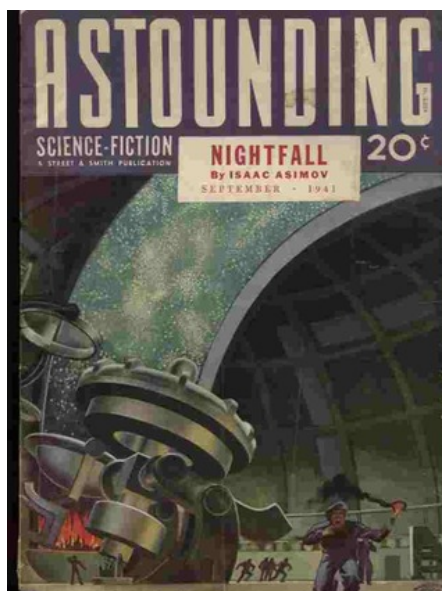




Nightfall

Isaac Asimov

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Nightfall Isaac Asimov

Of the six suns, only Beta is left in the sky. Do you see it?"

The question was rather unnecessary. Beta was almost at zenith, its ruddy light flooding the landscape to an unusual orange as the brilliant rays of setting Gamma died. Beta was at aphelion. It was small; smaller than Theremon had ever seen it before, and for the moment it was undisputed ruler of Lagash's sky.

Lagash's own sun, Alpha, the one about which it revolved, was at the antipodes, as were the two distant companion pairs. The red dwarf Beta — Alpha's immediate companion — was alone, grimly alone.

Aton's upturned face flushed redly in the sunlight. "In just under four hours," he said, "civilization, as we know it, comes to an end. It will do so because, as you see, Beta is the only sun in the sky." He smiled grimly. "Print that! There'll be no one to read it.

Nightfall Details

Date : Published September 1941

ISBN :

Author : Isaac Asimov

Format : 40 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Short Stories, Fiction

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From Reader Review Nightfall for online ebook

Mina Soare says

This story was written in answer to a quote attributed to poet Ralph Waldo Emerson:

*If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore,
and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God!*

Asimov disagrees.

Short and sweet, don't read after dark, strongly recommend.

Peter Tillman says

Online text: (may be temp copy)

<http://www.astro.sunysb.edu/fwalter/A...>

The Asimov classic. As others note, the original novelette is far suhd perior th the novelization. If you haven't read it, you should.

Times read: many, over the years. Not lately.

Jerry Jose says

[So imagine, how darkness and appearance of millions of stars in sky would affect the people, during the occurrence of an event like night. (hide spoiler)]

Maria João Fernandes says

Ao ler estes dois pequenos contos, que me deram a conhecer um vasto mundo tão real no seu surrealismo, senti como se tivesse lido um longo e detalhado romance, tal foi o poder do que as palavras me disseram.

"Os homens nasceram cegos para certas coisas."

Na primeira história, "O Mestiço", Asimov faz uma critica à nossa natureza humana que, inevitavelmente, exclui e repudia aqueles que são de natureza diferente. O conforto do que conhecemos vence sempre o mistério do desconhecido e mesmo que aqueles que se apresentem o façam com humildade e simpatia, nunca são bons o suficiente, porque não são iguais a nós. O racismo só existe no nosso mundo, porque ainda não fomos além dele, mas Asimov dá-mos uma visão bastante real do confronto com seres de outros mundos e as incontornáveis consequências da nossa presunção.

"Que tem a escuridão capaz de me enlouquecer?"

Num mundo aquecido e iluminado por seis sóis, o calor e a luz são imprescindíveis à sobrevivência. Isaac Asimov conta-nos uma história que tem lugar durante algumas horas, entre quatro paredes indefinidas. O fim do mundo está próximo e a concretização da profecia é aguardada com medo pelos que acreditam, com ansiedade pelos que se sentem divididos entre opiniões e com indiferença e humor pelos que na partilham da mesma fé. Seja qual for o prenúncio, haverão sempre dúvidas e, sendo ou não provada a veracidade da tese defendida, o que permanecerá para sempre são as consequências na alma e na mente.

Tom Van Boening says

Enjoyable. A cool concept of a night that only comes every 2000 years on a far away world.

Me thinks Pitch Black was inspired by this in some way.

I subtracted a star because I cannot believe that a world that far in the future would operate without artificial lights. Oh well. Minor problem in an otherwise classic story.

Simon says

This story is terrible in every way except for writing style. Implausible concept, characters colorless, too numerous, confusing beginning, too long. The idea behind it is neat, but meatless, and it just doesn't work. I expected much more of supposedly one of the greatest sci-fi stories ever by the famous Asimov. (included in the Science Fiction Hall of Fame Vol. 1, voted in by sci-fi writers)

spoilery discussion of the story concept:

so on a permanently lit planet with 6 stars, there's a total eclipse every 2050 years, when people go insane because they're afraid of the dark and they suddenly realize that there are all those stars in the sky, so they burn all houses to have some light and all culture resets in this endless cycle.

Really?

They have electricity and torches, so they should have more than enough means to prevent going crazy from darkness.

They know exactly what is going to happen, so they should be able to prepare for this darkness.

Some of the people should have the hint of reason not to go insane from an eclipse, preserving knowledge. Passing on knowledge should be an easy task anyways, unavoidable even. The idea is probably that all libraries would be burned, but there should be enough left to reconstruct the most important concepts.

Even if this concept worked, and i see the beauty and terror of all mankind experiencing night and a sky of stars for the first time, that wouldn't make too much of a story, and the events and characters built around the idea have no meat either.

There are some astronomers idling around without any motivation playing chess, because hey, it's just the end of the world, and some people discussing whether to publish a newspaper story about this. Okay, the idea of a cult integrating knowledge about the cycle into a holy text is neat, but that's about it. There are too many characters in the story that one can't place and that don't capture your interest.

Martin says

The long night had come again.

I am deeply impressed by this sci-fi short by Isaac Asimov from 1941.

Set in a world that is influenced by not one, but six suns, the people of Lagash only know eternal day. The sunlight never fades anywhere on the planet, since one of the six suns is always on the sky.

This had led to mankind evolving with an inherent fear of the dark. It is one of the most primal instincts that babies are born with on planet Lagash.

Theremon 762 is a journalist who investigates some outrageous rumors that are circulated by the scientists of Saro University. The institute's director, Aton 77, has declared that very soon, all six of the suns would vanish to bring darkness to Lagash - which is actually a prophecy that many cult leaders following the 'Book of Revelation' believe in.

The cultists claim that mankind will be wiped off the face of Lagash to repent for their sins. The Stars would bring darkness and fire and destroy society as people know it.

Theremon wonders why a renowned scientist would believe in such 'nonsense', but Aton and his staff inform Theremon that there is evidence of several civilizations that preceded the current society. An event that apparently occurs every 2000 years seems to have ended each of these civilization 'cycles' - and Aton believes to have found a scientific explanation for this fact.

And he knows that they have reached the end of another 2000 year cycle. Theremon learns that every 2000 years, there is a rare star constellation that only leaves one sun, Beta, a dim red dwarf, visible on the sky. And precisely when that happens, another planet comes between Lagash and Beta, leading to a solar eclipse that immerses all of Lagash into complete darkness.

Theremon still does not believe that a good half an hour of darkness would lead to the end of civilization, but the more the last of the suns vanishes, the more he feels the terror of darkness that no human on Lagash seems to be immune to.

(view spoiler)

Simply outstanding and an inspiration for many science fiction writers!

There even seems to be a novel that was based on this story and was apparently written with the approval of Isaac Asimov.

5 stars! And let's be grateful we are used to day AND night!

Uzma says

Now this is the story worth reading. It was one of the first books written by Asimov that I read. Even though Asimov is known for his science-fiction, I started with his mystery novels and I loved the way he wrote. So I

continued to hunt down anything he had written and I came across this in one of the anthologies that collected his short stories. I never looked back. This story is my favorite of his stand-alone short stories and I'll tell you why.

Asimov analyses our society in a way where science and religion and prophecies and the end-of-the-world are all connected and yet are at odds with each other, even though, it can be argued that they end up proving each other correct. All of current societies are also run similarly you could say. It's more social commentary for me than science fiction. It's an invitation to step out of our little minds and look at things from another angle.

A lot of people have a hard time with this story because they can't see the parallel with our world and they can't imagine a world so similar and yet so different from our own. A world so conditioned to one stimulus, that the loss of it could send an entire world into madness. What would be the parallel for our world I wonder. What would drive us to the point of insanity if taken away from us? What do we take for granted?

Catherine ? says

This was the kind of story that was bizarre and yet wholly believable. A science fiction classic.

Rhonda says

The thought of gazing upward to the stars driving any creature to complete madness is a difficult concept to fathom, nonetheless that's the driving force behind the story of Nightfall.

Picture a planet with six suns and no other way to light people's world. Every light they utilize, inside or out, comes from their suns. A few select scientist discovered there will be a total eclipse of all six suns and total darkness will ensue.

They're cognizant concerning the stars, though they're a bit shaky on what they may be. There are religious texts--thousands of years old-- explaining a well-known theory. The texts tell a tale of catastrophes that happened when the world turned to darkness at a previous time. People burned their cities to light their world and set themselves back to their own dark ages.

The primary component of the story presents dialog among a reporter and the scientist trying to record the event for future reference.

The dialog makes up 99% of the book, and the event of complete darkness occurs only on the last few pages. Asimov writes the amount of stars number 30,000 compared to the few thousand that inhabitants of Earth view during our nightly observations.

It's difficult to conceptualize the feelings except beauty from these pinpoints of lights, although to never observe a star and suddenly to be bombarded with thousands could jolt anyone's composure.

Even though the book feels especially long winded--the writing continues with Asimov's excellence and the story's interesting subject matter is definitely worth the reader's time.

This review is from my blog: <http://somanymbookssolittletime.blogs...>

Alexandre says

Gênio de Asimov em poucas páginas.

Já tinha ouvido muito sobre este conto e já imaginava que seria excepcional. E é.

E também é completamente diferente do que eu havia imaginado.

Não posso deixar de pensar sobre viver com receio e o que isso leva as pessoas a fazerem.

Se tem tempo de ler isso, tem tempo para ler o conto. Então vá e depois me agradeça.

Lucas Mota says

Um conto que faz jus a fama da Asimov: ficção científica com alto apelo filosófico.

Aqui a ciência e a fé debatem e se criticam mutuamente, enquanto buscam compreender o maior fenômeno natural de suas épocas: o sumiço dos seis sóis e o extermínio do dia de luz constante.

Não quero falar sobre o que há de melhor neste conto, já que isso seria um spoiler, mas o final é poderosamente crível. Nós, seres humanos, poderíamos facilmente protagonizar algo assim, se é que já não o fizemos.

Sérgio Gillet says

Incrível livro, que mistura conhecimento religioso e científico com um final surpreendente.

Elena B. says

"But if it turns out that four hours pass - and another four - and nothing happens?" asked Theremin softly. "Don't let that worry you. Enough will happen."

It would be hard to stand, I admit, because I'd have to make you all out to be a bunch of gibbering idiots, but if I can get people laughing at you, they might forget to be angry.

There just isn't any place in the universe you could put a million sun's - unless they touch one another.

Supposing you have an universe in which there was a planet with only one sun [...] "Of course," continued Beenay, "there's the catch that life would be impossible on such a planet. It wouldn't get enough heat and light, and if it rotated there would be total Darkness half of each day. You couldn't expect life - which is fundamentally dependent upon light - to develop under those conditions."

The long night had come again.

Jokoloyo says

Nightfall is one of my early reads in SF genre, and after all these years I can still feel the eerie feeling that I felt after read the last word of the story.

My rating could be bias for some people. As in other Asimov stories, we seek the gems in the ideas. So, if some people said the characterizations or plots of his works are not great, I can't disagree. But *Nightfall* has good world building and surprisingly better than average execution for Asimov's works. The execution successfully made me understood by heart (view spoiler)the story.

Majority of Asimov stories have interesting ideas and raised your interest, *Nightfall* could raised your interest and emotions.

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PS: the last paragraph is heavily influenced by Terence. I like his definition of Favorite books.
