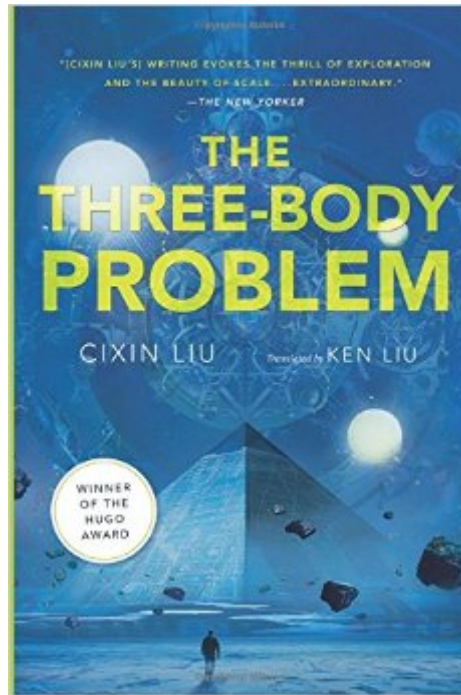


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The Three-Body Problem



Synopsis

The Three-Body Problem is the first chance for English-speaking readers to experience this multiple award winning phenomenon from China's most beloved science fiction author, Liu Cixin. Set against the backdrop of China's Cultural Revolution, a secret military project sends signals into space to establish contact with aliens. An alien civilization on the brink of destruction captures the signal and plans to invade Earth. Meanwhile, on Earth, different camps start forming, planning to either welcome the superior beings and help them take over a world seen as corrupt, or to fight against the invasion. The result is a science fiction masterpiece of enormous scope and vision.

Book Information

Series: Three-Body (Book 1)

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (995 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

First, this does not read like a translation. Ken Liu's translation of Cixin Liu's original Chinese language novel, "San ti" (2008) comes across seamlessly in the spare, translated English prose (though I cannot speak as to the authenticity of the translation, rather, just the style). Ken Liu sprinkles footnotes throughout the novel giving some useful background with regards to the Chinese Cultural Revolution of the 1960's and 1970's, as well as background in math and physics. The plot's political and scientific setting reminded me quite a bit of the writing of Gregory Benford, specifically, his novel Timescape. If I were to hazard a guess, if you like Benford's writing, you'll enjoy this novel. If you dislike Benford (he isn't everyone's cup of tea) you might want to pass on this. This is very much hard core, traditional science fiction. The backdrop of China's Cultural Revolution gives a

memorable setting. Cixin Liu's personal experiences as a Chinese citizen (a young child - he was born in 1963) lends a degree of authenticity to that aspect of the novel. Please, please, please read at least to the halfway point. Mr. Liu's plot slowly and steadily increases the pace. I loved the entire book, but one fellow reader was going "meh" until she read enough to tell me SHE wants to read the entire series now. If you find yourself thinking, "What's the big deal" just keep on going. This is a FUN read! Note that this is the first of an original trilogy by the author, and I'm hooked. Try to avoid reviews that give too much of the plot away and just enjoy the work.

When I read the last of the nearly 400 pages of *The Three-Body Problem*, I immediately wanted more. And thankfully English translations of the other two volumes of the Three Body trilogy (tentatively titled *The Dark Forest* and *Death's End*) are in the works. Cixin Liu writes with great intelligence, wisdom, heart, insight into the human condition, and humor. And Ken Liu's translation from Chinese to English flows so smoothly that at no point did I feel that I was reading a translated novel. If you are wondering if this is a book you would be interested in reading, I suggest you check out Three-Body author Cixin Liu's article, "The Worst of All Possible Universes and the Best of All Possible Earths: Three Body and Chinese Science Fiction," translated by Ken Liu, at [tor dot com](http://tor.com) (Tor being the publisher of *The Three-Body Problem*). At the same site you can find what is described as a self-contained story within the novel with the title, "The Three-Body Problem: "King Wen of Zhou and the Long Night." The latter will give you a taste of the how the novel reads. Though the novel contains twists, turns, surprises, and action, I did not find *The Three-Body Problem* to be a page turner and there were times when I wished it moved at a faster pace. But by the time I reached the last page I realized that the pace at which it moves is in sync with the subject matter and the vast periods of time, vast distances, and epic proportions in play. In the aforementioned article at the Tor site, Cixin Liu mentions that in the third volume of the trilogy, he "extended the time line to the heat death of the universe." I cannot remember ever reading any other novel, science fiction or otherwise, that gave me the sense of proportion, scale, and vastness I got from reading *The Three-Body Problem*.

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