very successful jaunting courier business in the meantime. He partners with Presteign to torture the information they need out of Foyle. During his psychiatric manipulations, he introduces the idea of Geoffrey Fourmyle to him—an identity Foyle later assumes. He falls in love with Jisbella McQueen.

Captain Peter Y'ang-Yeovil, Angelo Poggi

A member of Central Intelligence for the Inner Planets, Y'ang-Yeovil is trying to track down Foyle to learn more about the destruction of the Nomad. At one point, he assumes the identity of Angelo Poggi to trap Foyle on the Spanish Stairs when he realizes the man is tracking down crew members of the Vorga. Y'ang-Yeovil opposes the Presteign and Dagenham. He and Robin Wednesbury form an attachment. There is a suggestion of marriage in the future.

Sheffield

An undercover agent for the Outer Planets, Sheffield acts as an attorney for the Presteign. He is aware of PyrE and wants to obtain it, but he wants to obtain Foyle more. He is the one who reveals to Foyle the secret of his ability to space jaunte. He takes Foyle to Old St. Pat's and that is how Foyle is in place when Robin detonates the PyrE. He is killed in the explosion.

Dr. Sergi Orel

The pharmacist's mate on the Vorga, Foyle tracks him down and tries to extract information on why the Vorga abandoned him aboard the Nomad. Orel dies after a sympathetic block is provoked by the questioning.



Sigurd Magsman

The 70 year old child is the most powerful telepath on Mars. Foyle kidnaps him and uses him to extract information from Captain Joyce. Foyle abandons the crazed telepath to his rescuers during an Outer Planets' bombing of Mars.

Rodg Kempsey

Kempsey also served aboard the Vorga. He is imprisoned on the moon and Foyle breaks him out under the guise that Dr. Orel sent him. In order to overcome the sympathetic block, Foyle tortures him to get the information he needs. Kempsey reveals that Captain Lindsey Joyce gave the orders. Kempsey later dies.

Bunny

Sheffield's assistant who reveals Sheffield's alien allegiance to the Presteign, Dagenham and Captain Peter Y'ang-Yeovil as well as the man's kidnapping of Gully Foyle.

Captain Lindsey Joyce

Lindsey Joyce is the Captain of the Vorga who abandons Foyle on the wreckage of the Nomad. She is now a resident of the Skoptsy Colony where she has had her nervous system severed. Foyle brings the kidnapped telepath Sigurd Magsman to question her. The telepath extracts the name of the person who gave the order to space the refugees and leave Foyle behind. Joyce reveals Olivia Presteign's name to Foyle.

Henry Baker

Baker is a surgeon who supplements his income by creating freaks of nature through illegal surgeries. Jisbella brings Foyle to him to have his tattoos removed. Baker abandons Foyle shortly after the procedure when law enforcement raids his facility. His surgery of Foyle is well done (albeit very painful) and he removes the noticeable tattoo.

Sam Quatt

An old compatriot of Jisbella McQueen, he is retired but comes out of retirement to help Jisbella briefly. He is captured after sustaining a head wound during the raid on Baker's facilities. He tells Jisbella and Foyle to leave him. The pair later steal his space yacht to retrieve the treasure from the Nomad.

Charles Fort Jaunte

The man who discovered the ability to jaunte—a form of teleporting from one destination to another if the jaunter knows the location. His experiments and teachers revolutionize the universe and change its landscape completely.

The Scientific People

The survivors of a space wreck from more than 200 years before who form a colony on the Sargasso Asteroid. They live by old science and mate based on genetics. They also harvest other wrecks and incorporate them into their colony. They harvest the Nomad and Foyle when he arrives in their space. They tattoo Foyle with the name Nomad. He later returns to the Scientific People after he learns of his amazing ability to space jaunte and waits among them for other humans to find him.

The Four Mile Circus

The Four Mile Circus comprises Geoffrey Fourmyle's \$40,000 credits a day entourage. They are considered both outlandish and crude. They accompany him everywhere and create a spectacle worth seeing.

Joseph

Joseph is the leader of the Scientific People. He tattoos Foyle with the name Nomad. He gives Nomad a woman named Moira to be his wife. Each of the Scientific People is tattooed with their name.

Moira

The woman given to Foyle by Joseph as his wife, Moira takes care of him when he returns at the end of the tale to meditate and wait for the rest of the solar system to find him.



Objects/Places

Skopty Colony

Those who enter the Skopty Colony do so voluntary and submit to a surgery that severs their sensory nervous system. They live out their days without speech, sound, sight, smell, touch or taste. Lindsey Joyce, former Captain of the Vorga, joins the Skopty Colony and Foyle must kidnap a telepath in order to interrogate her there.

Gouffre Martel

This underground prison is kept in total blackness. The location prevents jaunting and it is one of the few places where jaunting undesirables can be incarcerated. Foyle spends several months there as Dagenham tries to break him down. He meets Jisbella McQueen, another resident of the prison and they make their escape—one of the first and only escapes to ever be made from the prison.

Sargasso Asteroid

The asteroid is home to the Scientific People. It is comprised of the wreckage of several space ships that either broke down or were destroyed. The Nomad is one of those ships and it is here where Gully Foyle receives his Nomad tattoo. The asteroid is where Foyle returns at the end of the tale to wait for others to discover him.

Spanish Stairs

A famous historical location in Rome, Italy, where Foyle and Robin encounter Captain Peter Y'ang-Yeovil disguised as Angelo Poggi. Foyle is nearly captured by Central Intelligence on these steps until the Burning Man (also Foyle) distracts the captors and Foyle manages to escape.

The Presteign Castle

Presteign Castle is the abode of the wealthy Presteign of Presteign and his family. His daughter Olivia lives with him there. Foyle meets Olivia during a party and later during a bombardment by the Outer Planets. Presteign meets with Dagenham and Sheffield in the Star Chamber within the Castle.

Old St Pat's

When religion is outlawed, St Patrick's Cathedral in New York falls into disrepair and is seldom used. Gully Foyle camps his Four Mile Circus within the precincts of Old St. Pat's. The building is all but destroyed when the PyrE is detonated.

Vorga

The Vorga is another Presteign-owned vessel. Captain Joyce Lindsey, Rodg Kempsey and Doctor Sergei Orel all serve aboard the Vorga. Olivia Presteign is the one who uses the Vorga to transport refugees from the Outer Planets and orders the Vorga to abandon Foyle. The Vorga takes on a life of its own as the focus of Foyle's efforts for revenge. He is consumed with the need to destroy it. It is only later that he focuses less on the vessel and more on the people who were aboard it.

Nomad

The space merchant vessel owned by the Presteign. Gully Foyle serves as a Merchant Marine, 3rd class aboard the Nomad. When it is attacked and devastated by raiders from the Outer Planets, Gully Foyle survives aboard it for 170 days, living in a tool locker. The Nomad houses several secrets including a fortune in bullion and a volatile substance known as PyrE. Foyle is also named for the Nomad when he sends the ship hurtling through space and the Scientific People find it and him aboard it.

Public Jaunte Stations

The modern equivalent of bus/subway/train stations are located in every major city and town across the globe. Commuters, travelers and shoppers can jaunte to the various stations provided they have been to them before. A worker living in Ohio can jaunte to New York (either directly or via other jaunte stations) to work as long as they had been to the New York Jaunte Station and memorized the coordinates and the details. Though hundreds of people use the public jaunte stations, no two people ever seem to jaunte into the same space at the same time.

Freak Show

Doctor Baker's Freak Show features genetic mutations, constructs and surgeries (illegal and legal alike) for the amusement of large corporations and the wealthy. It is portrayed as a guilty secret and he offers to take Foyle off Jisbella's hands and add him to the Freak Show because the tattoos are barbaric in nature and a throwback to two or three hundred years before. The Freak Show is raided by authorities hunting Foyle and presumably taken into custody or dismantled.

Social Concerns And Themes

Where the main characters in *The Demolished Man* (1953) largely were from the upper strata of society, many of those in *The Stars My Destination* are the opposite, representing the lower social classes. Gulliver Foyle, the protagonist, is an uneducated, unskilled Mechanic's Mate 3rd Class on the twenty-fourth-century spaceship, *Nomad*. As in the earlier novel, events are put into motion in a business context, and they result in an overpowering desire for revenge. The outcome is that an individual again is goaded into a special awareness of himself and forced to develop supranormal powers in order to survive. The character's social awareness begins to develop next, and through extraordinary events the individual makes an evolutionary leap.

Gully begins as an insensitive egoist and ends up as a representative of the next development in the human race.

He has become a superman in the sense that the characters in George Bernard Shaw's dramas become supermen.

Essentially common people, Shaw's characters become animated by a life force that compels them to seek others of a like constitution in order to advance the race. What for Gully started out as a mad, antisocial drive for revenge becomes a movement toward social responsibility that encompasses his entire culture.

The plot device that initiates the action in the novel is a simple one.

During World War II, German submarines occasionally set traps by placing shipwreck survivors where they could be found; when another ship went to the rescue, it became easy prey for the submarine. As a consequence, survivors were sometimes left to die. Bester's story begins in medias res. That is, Gully already has been shipwrecked.

He is the sole survivor of an attack by forces of the Outer Planets, and he has been marooned in space for 170 days.

Suddenly, a ship appears that can rescue him — but inexplicably it leaves him stranded. Enraged, Gully focuses his whole being on finding the ship and its crew so that he can destroy them for having abandoned him.

There are two items that block Gully's act of revenge, though, and these complicating elements are what the novel is really about. First, humanity has discovered a mental process called jaunting that is a limited form of teleportation. Trained practitioners can move instantaneously from one jaunte stage to another up to 1,000 miles distant. Second, there was a secret cargo aboard the *Nomad*, a twenty-pound load of PyrE, a tremendously explosive compound that can be triggered by "will and idea." In other words, anyone can detonate the material merely by thinking about doing so. The explosive clearly would be the decisive weapon in the impending interplanetary civil war.

Through his adventures and narrow escapes, Gully is forced to control his mind to the point that he can jaunt through time as well as space. The stereotyped Common Man has risen above society and can now show humankind how to rise to his level.

Moreover, Gully recognizes that mankind can be free to evolve only if everyone is part of the process as opposed to being controlled by a powerful few in the government (Y'ang-Yeovil) or big business (Presteign). Thus, he gives the secret of PyrE to the world in the calm assurance that if everyone has the power to destroy the universe, everyone will act with a sense of social responsibility to save the universe (a kind of futuristic Mutually Assured Destruction policy). Instead of seeing this as giving a loaded weapon to a child, Gully perceives his actions as being a means of impelling society to mature, as he has when responsibility is thrust upon him. The novel concludes with Gully in a meditational dream state. It is implied that when he awakens he will lead humanity as it awakens to its vast potential.

Techniques

Stylistically, *The Stars My Destination* is even more ambitious than *The Demolished Man*, although the devices that Bester employs in his second novel are the same as or an extension of those that he used in his first novel.

The most obvious, and initially the most striking, element is again typography, the utilization of different fonts (type faces) and patterns to replicate as closely as possible on the printed page the sensory effect of synaesthesia that Gully experiences. Synaesthesia is "that rare condition in which perception receives messages from the objective world and relays these messages to the brain, but there in the brain the sensory perceptions are confused with another" (*The Stars My Destination*).

Thus, Gully sees sounds and hears shadows, and words with different sized letters undulate across the page to represent physically a sensory phenomenon.

Less superficially evident, but more effective in conveying the essence of Bester's message, are his utilization of dialogue and imagery. At the beginning of the story Gully speaks a language that the writer has invented to illustrate his protagonist's social status.

This is an important creation for it establishes a benchmark against which Gully can be compared later in the novel so that the amount of change that takes place in his character is quite evident. The standard English that Gully speaks after being tutored in logic and the social graces by Jisbella contrasts dramatically with the harsh sounding dialect of the lower class.

Bester reinforces this by developing a new grammatical pattern to demonstrate the subtle use of logic or the lack of logic that underlies the two distinctive dialects.

Likewise, the image of the hideous tiger mask that is tattooed on Gully's face captures the intense emotions that control him and set him apart from the rest of humanity (and vividly illustrates his survival drive) and at the same time provides a standard against which his progress can be compared as he learns to overcome his emotions and rely upon his intellect. The image of *The Burning Man* that reappears throughout the book serves a similar purpose. When taken together, these two images become even more significant, for they merge with the opening quatrain of William Blake's "The Tiger" that is quoted at the beginning of the novel. These famous lines are from a poem in Blake's *Songs of Experience* (1794) collection, a group of poems that reverse conventional attitudes to show that true innocence can only be achieved through experience because true innocence must be chosen and a choice can only be made if the options are known (as in the parable of the prodigal son in the Bible). Again, Bester is working with various techniques to wed form and content in this tale about maturation. The fire, the emotional power, and the sense of control that forge Gully and open up a new universe for humanity are implied in the intertwining of these images and the literary allusion to

Blake's poem. The full significance of Bester's conscious craftsmanship is underscored by the fact that the novel was originally published under the title *Tiger! Tiger!*

Finally, the repetition of the novel's opening paragraph at the conclusion of the tale serves as a frame that implies that the social concerns explored and evolutionary process manifested in *Gully* (and by extension the human race) are not just ongoing but eternal as well.

Themes

The Material Realization of Our Dreams

The book is about the imagination and explores how our inner beliefs, feelings and perceptions become reality. It is important to note that Alfred Bester originally published the *The Stars My Destination* as "Tiger! Tiger!", a four part serial in *Galaxy* magazine beginning in October 1956. Science fiction began as speculative fiction and explored the possibilities of the imagination.

In science fiction, dreams of traveling to the stars and teleportation can become reality. In all science fiction, imagination is the literary form's key. While the book focuses on a thoroughly unlikable character, it takes into account that Foyle had no ambition, no dreams and no imagination. He learns to dream. He learns to imagine.

The first dream is more of an obsession. He wants to destroy the Vorga, but that dream puts him on a path to his own destiny. Throughout the book he learns to love and that he can do more than others can dream—he can jaunte across space and time. The tattoos he receives during the course of the book are another example of this internal-external effect. The tiger like markings of the tattoo are removed by surgery, but they appear again whenever he loses his self-control. This is a direct cause and effect situation, showing how his internal emotions are reflected in his external world.

The ability to jaunte is the second realization of the dream theme. The ability to transport oneself to any destination one can see or 'imagine' is a full realization of the desire to travel and for freedom. The book is littered with references to the imagination and dreaming and how mankind must be willing to become more than it is and to dream bigger, brighter dreams.

Revenge Tragedy

A secondary theme is of the revenge tragedy. Much like Edmund Dantes of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Gully Foyle is consumed by revenge. His revenge drives him to take insane risks and to become more than he is. He attacks, tortures and kills people in his quest for revenge. He is without conscience or remorse until he discovers that the one he most desperately wants to kill is the woman he's fallen desperately in love with. The tragedy of these colliding emotions begins a cascade effect. Foyle begins to feel remorse for his actions and his choices and takes responsibility for them. However, the satisfaction he craves from the beginning of the tale is ultimately unfulfilled.

As with all tragedies, there is an element of desire that goes wholly unfulfilled. In Foyle's case, it is the driving need to avenge himself on the Vorga. The ship's abandonment of him in space gives him a focus for all his helplessness and rage and not just from the 170 days spent aboard the *Nomad*, but for an entire lifetime of drifting with no real goals

or desire. He is as listless as his race and the actions taken by the Vorga catapult him into a series of events that lead to real change—including meeting Olivia Presteign.

His love for Olivia could be seen as redemptive, yet it is the ultimate tragedy for he has come to love the very thing that he hates so powerfully. This mixture of complex emotions devastates him and leads him to reach beyond himself finally, and instead of seeking revenge, he seeks change and the stars.

Haves versus the Have Nots

It is a very old theme and a very old dynamic, but the theme of "the haves versus the have nots" runs throughout this book. First, it is the Inner Planets as the Haves and the Outer Planets as the Have Nots. The advent of jaunting creates a disparity between the dependency of the Inner Planets on the products produced by the Outer Planets. By no longer needing to purchase so much, the economy of both is threatened, leaving the Outer Planets to attack the Inner in a desperate bid for survival.

For Gully Foyle, he is a Have Not in every sense of the word. He has no goals. He has no focus or chance for advancement. He is a simple man and described as a nobody. His ship is attacked and destroyed by the Outer Planets, they take him and outfit him in a suit with the intention of using him as bait to lure Inner Planet ships to their destruction. He jaunts across space to the wreckage of the Nomad where he bides his time in a hellish existence. Then he rescues himself, first by crashing the Nomad into the Sargasso Asteroid and then later, by stealing one of their ships and making his way back to Earth.

Foyle becomes a Have. The Outer Planets want his space jaunting ability and on the Inner Planets, Presteign and his ilk want him because he knows where the PyrE is. Jisbella wants him to help her escape. The authorities want him for both the PyrE and his space jaunting ability. The struggle between the Haves and the Have Nots is what Foyle wants to end. He feels they should all be able to achieve what they desire, if they desire it greatly enough, and those who lack desire should be destroyed. He wants his world to become all tigers and not just sheep.

Presteign and his kind do not want to share their power, their ability as Haves, with the Have Nots. They believe, blindly, that they are best suited to lead and by intermixing the two the world may burn. Foyle does not care. He thinks that unless they do it, they are all going to be destroyed. It is time for a new world, a new universe and one where the Haves and the Have Nots travel the same path or fall off it all together.

Style

Point of View

Written in third person, the book is largely told from the perspective of uneducated Gully Foyle. He is a simple man, a crude man and one bent on revenge. His rage permeates much of the first half of the book, but it is his single-minded purpose that colors every scene and interaction. What little is seen of the thoughts of other characters is often in direct relation to Gully Foyle and his quest.

Setting

The Stars My Destination takes place 500 years into the future in a solar system that expands humanity's influence to the stars and other planets. There is a war brewing between Inner and Outer Planets because jaunting has disrupted trade and the needs of the populace. There is a feeling of impending doom because humanity is stagnating even in their desire to explore and develop and evolve. When Charles Fort Jaunte discovers the jaunte, it offers a renaissance of sorts to the bored and inactive masses. Soon they begin to abandon vehicle technology save for starships, because jaunting across space proved impossible.

Vehicles become a novelty, indulged in by the rich to show off their wealth and prestige. Interestingly enough, depending on a family's incorporation and wealthy roots, they select a vehicle from that time period to be their show piece. A family that incorporated in the 1800's may arrive by horse and buggy and another family from the 1920s might arrive in a Model T car or something similar. It becomes fashionable to refuse to jaunte because jaunteing is the common man's transportation.

Security and social freedoms are powerful issues in this time. Jaunteing seems to have sabotaged women's rights. They are kept locked away (especially among the wealthy) in an effort to protect family lineage and blood lines. Jaunte coordinates are closely guarded secrets and security systems (mantraps) are designed to prevent rapists, looters, thieves and others from just jaunting into homes.

It is a time of contradictions and where one exciting discovery soon becomes old hat; the masses once again move forward, surging with the tides of politics—particularly the war between the Inner and Outer Planets, as their interdependencies are shattered by jaunting leaving each side with needs and supplies the other can no longer meet. It is a time of turbulence when humanity seems ready to implode and where someone as unremarkable as Gully Foyle can prove to be a catalyst for remarkable change.

Language and Meaning

Bester utilizes imagination and the literary allusions very well in this science fiction tale. Considered a Master of Science Fiction by modern standards, *The Stars My Destination* is about the journey of one man, one terrible man, to one terrible realization. He does not try to dress it up or make it pretty, but instead studies the grittiness of the human condition and how one simple, uneducated man can change the universe.

Structure

The Stars My Destination is broken into two parts with 8 chapters in each. The book contains a foreword written by Neil Gaiman introducing the novel and Alfred Bester. There is a prologue explaining the world's rules and physics, including the political situation caused by the advent of jaunting.

Quotes

"When people teleport, they also teleport the clothes they wear and whatever they are strong enough to carry. I hate to disappoint you, but even ladies' clothes would arrive with them," Prologue, p. 10.

"Gully Foyle is my name and Terra is my nation. Deep space is my dwelling place and death's my destination," Chapter 1, p. 16.

"You pass me by. You leave me rot like a dog. You leave me die, Vorga ... Vorga-T:1339. No. I get out of here, me. I follow you, Vorga. I find you, Vorga. I pay you back, me. I rot you. I kill you, Vorga. I kill you filthy," Chapter 1, p. 23.

"You are the first to arrive alive in fifty years. You are a puissant man. Very. Arrival of the fittest is the doctrine of Holy Darwin. Most Scientific," Chapter 2, p. 28.

"Never forget. Location. Elevation. Situation. That's the only way to remember your jaunte co-ordinates," Chapter 3, p. 34.

"I have to be so careful, Sgt. Logan. You see, no one likes to know what another person really thinks about him. We imagine that we do, but we don't," Chapter 3, p. 38.

"So that makes you alien-belligerent. When the war started you and all the rest was given one mot to get out of the Inner Planets and go home. Any which didn't became spies by law. I got you right here, girl," Chapter 3, p. 41.

"There are thousands of Presteigns. All are addressed as Mister. But I am Presteign of Presteign, head of house and sept, first of the family, chieftain of the clan. I am addressed as Presteign. Not 'Mister' Presteign. Presteign," Chapter 3, p. 46.

"Liars! It's real, me. This here is phoney. What happened to me is real. I'm real, me," Chapter 4, p. 65.

"Yep. Don't know where they are, them. Don't know where they're going. Blue Jaunte into the dark ... and we hear 'em, exploding in the mountains. Boom! Blue Jaunte!" Chapter 5, p. 72.

"You don't know what jaunting's done to women, Gully. It's lock us up, sent us back to the seraglio," Chapter 5, p. 74.

"Ghoul. Liar...lecher....tiger...ghoul. The walking cancer ... Gully Foyle," Chapter 6, p. 103.

"We've never seen his face...only the mask," Chapter 6, p. 104.

"I couldn't help myself. That's what's inside me...what I have to get rid of," Chapter 7, p. 108.



"You can't ever lose control, Gully. You'll never be able to drink too much, eat too much, love too much, hate too much ... You'll have to hold yourself with an iron grip," Chapter 7, p. 113.

"You destroyed me once. Are you trying to destroy me again?" Chapter 8, p. 136.

"Without mercy, without forgiveness, without hypocrisy," Chapter 11, p. 165.

"I dance, speak four languages miserably, study science and philosophy, write pitiful poetry, blow myself up with idiotic experiments, fence like a fool, box like a buffoon. In short I'm the notorious Fourmyle of Ceres," Chapter 11, p. 169.

"Fantastic. Wonderfully evil. I can't describe it. Give me something to write with. I'll show you," Chapter 12, p. 186.

"For being blind. For being cheated. For being helpless. They should have killed me when I was born. Do you know what it's like to be blind .. to receive life second hand? To be dependent, begging, crippled?" Chapter 14, p. 210.

"I want to be purged. I want to pay for what I've done and settle the account. I want to get rid of this damnable cross I'm carrying...this ache that's cracking my spine," Chapter 16, p. 249.

"A man is a member of society first, and an individual second. You must go along with society, whether it chooses destruction or not," Chapter 16, p. 250.

"You're all freaks, sir. But you always have been freaks. Life is a freak. That's its hope and glory," Chapter 16, p. 251.

"I've handed life and death back to the people who do the living and dying. The common man's been whipped and led long enough by driven men like us...compulsive men...tiger men who can't help lashing the world before them. We're all tigers, the three of us, but who the hell are we to make the decisions for the world just because we're compulsive? Let the world make its own choice between life and death. Why should we be saddled with responsibility?" Chapter 16, p. 254.

"Blow yourselves to Christ gone or come and find me, Gully Foyle, and I make you men. I make you great. I give you the stars," Chapter 16, p. 255.

Topics for Discussion

Consider the relationship between imagination and education. Do menial jobs and tasks go only to those who are uneducated or lack imagination?

Explore the nature of leadership. Is it truly limited to those with a vision for the future or the Will to create one?

Discuss the evolution of Gully Foyle. Is he born aboard the Nomad or in the fires of the PyrE detonation?

Explain Foyle's belief that the common man must be free to destroy himself or evolve, rather than blindly following more powerful men who assert themselves.

Discuss the fact that in Foyle's time, women have been consigned back to the seraglio because of jaunting. Why would the advent of jaunting strip the rights of women?

Explain how self-perception and self-awareness affect an individual's actions. When does Gully Foyle become truly self-aware?

Discuss the ramifications the discovery of space jaunting could have on the political and social infrastructures of the Inner and Outer Planets.

Literary Precedents

As was the case with *The Demolished Man*, elements in *The Stars My Destination* can be traced back to numerous examples in the science fiction genre (space and time travel and teleportation are obvious examples). There are also stylistic resonances with James Joyce, typographical connections with Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759-1767), and the aforementioned thematic links with William Blake's poetry.

Bester's fiction is filled with literary allusions, and one of the most interesting literary precedents for this novel is the incorporation of the plot line from Alexandre Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844). In "My Affair with Science Fiction" Bester admits that he had been "toying with the notion of using the Count of Monte Cristo pattern for a story. The reason is simple; I'd always preferred the antihero, and I'd always found high drama in compulsive types." He then goes on to relate how a story in an old *National Geographic* about the survival of a torpedoed sailor at sea who had been sighted by passing ships that refused to rescue him merged in his mind with the Monte Cristo pattern and thereby led him into the story that developed into *The Stars My Destination*.

Related Titles

While Bester is best known for, and has made his most important literary contributions through, his novels, he has also written numerous science fiction short stories that are extremely popular and considered classics of the genre. *Starlight* (1976) is a useful anthology of his short fiction because it brings together many of his best and best-known stories and because the contents of the collection span a considerable segment of his career, since it contains pieces published as early as 1941 ("Adam and No Eve") and as recently as 1974 ("The Four-Hour Fugue"). More importantly, a representative sampling from *Starlight* (which is actually a bringing together of two previously published collections — *The Light Fantastic* (1976) and *Star Light, Star Bright* (1976) — and includes the revealing autobiographical essay "My Affair with Science Fiction") shows that both the themes that control Bester's novels and the techniques that he uses to express them appear throughout his entire oeuvre and even in some cases were experimented with in short stories that preceded the longer works. Of additional interest are the brief introductions to each tale in which the writer explains how he came to write that particular story.

"Adam and Eve" arose out of Bester's impatience with what had become a science fiction cliché — a story in which it is revealed at the conclusion that the last two people left alive on Earth are Adam and Eve. In this telling, Steven Krane is a scientist whose experiment goes awry and literally destroys all life on Earth except him.

Ultimately, the protagonist manages to crawl to a sea where his disintegrating body will start a new evolutionary cycle that will lead to today's world.

"Oddy and Id" (1950) is a Freudian tale in which the world discovers that no matter how well educated a person is, unconscious selfish drives will overpower all altruistic motives. In "Time Is the Traitor" (1953), Bester explores the Freudian consequences when a man tries to replace his dead girlfriend.

When she is finally cloned, he has changed so much she no longer interests him and she is not in love with the man whom he has become. The moral of the story is: "The mind goes back, but time goes on, and farewells should be forever." "Fondly Fahrenheit" (1954) traces the interlocking psyches of a murderous android and his owner. The result of their mutual psychological projection is disastrous. When the android, who has taken on his master's subconscious maniacal personality, is destroyed, the master demonstrates the characteristics that the android had developed.

Richard Armour's comic and somewhat skewed observations on history are recalled by "The Men Who Murdered Mohammed" (1958). With a story line that can be traced back to H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895), this tale suggests that time travel in any meaningful sense is impossible because every person lives in an individual reality and there is no way, therefore, to affect anyone else's reality by traveling back in time since the lines are parallel but do not actually connect.

Bester's "obsession with patterns and dynamics" is found in an extrapolation of a "logically possible exaggeration of environment on a contemporary man," as he explains in his introduction to "The Pi Man" (1959). The typographical patterns that appear on the printed page are one of his stylistic trademarks.

An intriguing variation on extrasensory perception serves as the basis for "The Four-Hour Fugue." A Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde dual personality inhabits the body of Dr. Blaise Skiaki, a research chemist for a perfume maker.

Among Skiaki's talents is the ability, while in an advanced state of somnambulism, to identify a pheromone exuded by someone who has a death wish. Ironically, what Skiaki does while sleepwalking is discovered by Gretchen Nunn, who is an esper who is blind but does not realize it because she sees through other people's eyes.

Neither can be cured, but their awareness of their situations means that together they can adjust and cope.

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