

## Search by the Foundation, Part III



[Opening theme music with voiceovers.]

**Arkady Darell**

"Is it over?"

**Pappa**

"Over? Who said it was over? In war, a lot of things can happen."

**Lord Stettin**

"Speak, you gray slug, speak."

**First Minister Meirus**

"I have told you, often, that you are not the Mule."

**Pelleas Anthor**

"How do you know?"

**Dr. Toran Darell**

"It's easy. You see, I happen to know where the Second Foundation really is."

**Homir Munn**

"A circle has no end."

[Theme music plays out.]

## **Joel**

Before beginning this episode of Seldon Crisis, please be advised that this is an independently created podcast and is not meant to be a substitute for reading the books, nor is it affiliated with the family or estate of Isaac Asimov.

Welcome back, my friends, to a landmark episode of Seldon Crisis. We've been through 14 episodes now, covering most of the three classic volumes of the original Foundation trilogy. This 15th episode out of a total of 34, including all of our guest episodes and essays, will complete the great trilogy. By the end of this episode, we will know without any doubt where the Second Foundation has been residing.

In case anyone has forgotten, you've all read these books, right? In the past, I've noted how Asimov's stories seem to contract as we approach the ending, involving fewer characters and locations, resulting in a compression of the tension as well. This story is a little different in that we still have quite a few characters to meet, and the action covers three planets and an exciting space battle as well. Rather than narrowing down the scope of the mystery, it seems to continue expanding until the end. No single story contains nearly as many twists and turns as this one, and many of these have yet to occur.

I suppose a short recap of the events thus far is in order, but we have a lot of ground to cover, so I'm only going to summarize briefly. We began with the introduction of the central protagonist in the young and impetuous romantic arcadey, Darrell, her surprise visitor one night in her room on Terminus in Palaus Anthor, and a conspiratorial meeting between several notable figures in her home, including Anthor, her scientist father, Dr Darrell, a journalist named Joel Turbore, an elderly colleague of Darrell Elbert Semic, and the highstrung scholar of the Mule in Homirman. It

was determined to send Mun to Kalgan, the Mule's former stronghold, to find evidence of the Second Foundation, which several of the conspirators now suspected of nefarious intent. Mun takes off for Calian, unaware that he harbours a stowaway in the person of the unpredictable arcady, determined to find the adventure and excitement she seems to feel as her destiny in life.

The second episode was almost entirely spent on Calgan, and it was a whirlwind. First we encountered the master villain of the piece in Lord Stetin, the ambitious first citizen of Calgan, who clearly intends to follow in the Mule's footsteps as the ruler of the galaxy at the Foundation's expense. His mistress, Lady Calia, at first seems to be a muddleheaded sex pot subservient to his desires, but we discover that appearances can be deceiving as she is herself later to be revealed to be a member of the elusive Second Foundation. This fact is mysteriously discerned by Arcady, who is thrown into a panic at the realization and attempts to flee Kalgan.

### **Asimov**

Nevertheless, the date on which the Foundation cruiser, the Hober Mallow met the Kalganian squadron, headed by the Fearless, and, upon refusing to allow a search party to board, was blasted into smoldering wreckage was 185; 11692 G.E. That is, it was the 185th day of the 11,692nd year of the Galactic Era which dated from the accession of the first Emperor of the traditional Kamble dynasty. It was also 185; 419 A.S. - dating from the birth of Seldon - or 185; 348 Y.F. - dating from the establishment of the Foundation. On Kalgan it was 185; 56 F.C. - dating from the establishment of the First Citizenship by the Mule. In each case, of course, for convenience, the year was so arranged as to yield the same day number regardless of the actual day upon which the era began.

## Joel

To summarize roughly, the war began nearly 12 millennia after the empire was founded and 350 years after the Foundation was founded upon Terminus, and it has now been more than fifty years since the Mule began his meteoric reign over half of the galaxy beginning with his quick conquest of Kalgan. We have covered three and a half centuries of events in the three novels we have discussed thus far. We are, then, more than a third of the way through Hari Seldon's predicted thousand year interregnum between empires, presuming his plan still has any validity after the Mule upended all of his careful calculations.

There's a lot of ground to cover, so I'm going to briefly summarize a couple of scenes near the beginning and call out a couple of important items that will be brought into focus later. We start back on Terminus, but this time in the office of Dr. Darell's senior colleague, Elvett Semic. Darell is down in the dumps about Arkady's absence and his concern for her welfare and Semic urges him to do something about it, such as go to Kalgan and check on her. Darell declines, mentioning that he has important work to do on Terminus. He then explains that he needs Semic's expertise to build something called a Symes-Molff Resonator at miniature scale. Neither man reveals for what purpose exactly, but we know it must be important, and since Darell is preoccupied with the fight against the Second Foundation, it involves some apparatus that will aid in unmasking them in some way. While they are discussing this, they are joined by Peleas Anthor, this time accompanied by a police lieutenant from Kalgan named Dirige, who claims to be the last man to see Arkady. It turns out this is the same officer who accosted Pappa and Mamma at the spaceport and apparently accepted a bribe to allow her to board a vessel enroute with them to Trantor. Dirige explains that they were allowed to leave safely, but that the acceptance of the bribe was a ruse. He explains he knows about the couple, as the man is an agricultural trading representative and he can vouch for his honesty. Darell is relieved to learn that his daughter is safe,

and glad that she is far away from the potential dangers of Kalgan. Later that evening, Anthor and Darell discuss the state of affairs.

Anthor brings Darell up to speed on a number of items he has heard reported from Kalgan, including the surprising fact that Homir Munn was refused admission to the Mule's palace and this refusal was abrogated by Lady Callia's insistence after spending some time with Arkady. He then reveals that Lady Callia had apparently arranged for Arkady to leave the planet with the help of Dirige, who Anthor says is in the pay of the Foundation. Anthor further explains that this information came from Dirige's interrogation of Munn, but that there is one more important, and truly significant and troubling point. He has evidence, from an encephalographic examination of the police officer, that he is controlled by the Second Foundation! While they are speaking they receive yet another disturbing report via an emergency news bulletin. The wreck of the Hober Mallow has been found, with all hands lost. The war with Kalgan has begun. Anthor, like Semic, urges Darell to proceed to Kalgan since it seems clear now that the Second Foundation is operating there. Once again Darell refuses. In a following scene, Dr. Darell visits with the Mayor of Terminus City – the supreme leader of the Foundation – where they utilize a three dimensional map of the local sector of the galaxy and discuss the progress of the war. The Mayor is highly concerned about Stettin's capabilities and thinks things look quite grim. The map reveals that, while the Foundation controls more territory and effectively surrounds the space controlled by Kalgan, their inner lines of communication are much shorter and they can operate far more effectively. Darell is unconcerned, and explains that he is confident that the Second Foundation will not allow such a significant deviation from Hari Seldon's Plan. The Mayor is doubtful, reminding him of the terrible history of relying upon Seldon on the occasion of the Mule's victorious campaign to defeat the Foundation. Darell explains that Stettin is not the Mule, and his investigations have

revealed the active machinations of the Second Foundation behind the scenes, and is confident Kalgan will ultimately lose.

Let me pause to consider current events for a moment. At the time of my writing of this script, a terrible war is in progress in Ukraine which is ever on my mind of late. It actually began with a similar state of affairs to what the Mayor describes, but with Ukraine in the position of the defending force of Kalgan and the Foundation like that of the Russian invaders. The aggressors had amassed a significant numerical superiority of forces surrounding their victim and felt extremely confident in their ultimate victory. Events have revealed since, however, that Ukraine's shorter lines of communication and mobility have enabled them to regain the offensive in the current state of battle. Unlike the Kalganian situation, however, the aggressive force is that of the surrounding Russian army, with Vladimir Putin being the Lord Stettin in our current reality, determined to regain past glories for Russia at the expense of his neighbor. It's almost as if Putin is counting on some mystical force like that of the Second Foundation – Russia's inevitable historical destiny – to prevail against a better situated opponent which has greater technological resources at their disposal. But our reality is not directly relevant to our story, so let us return to the distant realms in space and time described by Asimov. Our next scene takes us to back to Kalgan, where Lord Stettin and his ministers examine a similar projection to that utilized by his opponents upon Terminus. The First Citizen is in a far more expansive mood than the Foundation's leader.

## **Lord Stettin**

I think the decisions are clear. We can afford to wait. To them, every day of delay will be another blow at their morale. If they attempt to defend all portions of their realm, they will be spread thin and we can strike through in two simultaneous thrusts here and here. In such a manner, we cut their fleet into three parts which can be defeated in detail. If they concentrate, they give up two-thirds of their dominions voluntarily and will probably risk rebellion.

## **Joel**

First Minister Meirus stood by with a graver countenance. He understood it was his unpleasant duty to resist the temptation to blandly agree with his lord's eager optimism.

## **First Minister Meirus**

In six months, the Foundation will grow six months stronger. Their resources are greater, as we all know; their navy is numerically stronger; their manpower is virtually inexhaustible. Perhaps a quick thrust would be safer.

## **Stettin**

The six months—or a year, if necessary—will cost us nothing. The men of the Foundation cannot prepare; they are ideologically incapable of it. It is in their very philosophy to believe that the Second Foundation will save them. But not this time, eh?

## **Joel**

Stettin scanned the faces of the other advisors present and none dared disagree with their master. He turned his attention back to the man who dared to betray some concern.

## **Stettin**

You lack confidence, I believe. Is it necessary once again to describe the reports of our agents in Foundation territory, or to repeat the findings of Mr. Homir Munn, the Foundation agent now in our . . . uh . . . service? Let us adjourn, gentlemen.

## **Joel**

Now we visit our Third World in this story. The great and glorious metallic city of Trantor, once the master of an entire galaxy and now in ruins. I'll let Asimov describe it for us.

## **Asimov**

Trantor was a world in dregs and rebirth set like a faded jewel in the midst of the bewildering crowd of suns at the center of the galaxy. In the heaps and clusters of stars piled high with aimless prodigality it alternately dreamed of past and future. Time had been when the insubstantial ribbons of control had stretched out from its metal coating to the very edges of stardom.

It had been a single city housing 400 billion administrators. The mightiest capital that had ever been until the decay of the empire eventually reached it. And in the great sack of a century ago its drooping powers had been bent back upon themselves and broken forever in the blasting ruin of death. The metal shell that circled the planet wrinkled and crumpled into an aching mock of its own grandeur. The survivors tore up the metal plating and sold it to other planets for seed and cattle. The soil was uncovered once more and the planet returned to its beginnings in the spreading areas of primitive agriculture.

It forgot its intricate and colossal past, or would have, but for the still mighty shards that heaped their massive ruins toward the sky in bitter and dignified silence.



**Pappa**

It's thousands of miles, Arkady, and there's so much to do here. Besides, it's not good to bother there. You know; it's a shrine.

**Joel**

Later we find the old trader at breakfast with his wife.

**Pappa**

I was down in the city yesterday, Mamma.

**Mamma**

And what is down in the city, Pappa?

**Joel**

Pappa describes the news he's picked up.

**Pappa**

Ah, not so good. A ship came in from out Kalgan way with newspapers from there. It's war there.

**Mamma**

War! So! Well, let them break their heads, if they have no more sense inside. Did your paycheck come yet? Pappa, I'm telling you again. You warn old man Cosker this isn't the only co-operative in the world. It's bad enough they pay you what I'm ashamed to tell my friends, but at least on time they could be!

**Pappa**

Time; shmime. Look, don't make me silly talk at breakfast, it should choke me each bite in the throat. The fighting is between Kalgan and the Foundation, and for two months, they've been at it.

**Mamma**

Um-m-m. And what's doing?

**Pappa**

Bad for the Foundation. Well, you saw Kalgan; all soldiers. They were ready. The Foundation was not, and so—poof!

**Joel**

Mamma suddenly scowls at her husband, looking past him.

**Mamma**

Fool!

**Pappa**

Huh?

**Mamma**

Dumb-head! Your big mouth is always moving and wagging.

**Joel**

She points to Arkady, standing in the doorway where she's been overhearing the conversation.

**Arkady Darell**

The Foundation. Is it war?

**Joel**

Papa and Mama exchanged glances and nod helplessly.

**Arkady**

And they're losing?

**Joel**

Again they both nod sadly.

**Arkady**

Is it over?

**Pappa**

Over? Who said it was over? In war a lot of things can happen. And... and—

**Mamma**

Sit down, darling. No one should talk before breakfast. You're not in a healthy condition with no food in the stomach.

**Joel**

Arkady resists Mamma's desire to change the subject.

**Arkady**

Are the Kalganians on Terminus?

**Pappa**

No. The news is from last week, and Terminus is still fighting. This is honest. I'm telling the truth. And the Foundation is still strong. Do you want me to get you the newspapers?

**Arkady**

Yes!

**Joel**

Later, Arkady finds Pappa alone and convinces him that it might help the cause – and be profitable for him – if he were to go on a trading mission with food for Terminus. Pappa looks thoughtful, and agrees with her that it might work. It would be risky, but he could probably get through if he was careful. Two weeks later it is all set. Mama is beside herself in fury and especially because he plans to make the trip alone.

**Pappa**

Mamma, why do you act like an old lady? I can't take you. It's a man's work. What do you think a war is? Fun? Child's play?

**Mamma**

Then why do you go? Are you a man, you old fool—with a leg and half an arm in the grave? Let some of the young ones go—not a fat bald-head like you.

**Pappa**

I'm not a bald-head. I got yet lots of hair. And why should it not be me that gets the commission? Why a young fellow? Listen, this could mean millions.

**Joel**

Just before he departs, Arkady finds him alone and asks a personal favor.

**Arkady**

If you're going to Terminus, could you... would you see my father?

**Pappa**

Oh—and I have to wait for you to tell me. Sure, I'll see him. I'll tell him you're safe and everything's O.K., and when the war is over, I'll bring you back.

**Joel**

Arkady gives him directions on how to find Dr. Darell, but hesitates before leaving.

**Arkady Darell**

One other thing.

**Pappa**

Yes?

**Arkady**

Would you tell him something from me?

**Pappa**

Sure.

**Arkady**

I want to whisper it to you.

**Joel**

She quietly speaks a few words only he can hear. Papa appears startled.

**Pappa**

That's what you want me to say? But it doesn't make sense.

**Arkady**

He'll know what you mean. Just say I sent it and that I said that he would know what it means. And you say it exactly the way I told you. No different. You won't forget it?

**Pappa**

How can I forget it? Five little words. Look—

**Arkady**

No, don't repeat it. Don't ever repeat it to anyone. Forget all about it, except to my father. Promise me.

**Pappa**

I promise. All right.

**Joel**

Asimov closes the scene.

**Asimov**

"As he passed down the drive to where the air-taxi waited to take him to the spaceport, she wondered if she had signed his death warrant. She wondered if she would ever see him again. She scarcely dared to walk into the house again to face the good, kind Mamma. Maybe when it was all over, she had better kill herself for what she had done to them."

**Joel**

Six months have passed, and the state of the war is now clearly favoring the foundation with their forces, quote, "almost as strong numerically, and stronger technically," than when it began.

Deep in space aboard a Foundation warship, our old friend Jole Turbor, now a war correspondent, is interviewing Fennel Leemor, Engineer Third Class.

**Jole Turbor**

All right, suppose you tell us then. You're a volunteer, aren't you?

**Joel**

The soldier answers with a ready grin.

**Fennel Leemor**

Sure am. If anyone picks a fight with me, I don't have to wait for anyone to drag me in. I joined up the day I heard about the Hober Mallow.

**Turbor**

That's a fine spirit. Have you seen much action? I notice you're wearing two battle stars.

**Leemor**

Those weren't battles. They were chases. The Kalganians don't fight, unless they have odds of five to one or better in their favor. Even then they just edge in and try to cut us up ship by ship. Cousin of mine was at Ifni and he was on a ship that got away, the old Ebling Mis. He says it was the same there. They had their Main Fleet against just a wing division of ours, and down to where we only had five ships left, they kept stalking instead of fighting. We got twice as many of their ships at that fight.

**Turbor**

Then you think we're going to win the war?

**Leemor**

Sure bet; now that we aren't retreating. Even if things got too bad, that's when I'd expect the Second Foundation to step in. We still got the Seldon Plan - and they know it, too.

**Turbor**

You're counting on the Second Foundation, then?

**Leemor**

Well, doesn't everyone?

**Joel**

Turbor's interview is interrupted by the news that a supposed spy has been picked up – an unimposing character named Preem Palver, claiming to be a trader from Trantor. Turbor recognizes the name and claims to know him and says that he will take responsibility for him and that he wishes to interview him. Meanwhile, on the bridge of the vessel, the ship's Captain tensely observes the state of battle. As Asimov describes.

**Asimov**

Captain Dixyl on the flagship of the Third Fleet watched unremittingly at the Grand Detector. No ship could avoid being a source of nuclear radiation—not even if it were lying an inert mass—and each focal point of such radiation was a little sparkle in the three-dimensional field. Each one of the Foundation's ships were accounted for and no sparkle was left over, now that the little spy who claimed to be a neutral had been picked up. For a while, that outside ship had created a stir in the captain's quarters. The tactics might have needed changing on short notice.

**Joel**

Dixyl turns to another officer, a Commander Cenn.

**Captain Dixyl**

Are you sure you have it?

**Joel**

Cenn responds sharply.



**Commander Cenn**

I will take my squadron through hyperspace: radius, 10.00 parsecs; theta, 268.52 degrees; phi, 84.15 degrees. Return to origin at 1330. Total absence 11.83 hours.

**Dixyl**

Right. Now we are going to count on pinpoint return as regards both space and time. Understand?

**Cenn**

Yes, captain. My ships will be ready by 0140.

**Dixyl**

Good.

**Joel**

Asimov,

**Asimov**

The Kalganian squadron was not within detector range now, but they would be soon. There was independent information to that effect. Without Cenn's squadron the Foundation forces would be badly outnumbered, but the captain was quite confident. Quite confident.

**Joel**

Elsewhere on board, Turbor now has his interview with the trader identified as Preem Palver.

**Turbor**

Quickly—what is the name of the girl you abducted?

**Joel**

The man suspected of being a spy stared blankly.

**Turbor**

No nonsense. If you do not answer, you will be a spy and spies are blasted without trial in wartime.

**Joel**

That got Palver's attention.

**Palver**

Arcadia Darell!

**Turbor**

Well! All right, then. Is she safe?

**Joel**

Palver nods in agreement.

**Turbor**

You would better be sure of that, or it won't be well for you.

**Palver**

She is in good health, perfectly safe.

## **Joel**

Moments later he reports to the bridge that Palver is not a spy and that he represents an agricultural co-operative on Trantor that wants to make a trade treaty with Terminus for the delivery of grains and potatoes. He's informed that, pending the outcome of the imminent battle, he will be delivered to his destination. The Captain is focused on new developments, described by Asimov.

## **Asimov**

The Kalganian fleet that spanned through space detected the Foundation ships from an incredible distance and were themselves detected. Like little fireflies in each other's Grand Detectors, they closed in across the emptiness. The Foundation ships were drifting forward again—very slowly. Not quick enough to urge a Kalganian retreat and just quickly enough to discourage a Kalganian advance. They preferred to wait, and the minutes passed. At 1325, the admiral's buzzer sounded in 75 ships of the Foundation's line, and they build up to a maximum acceleration toward the front plane of the Kalganian fleet itself. 300 strong Kalganian shields flared into action and the vast energy beams flicked out, every one of the 300 concentrated in the same direction toward their mad attackers, who bore down relentlessly, uncaringly. And at 1330, 50 ships under Commander Cenn appeared from nowhere in one single bound through hyperspace to a calculated spot at a calculated time and were spaced in tearing fury at the unprepared Kalganian rear.

The trap worked perfectly. The Kalganians still had numbers on their side but they were in no mood to count. Their first effort was to escape and the formation, once broken, was only the more vulnerable as the enemy ships bumped into one another's path. After a while, it took on the proportions of a rat hunt. Of 300 Kalganian ships, the core and pride of their fleet, some 60 or less, many in a state of near hopeless disrepair, reached Kalgan once

more. The Foundation loss was eight ships out of a total of 125. It was the third day of the new year of 377.

**Joel**

Back on Kalgan, the news had penetrated quickly to Lord Stettin's chambers, where the would be emperor of the galaxy raged helplessly before Meirus.

**Stettin**

Well? Contribute something. We stand here defeated, do you understand? Defeated! And why? I don't know why. There you have it. I don't know why. Do you know why?

**Meirus**

I think so.

**Stettin**

Treason! You've known of treason, and you've kept quiet. You served the fool I ejected from the First Citizenship and you think you can serve whatever foul rat replaces me. If you have acted so, I will extract your entrails for it and burn them before your living eyes.

**Meirus**

I have tried to fill you with my own doubts, not once, but many times. I have dinned it in your ears and you have preferred the advice of others because it stuffed your ego better. Matters have turned out not as I feared, but even worse. If you do not care to listen now, say so, sir, and I shall leave, and, in due course, deal with your successor, whose first act, no doubt, will be to sign a treaty of peace.

**Stettin**

Speak, you gray slug, speak.

## **Meirus**

I have told you often, sir, that you are not the Mule. You may control ships and guns but you cannot control the minds of your subjects. Are you aware, sir, of who it is you are fighting? You fight the Foundation, which is never defeated—the Foundation, which is protected by the Seldon Plan—the Foundation, which is destined to form a new Empire.

## **Stettin**

There is no Plan. No longer. Munn has said so.

## **Meirus**

Then Munn is wrong. And if he were right, what then? You and I, sir, are not the people. The men and women of Kalgan and its subject worlds believe utterly and deeply in the Seldon Plan, as do all the inhabitants of this end of the Galaxy. Nearly four hundred years of history teach the fact that the Foundation cannot be beaten. Neither the kingdoms nor the warlords nor the old Galactic Empire itself could do it. The Mule did it. Exactly, and he was beyond calculation—and you are not. What is worse, the people know that you are not. So your ships go into battle fearing defeat in some unknown way. The insubstantial fabric of the Plan hangs over them so that they are cautious and look before they attack and wonder a little too much. While on the other side, that same insubstantial fabric fills the enemy with confidence, removes fear, maintains morale in the face of early defeats. Why not? The Foundation has always been defeated at first and has always won in the end. And your own morale, sir?

You stand everywhere on enemy territory. Your own dominions have not been invaded; are still not in danger of invasion—yet you are defeated. You don't believe in the possibility, even, of victory, because you know there is none. Stoop, then, or you will be beaten to your knees. Stoop voluntarily, and you may save a remnant. You have depended on metal and power and they have sustained you as far as they could. You have ignored mind

and morale and they have failed you. Now, take my advice. You have the Foundation man, Homir Munn. Release him. Send him back to Terminus and he will carry your peace offers.

### **Joel**

Weeks later, Homir Munn has returned to Terminus in his new role of Mediator Extraordinary, and has been instrumental in bringing the war to a close. He has arrived for a visit with Dr. Darell and the other three conspirators from our first scene. Jole Turbor was the first to congratulate him and welcome him home.

### **Turbor**

Well, Homir, you are a man of affairs now, I see. You handled matters well.

### **Homir Munn**

I? I hadn't a thing to do with it. It was Arcadia. By the by, Darell, how is she? She's coming back from Trantor, I heard?

### **Joel**

Darrell smiled widely.

### **Darell**

You heard correctly. Her ship should dock within the week.

### **Turbor**

Then it's over, really. Who would have predicted all this last spring? Munn's been to Kalgan and back. Arcadia's been to Kalgan and Trantor and is coming back. We've had a war and won it, by Space. They tell you that the vast sweeps of history can be predicted, but doesn't it seem conceivable that all that has just happened, with its absolute confusion to those of us who lived through it, couldn't possibly have been predicted?

**Joel**

But one of their number was not ready to join in the celebration. Peleas  
Anthr interjected,

**Anthr**

Nonsense. What makes you so triumphant, anyway? You talk as though  
we have really won a war, when actually we have won nothing but a petty  
brawl which has served only to distract our minds from the real enemy.

**Joel**

Anthr notices a slight smile on Munn and elaborates on his complaint.

**Anthr**

Yes, I refer to the Second Foundation. There is no mention of it and,  
if I judge correctly, every effort to have no thought of it. Is it because  
the fallacious atmosphere of victory that palls over this world of idiots is  
so attractive that you feel you must participate? Turn somersaults then,  
handspring your way into a wall, pound one another's back and throw  
confetti out the window. Do whatever you please, only get it out of your  
system—and when you are quite done and you are yourselves again, return  
and let us discuss that problem which exists now precisely as it did last  
spring when you sat here with eyes cocked over your shoulders for fear  
of you knew not what. Do you really think that the Mind-masters of the  
Second Foundation are less to be feared because you have beat down a  
foolish wielder of spaceships?

**Munn**

Will you hear me speak now, Anthr? Or do you prefer to continue your  
role as a ranting conspirator?

**Darell**

Have your say, Homer, but let all of us refrain from over picturesqueness of language. It's a very good thing in its place, but at present it bores me.

**Munn**

I was sent to Kalgan to find out what I could from the records contained in the Mule's palace. I spent several months doing so. I seek no credit for that accomplishment. As I have indicated, it was Arcadia whose ingenuous intermeddling obtained the entry for me. Nevertheless, the fact remains that to my original knowledge of the Mule's life and times, which, I submit, was not small, I have added the fruits of much labor among primary evidence which has been available to no one else. I am, therefore, in a unique position to estimate the true danger of the Second Foundation; much more so than is our excitable friend here.

**Anthor**

And what is your estimate of that danger?

**Munn**

Why, zero.

**Joel**

Elvett Semic is startled.

**Semic**

You mean zero danger?

**Munn**

Certainly. Friends, there is no Second Foundation! [pause] And what is more, there was never one.



**Joel**

Munn goes on to explain that his studies of the Mule have revealed that it was poor physique and mortality that ended his search for the Second Foundation, which was more than thorough enough to find them if they had existed.

**Munn**

Knowing little of mental science, we blame anything we don't know on supermen—those of the Second Foundation in this case, based on the hint thrown us by Seldon.

**Joel**

Author responds with heavy sarcasm.

**Author**

Oh, then you do remember Seldon. I thought you had forgotten. Seldon did say there was a Second Foundation. Get that in focus.

**Munn**

And are you aware then of all Seldon's purposes? Do you know what necessities were involved in his calculations? The Second Foundation may have been a very necessary scarecrow, with a highly specific end in view. How did we defeat Kalgan, for instance? What were you saying in your last series of articles, Turbor?

**Turbor**

Yes, I see what you're driving at. I was on Kalgan toward the end, Darell, and it was quite obvious that morale on the planet was incredibly bad. I looked through their newsrecords and—well, they expected to be beaten. Actually, they were completely unmanned by the thought that eventually the Second Foundation would take a hand, on the side of the First, naturally.

**Munn**

Quite right, I was there all through the war. I told Stettin there was no Second Foundation and he believed me. He felt safe. But there was no way of making the people suddenly disbelieve what they had believed all their lives, so that the myth eventually served a very useful purpose in Seldon's cosmic chess game.

**Joel**

But Anthor shows no indication of being swayed by Munn's argument and leaps to his feet and points at the librarian in fury.

**Anthor**

I say, you lie!

**Munn**

I don't see that I have to accept, much less answer, an accusation of that nature.

**Anthor**

I say it without any intention of personal offense. You cannot help lying; you don't realize that you are. But you lie just the same.

**Semic**

Take a breath, young fella.

**Author**

I'm out of patience with all of you. I haven't seen this man more than half a dozen times in my life, yet I find the change in him unbelievable. The rest of you have known him for years, yet pass it by. It is enough to drive one mad. Do you call this man you've been listening to Homir Munn? He is not the Homir Munn I knew.

**Munn**

You claim me to be an impostor?

**Author**

Perhaps not in the ordinary sense, but an imposter nonetheless. Quiet, everyone! I demand to be heard.

Do any of you remember Homir Munn as I do—the introverted librarian who never talked without obvious embarrassment; the man of tense and nervous voice, who stuttered out his uncertain sentences? Does this man sound like him? He's fluent, he's confident, he's full of theories, and, by Space, he doesn't stutter. Is he the same person? Shall we test him?

**Joel**

Munn insists he is the man he always was and submits readily to be tested by encephalographic analysis. After some argument, it is decided that all should be tested. One by one each is tested and their patterns show no evidence of the tamper plateau. Munn is the last to be tested. Upon completion of the scan, the results are checked by Darell and Author.

Author comments sarcastically.

**Author**

Sure, sure, it's only the onset of a complex. Isn't that what he told us? No such thing as tampering; it's all a silly anthropomorphic notion—but look at it! A coincidence, I suppose.

**Munn**

What's the matter!

**Joel**

Darrell breaks the news to him gently.

**Munn**

Quiet, Munn. You've been handled. You've been adjusted by them.

You can't be serious, surely. There is a purpose to this. You're testing me!

**Darell**

No. No, Homer. It's true.

**Munn**

I don't feel any different. I can't believe it. You are all in this. It's a conspiracy. You're planning to kill me. By space, you're planning to kill me!

**Joel**

As Asimov describes. "With a lunge, Anthor was upon him. There was the sharp crack of bone against bone, and Homir was limp and flaccid with that look of fear frozen on his face."

Turbor is the first to speak.

**Turbor**

How did you guess there was something wrong with him?

**Joel**

Author responds,

**Author**

You see, I happen to know where the Second Foundation really is.

**Joel**

Semic, mildly concerned, asks,

**Semic**

Are you sure? I mean, we've just gone through this sort of business with Munn.

**Author**

This isn't quite the same.

Darell, the day the war started, I spoke to you most seriously. I tried to have you leave Terminus. I would have told you then what I will tell you now, if I had been able to trust you.

**Darell**

You mean you have known the answer for half a year?

**Author**

I have known it from the time I learned that Arcadia had left for Trantor.

**Darell**

What had Arcadia to do with it? What are you implying?

**Author**

Absolutely nothing that is not plain on the face of all the events we know so well. Arcadia goes to Kalgan and flees in terror to the traditional center of the Galaxy, rather than return home. Lieutenant Dirige, our best agent on Kalgan, is tampered with. Homir Munn goes to Kalgan and he is tampered with. The Mule conquered the Galaxy, but, queerly enough, he made Kalgan his headquarters, and it occurs to me to wonder if he was conqueror or, perhaps, tool.

At every turn, we meet with Kalgan, Kalgan—nothing but Kalgan, the world that somehow survived untouched all the struggles of the warlords for over a century.

**Darell**

Your conclusion then?

**Author**

Is obvious. The Second Foundation is on Kalgan!

**Joel**

Turbor raises a hand to object.

**Turbor**

I was on Kalgan, Anthor. I was there last week. If there was any Second Foundation on it, I'm mad. Personally, I think you're mad.

**Author**

Then you're a fat fool. What do you expect the Second Foundation to be? A grammar school? Do you think that Radiant Fields in tight beams spell out 'Second Foundation' in green and purple along the incoming spaceship routes? Listen to me, Turbor. Wherever they are, they form a tight oligarchy. They must be as well hidden on the world on which they exist, as the world itself is in the Galaxy as a whole.

**Joel**

Turbor scowls.

**Turbor**

I don't like your attitude, Author.

**Author**

That certainly disturbs me. Take a look about you here on Terminus. We're at the center—the core—the origin of the First Foundation with all its knowledge of physical science. Well, how many of the population are physical scientists? Can you operate an Energy Transmitting Station? What do you know of the operation of a hypernuclear motor? Eh? The number of real scientists on Terminus—even on Terminus—can be numbered at less than one percent of the population.

And what then of the Second Foundation where secrecy must be preserved. There will still be less of the cognoscenti, and these will be hidden even from their own world.

**Semic**

Say— we just licked Kalgan—

**Author**

So we did. So we did. Oh, we celebrate that victory. The cities are still illuminated; they are still shooting off fireworks; they are still shouting over the televisions. But now, now, when the search is on once more for the Second Foundation, where is the last place we'll look; where is the last place anyone will look? Right? Kalgan!

We haven't hurt them, you know; not really. We've destroyed some ships, killed a few thousands, torn away their Empire, taken over some of their commercial and economic power—but that all means nothing. I'll wager that not one member of the real ruling class of Kalgan is in the least discomfited. On the contrary, they are now safe from curiosity. But not from my curiosity. What do you say, Darell?

**Darell**

Interesting. I'm trying to fit it in with a message I received from Arcadia two months ago.

**Author**

Oh, a message? And what was it?

**Darell**

Well, I'm not certain. Five short words, but it's interesting.

**Joel**

Semic looks thoughtful.

**Semic**

Look, there's something I don't understand.



**Darell**

What's that, Elvett?

**Semic**

Well, now, Homir Munn was saying just a while ago that Hari Seldon was faking when he said that he had established a Second Foundation. Now you're saying that it's not so; that Seldon wasn't faking, eh?

**Darell**

Right, he wasn't faking. Seldon said he had established a Second Foundation and so he had.

**Semic**

All right, then, but he said something else, too. He said he established the two Foundations at opposite ends of the Galaxy. Now, young man, was that a fake—because Kalgan isn't at the opposite end of the Galaxy.

**Joel**

Author proceeds brusquely.

**Author**

That's a minor point. That part may well have been a cover-up to protect them. But after all, think— What real use would it serve to have the Mind-masters at the opposite end of the Galaxy? What is their function? To help preserve the Plan. Who are the main card players of the Plan? We, the First Foundation. Where can they best observe us, then, and serve their own ends? At the opposite end of the Galaxy? Ridiculous! They're reasonably close, actually, and that is much more sensible.

**Darell**

I like that argument. It makes sense. Look here, Munn's been conscious for some time and I propose we loosen him. He can't do any harm, really.

**Joel**

Anthor looks dubious, but Homir is nodding vigorously. Five seconds later he is rubbing his wrists just as vigorously.

**Darell**

How do you feel, Homir?

**Munn**

Rotten, but never mind. There's something I want to ask this bright young thing here. I've heard what he's had to say, and I'd just like permission to wonder what we do next. Well, suppose Kalgan is the Second Foundation. Who on Kalgan are they? How are you going to find them? How are you going to tackle them if you find them, eh?

**Darell**

Ah, I can answer that, strangely enough. Shall I tell you what Semic and I have been doing this past half-year?

**Joel**

Darell goes on to describe how he and Semic had engaged in intensive research to find a way to go beyond the technology previously described and utilized to identify persons controlled by the Second Foundation. They had eventually succeeded in creating a technology to shield minds from control through the propagation of fields of mental static; sort of a mentalic control jamming field, undetectable by those attempting to do the controlling.

**Darell**

The device is a fairly easy one to produce, and I had all the resources of the Foundation under my control as it came under the heading of war research. And now the mayor's offices and the Legislative assemblies are surrounded with Mental Static. So are most of our key factories. So is this building. They are now somewhat obscured. Eventually, any place we wish can be made absolutely safe from the Second Foundation or from any future Mule. And that's it.

**Joel**

Turbor, with a sigh of relief.

**Turbor**

Then it's all over. Great Seldon. It's all over.

**Darell**

Well, not exactly.

**Turbor**

Is there something more?

**Darell**

Yes. We haven't located the Second Foundation yet.

**Author**

What? Are you trying to say...

**Darell**

Yes, I am. Kalgan is not the Second Foundation.

**Author**

How do you know?

**Darell**

It's easy. You see, I happen to know where the Second Foundation really is.

**Joel**

Turbor laughs.

**Turbor**

Great Galaxy, this goes on all night. One after another, we put up our straw men to be knocked down. We have fun, but we don't get anywhere. Space! Maybe all planets are the Second Foundation. Maybe they have no planet, just key men spread on all the planets. And what does it matter, since Darell says we have the perfect defense?

**Darell**

The perfect defense is not enough, Turbor. My Mental Static device is far from perfect, and even if it were, it is only something that keeps us in the same place. We cannot remain forever with our fists doubled, frantically staring in all directions for the unknown enemy. We must know not only how to win, but whom to defeat. And there is a specific world on which the enemy exists.

**Author**

Get to the point. What's your information?

**Darell**

Arcadia sent me a message, and until I got it, I never saw the obvious. I probably would never have seen the obvious. Yet it was a simple message that went: 'A circle has no end.' Do you see?

**Author**

No.

**Munn**

A circle has no end.

**Joel**

Darell continues.

**Darell**

Well, it was clear to me. What is the one absolute fact we know about the Second Foundation, eh? I'll tell you! We know that Hari Seldon located it at the opposite end of the Galaxy. Homir Munn theorized that Seldon lied about the existence of the Foundation. Pelleas Anthor theorized that Seldon had told the truth that far, but lied about the location of the Foundation. But I tell you that Hari Seldon lied in no particular; that he told the absolute truth.

But, what is the other end? The Galaxy is a flat, lens-shaped object. A cross section along the flatness of it is a circle, and a circle has no end—as Arcadia realized. We—we, the First Foundation—are located on Terminus at the rim of that circle. We are at an end of the Galaxy, by definition. Now follow the rim of that circle and find the other end. Follow it, follow it, follow it, and you will find no other end. You will merely come back to your starting point—

And there you will find the Second Foundation.

**Author**

There?

**Joel**

Author asks.

**Author**

Do you mean here?

**Darell**

Yes, I mean here! Why, where else could it possibly be? You said yourself that if the Second Foundationers were the guardians of the Seldon Plan, it was unlikely that they could be located at the so-called other end of the Galaxy, where they would be as isolated as they could conceivably be. You thought that Kalgan's distance was more sensible. I tell you that that is also too far. No distance at all is most sensible. And where would they be safest? Who would look for them here? It's the old principle of the most obvious place being the least suspicious.

Why was poor Ebling Mis so surprised and unmanned by his discovery of the location of the Second Foundation? There he was, looking for it desperately in order to warn it of the coming of the Mule, only to find that the Mule had already captured both Foundations at a stroke. And why did the Mule himself fail in his search? Why not? If one is searching for an unconquerable menace, one would scarcely look among the enemies already conquered. So the Mind-masters, in their own leisurely time, could lay their plans to stop the Mule, and succeeded in stopping him.

Oh, it is maddeningly simple. For here we are with our plots and our schemes, thinking that we are keeping our secrecy—when all the time we are in the very heart and core of our enemy's stronghold. It's humorous.

**Joel**

Author is clearly unpersuaded.

**Author**

You honestly believe this theory, Dr. Darell?

**Darell**

I honestly believe it.

**Author**

Then any of our neighbors, any man we pass on the street might be a second foundation superman with his mind watching yours and feeling the pulse of its thoughts.

**Darell**

Exactly.

**Author**

And we have been permitted to proceed all this time without molestation?

**Darell**

Without molestation? Who told you we were not molested? You, yourself, showed that Munn has been tampered with. What makes you think that we sent him to Kalgan in the first place entirely of our own volition—or that Arcadia overheard us and followed him on her own volition?

Hah! We have been molested without pause, probably. And after all, why should they do more than they have? It is far more to their benefit to mislead us, than merely to stop us.

**Author**

Well, then, I don't like it. Your Mental Static isn't worth a thought. We can't stay in the house forever and as soon as we leave, we're lost, with what we now think we know. Unless you can build a little machine for every inhabitant in the Galaxy.

**Darell**

Yes, but we're not quite helpless, Author. These men of the Second Foundation have a special sense which we lack. It is their strength and also their weakness. For instance, is there any weapon of attack that will be effective against a normal, sighted man which is useless against a blind man?

**Joel**

The others appear confused, but Munn points out that a strong light in the eyes would do the trick

**Darell**

Exactly. A good, strong blinding light.

**Joel**

Turbor asks Darell what this has to do with the issue at hand.



**Darell**

But the analogy is clear. I have a Mind Static device. It sets up an artificial electromagnetic pattern, which to the mind of a man of the Second Foundation would be like a beam of light to us. But the Mind Static device is kaleidoscopic. It shifts quickly and continuously, faster than the receiving mind can follow. All right, then, consider it a flickering light; the kind that would give you a headache, if continued long enough. Now intensify that light or that electromagnetic field until it is blinding—and it will become a pain, an unendurable pain. But only to those with the proper sense; not to the unsensed.

**Joel**

Author is intrigued.

**Author**

Really? Have you tried this?

**Darell**

On whom? Of course, I haven't tried it. But it will work.

**Author**

Well, where do you have the controls for the field that surrounds the house? I'd like to see this thing.

**Darell**

Here.

**Joel**

He reaches into his pocket and tosses a black, knob-studded cylinder to Author.

**Author**

It doesn't make me any smarter to look at it. Look, Darell, what mustn't I touch? I don't want to turn off the house defense by accident, you know.

**Darell**

You won't. That control is locked in place.

**Author**

And what's this knob?

**Darell**

That one varies rate of shift of pattern. Here—this one varies the intensity. It's that which I've been referring to.

**Author**

May I?

**Darell**

Why not? It won't affect us.

**Joel**

Asimov describes the younger man's action.

**Asimov**

Slowly, almost wincingly, Anthor turned the knob, first in one direction, then in another. Turbor was gritting his teeth, while Munn blinked his eyes rapidly. It was as though they were keening their inadequate sensory equipment to locate this impulse which could not affect them.

**Joel**

Finally, Anthor shrugs and tosses the control box back into Darell's lap.

**Author**

Well, I suppose we can take your word for it. But it's certainly hard to imagine that anything was happening when I turned the knob.

**Darell**

But naturally, Pelleas Author. The one I gave you was a dummy. You see, I have another.

**Joel**

And in the next moment he pulled a device identical in appearance from another pocket and turned the intensity dial to the maximum. In Asimov's words.

**Asimov**

"With an unearthly shriek, Pelleas Author sank to the floor. He rolled in his agony; whitened, gripping fingers clutching and tearing futilely at his hair. Munn lifted his feet hastily to prevent contact with the squirming body, and his eyes were twin depths of horror. Semic and Turbor were a pair of plaster casts; stiff and white. Darell, somber, turned the knob back once more. And Author twitched feebly once or twice and lay still. He was alive. His breath racking his body."

**Joel**

Arcady

**Darell**

Arcadia, what made you decide that Terminus contained both Foundations?

**Arkady**

Oh. I don't know, Father. It just came to me.

**Darell**

Think. This is important. What made you decide both Foundations were on Terminus?

**Arkady**

Well, there was Lady Callia. I knew she was a Second Foundationer. Anthor said so, too.

**Darell**

But she was on Kalgan. What made you decide on Terminus?

**Arkady**

Father, I knew. The more I thought, the surer I was. It just made sense.

**Darell**

It's no good, Arcadia. It's no good. Intuition is suspicious when concerned with the Second Foundation. You see that, don't you? It might have been intuition—and it might have been Control!

**Arkady**

Control! You mean they changed me? Oh, no. No, they couldn't. But didn't Anthor say I was right? He admitted it. He admitted everything. And you've found the whole bunch right here on Terminus. Didn't you? Didn't you?

**Darell**

I know, but—Arcadia, will you let me make an encephalographic analysis of your brain?

**Arkady**

No, no! I'm too scared.

**Darell**

Of me, Arcadia? There's nothing to be afraid of. But we must know. You see that, don't you?

**Arkady**

What if I am different, Father? What will you have to do?

**Darell**

I won't have to do anything, Arcadia. If you're different, we'll leave. We'll go back to Trantor, you and I, and . . . and we won't care about anything else in the Galaxy.

**Joel**

The fifteen minutes of the test feels like an hour to both of them as they tensely await the results. Finally Dr. Darell smiles broadly and heaves a sigh of relief.

**Darell**

The house is under maximum mind static and your brainwaves are normal. We really have trapped them, Arcadia, And we can go back to living!

**Arkady**

Father, can we let them give us medals now?

**Darell**

How did you know I'd asked to be left out of it? Never mind; you know everything. All right, you can have your medal on a platform with speeches.

**Arkady**

And father?

**Darell**

Yes?

**Arkady**

Can you call me Arkady from now on?

**Darell**

But... very well, Arkady.

**Joel**

And so the story ends. Or does it?

And so the story ends, or does it? No, there is a final card to play, and of course it is the Second Foundation that will play it. I'm going to do something a little unusual now before my concluding thoughts, and that is to read the final chapter verbatim, exactly as Asimov wrote it.

An unlocated room on an unlocated world.

And a man whose plan had worked.

The First Speaker looked up at the Student.

**First Speaker**

Fifty men and women,

**Joel**

he said.

**First Speaker**

Fifty martyrs! They knew it meant death or permanent imprisonment and they could not even be oriented to prevent weakening—since orientation might have been detected. Yet they did not weaken. They brought the plan through because they loved the greater plan.

**Student**

Might they have been fewer?

**Joel**

asked the Student, doubtfully.

The First Speaker slowly shook his head,

**First Speaker**

It was the lower limit. Less could not possibly have carried conviction. In fact, pure objectivism would have demanded seventy-five to leave margin for error. Never mind. Have you studied the course of action as worked out by the Speaker's Council 15 years ago?

**Student**

Yes, Speaker.

**First Speaker**

And compared it with actual developments?

**Student**

Yes, Speaker.

**Joel**

Then after a pause...

**Student**

I was quite amazed, Speaker.

**First Speaker**

I know. There is always amazement. If you knew how many men labored for how many months—years, in fact—to bring about the polish of perfection, you would be less amazed. Now tell me what happened—in words. I want your translation of the mathematics.

**Student**

Yes, Speaker.

**Joel**

The young man marshalled his thoughts.

**Student**

Essentially, it was necessary for the men of the First Foundation to be thoroughly convinced that they had located and destroyed the Second Foundation. In that way, there would be reversion to the intended original. To all intents, Terminus would once again know nothing about us; include us in none of their calculations. We are hidden once more, and safe—at the cost of fifty men.

**First Speaker**

And the purpose of the Kalganian war?

**Student**

To show the Foundation that they could beat a physical enemy—to wipe out the damage done to their self-esteem and self-assuredness by the Mule.



**First Speaker**

There you are insufficient in your analysis. Remember, the population of Terminus regarded us with distinct ambivalence. They hated and envied our supposed superiority; yet they relied on us implicitly for protection. If we had been 'destroyed' before the Kalganian war, it would have meant panic throughout the Foundation. They would then never have had the courage to stand up against Stettin, when he then attacked; and he would have. Only in the full flush of victory could the 'destruction' have taken place with minimum ill-effects. Even waiting a year, thereafter, might have meant a too-great cooling-off spirit for success.

**Joel**

The student nodded.

**Student**

I see. Then the course of history will proceed without deviation in the direction indicated by the plan.

**First Speaker**

Unless,

**Joel**

pointed out the first speaker,

**First Speaker**

further accidents, unforeseen and individual occur.

**Student**

And for that,

**Joel**

said the student,

**Student**

we will exist. Except— Except— One facet of the present state of affairs worries me, Speaker. The First Foundation is left with the Mind Static device—a powerful weapon against us. That, at least, is not as it was before.

**First Speaker**

A good point. But they have no one to use it against. It has become a sterile device; just as without the spur of our own menace against them, encephalographic analysis will become a sterile science. Other varieties of knowledge will once again bring more important and immediate returns. So this first generation of mental scientists among the First Foundation will also be the last—and, in a century, Mind Static will be a nearly forgotten item of the past.

**Student**

Well,

**Joel**

the student was calculating mentally.

**Student**

I suppose you're right.

## **First Speaker**

But what I want you most to realize, young man, for the sake of your future in the Council, is the consideration given to the tiny intermeshings that were forced into our plan of the last decade and a half simply because we dealt with individuals. There was the manner in which Anthor had to create suspicion against himself in such a way that it would mature at the right time, but that was relatively simple.

There was the manner in which the atmosphere was so manipulated that to no one on Terminus would it occur, prematurely, that Terminus itself might be the center they were seeking. That knowledge had to be supplied to the young girl, Arcadia, who would be heeded by no one but her own father. She had to be sent to Trantor, thereafter, to make certain that there would be no premature contact with her father. Those two were the two poles of a hypernuclear motor; each being inactive without the other. And the switch had to be thrown—contact had to be made—at just the right moment. I saw to that!

And the final battle had to be handled properly. The Foundation's fleet had to be soaked in self-confidence, while the fleet of Kalgan made ready to run. I saw to that, also!

## **Joel**

Said the student.

## **Student**

It seems to me, Speaker, that you . . . I mean, all of us . . . were counting on Dr. Darell not suspecting that Arcadia was our tool. According to my check on the calculations, there was something like a thirty percent probability that he would so suspect. What would have happened then?

**First Speaker**

We had taken care of that. What have you been taught about Tamper Plateaus? What are they? Certainly not evidence of the introduction of an emotional bias. That can be done without any chance of possible detection by the most refined conceivable encephalographic analysis. A consequence of Leffert's Theorem, you know. It is the removal, the cutting-out, of previous emotional bias, that shows. It must show.

And, of course, Anthor made certain that Darell knew all about Tamper Plateaus.

However— When can an individual be placed under Control without showing it? Where there is no previous emotional bias to remove. In other words, when the individual is a newborn infant with a blank slate of a mind. Arcadia Darell was such an infant here on Trantor fifteen years ago, when the first line was drawn into the structure of the Plan. She will never know that she has been Controlled, and will be all the better for it, since her Control involved the development of a precious and intelligent personality.

**Joel**

The first speaker laughed shortly.

**First Speaker**

In a sense, it is the irony of it all that is most amazing. For four hundred years, so many men have been blinded by Seldon's words 'the other end of the Galaxy,' they have brought their own peculiar, physical-science thought to the problem, measuring off the other end with protractors and rulers, ending up eventually either at a point in the periphery one hundred eighty degrees around the rim of the Galaxy, or back at the original point.

Yet our very greatest danger lay in the fact that there was a possible solution based on physical modes of thought. The Galaxy, you know, is not simply a flat ovoid of any sort; nor is the Periphery a closed curve. Actually, it is a double spiral, with at least eighty percent of the inhabited planets on the Main Arm. Terminus is the extreme outer end of the spiral arm, and we are at the other— since what is the opposite end of a spiral? Why the central regions?

But that is a trifling. It is an accidental and irrelevant solution. The solution could have been reached immediately, if the questioners had but remembered that Hari Seldon was a social scientist, not a physical scientist, and adjusted their thought processes accordingly. What could ‘opposite ends’ mean to a social scientist? Opposite ends on the map? Of course not. That’s the mechanical interpretation only.

The First Foundation was at the Periphery, where the original Empire was weakest, where its civilizing influence was least, where its wealth and culture were most nearly absent. And where is the social opposite end of the Galaxy? Why, at the place where the original Empire was strongest, where its civilizing influence was most, where its wealth and culture were most strongly present.

Here! At the center! At Trantor, capital of the Empire of Seldon’s time.

And it is so inevitable. Hari Seldon left the Second Foundation behind him to maintain, improve, and extend his work. That has been known, or guessed at, for fifty years. But where could that best be done? At Trantor, where Seldon’s group had worked, and where the data of decades had been accumulated. And it was the purpose of the Second Foundation to protect the Plan against enemies. That, too, was known! And where was the source of greatest danger? To Terminus and the plan?

Here! Here at Trantor, where the Empire, dying though it was, could, for three centuries, still destroy the Foundation, if it could only have decided to do so.

Then when Trantor fell and was sacked and utterly destroyed, a short century ago, we were naturally able to protect our headquarters, and, on all the planet, the Imperial Library and the grounds about it remained untouched. This was well-known to the Galaxy, but even that apparently overwhelming hint passed them by.

It was here at Trantor that Ebling Mis discovered us; and here that we saw to it that he did not survive the discovery. To do so, it was necessary to arrange to have a normal Foundation girl defeat the tremendous mutant powers of the Mule. Surely, such a phenomenon might have attracted suspicion to the planet on which it happened—It was here that we first studied the Mule and planned his ultimate defeat. It was here that Arcadia was born and the train of events begun that led to the great return to the Seldon Plan.

And all those flaws in our secrecy; those gaping holes; remained unnoticed because Seldon had spoken of 'the other end' in his way, and they had interpreted it in their way.

## **Joel**

The First Speaker had long since stopped speaking to the Student. It was an exposition to himself, really, as he stood before the window, looking up at the incredible blaze of the firmament; at the huge Galaxy that was now safe forever.

## **First Speaker**

Hari Seldon called Trantor 'Star's End,'

**Joel**

he whispered,

**First Speaker**

and why not that bit of poetic imagery? All the universe was once guided from this rock; all the apron strings of the stars led here. 'All roads lead to Trantor,' says the old proverb, 'and that is where all stars end.'

**Joel**

Eight months earlier, the First Speaker had viewed those same crowding stars—nowhere as crowded as in the central regions of that huge cluster of matter Man calls the Galaxy—with misgivings; but now there was a somber satisfaction on the round and ruddy face of Preem Palver—First Speaker.

Now it really is over (for now) and we have the answer to all of the riddles posed by the great master. The Second Foundation was always based on Trantor. Not on Tazenda or Rossem, as we were previously led to believe. Nor was it ever based on Kalgan, for surely the Mule would have discovered it there if it were. It did exist - unlike poor Homir Munn was led to deduce, and it was never on Terminus as Arkady's distraught father so sincerely believed. Peleas Anthor and Lady Callia played their parts well in creating such a powerful illusion, and presumably they and the fifty unknown agents of the Second Foundation paid the ultimate price to keep the secret by presenting a compelling alternative. All along it was on Trantor and in the vicinity of the Imperial Library where Hari Seldon did his great work of Psychohistory. This means that it was also present in the shadows during the most critical moments of the first story of the Mule.

Let me repeat one phrase of speaker's words, "... it was necessary to arrange to have a normal foundation girl defeat the tremendous mutant powers of Mule."

Bayta was controlled! I recall being reminded of this by the first guest of this podcast, Nathaniel Goldberg, during our discussion way back in episode 6 of Season 1. I was not happy to accept this knowledge, despite having read this story twice already, and found myself denying it. I wanted very much for Bayta to have been an independent agent. Of all the great characters created by Asimov thus far she remains my favorite. As impossible as it seemed, I wanted it to be her native cleverness and consummate skill under extraordinary pressure that had defeated the Mule! Recall how she had forced herself to not think about her great insight for fear that Magnifico would catch on, and how his desire to leave her uncontrolled left him blind to her true awareness that would ultimately lead to the critical loss of Ebling Mis's surprising knowledge? Mis had surmised that the Second Foundation was close by and was ready to reveal it to all of them, before Bayta shockingly ended his life.

The truth is now revealed. Bayta was, all along, controlled by the Second Foundation, just as we know the Mule controlled Toran. Was Ebling Mis also under the Second Foundation's control? Well, all we know for certain is that the Mule controlled him to the point of draining his life energy. Perhaps the Second Foundation couldn't control an already controlled person, or perhaps they realized the best way to defeat the Mule was to use Bayta as their instrument. It's also interesting to discover that Arkady was unwittingly controlled since the moment of her birth. This also takes away her agency which I find a little troubling. On the other hand, her control was such that she was never aware of it herself as she had no uncontrolled memories, so her behavior was effectively undertaken in complete ignorance. Her behavior and decisions were at least authentic to herself. An unexamined mystery remains about Bayta. When did she become controlled – upon arriving on Trantor? If so, how was she not aware of the change? Did the stress and confusion of the war and all the crazy events leading her up to that moment blind her to such an essential change in her being? Perhaps she was somehow controlled much



earlier - even before meeting Magnifico - and this explains the curious nature of her relationship with the clown and why he surprisingly left her uncontrolled?

We will have to leave these questions for now, as Asimov was to leave this story untouched for another three decades. In the early 1980s, after an extended break to write primarily non-fiction, he finally was to yield to his publisher's request and the unending clamor of his large fanbase and write a sequel entitled *Foundation's Edge*. The world had changed since he last addressed the topic, and he incorporated much of what he had learned since about the continual progression of computer technology and robotics - a topic intentionally omitted from the trilogy - into the new story as significant plot points. His writing retained many aspects, however, of what made the original trilogy such a compelling read. There remained the love of mystery and the big twists this story was full of. I highly recommend reading *Foundation's Edge* as well as the later sequel *Foundation and Earth* if you haven't done so. There are also two prequels that return to the life and times of Hari Seldon that were added on to the story in Asimov's twilight years. I would resist the temptation to read them before the sequels however. I find it most enjoyable to discover Asimov's stories in the sequence he wrote them, as he was in some sense discovering them too.

It's been a great joy to bring you the three volumes of this magnificent trilogy and there is so much more to be said. Fortunately, I will soon have the opportunity of doing exactly that with our first returning guest on this podcast; that being the very first, Nathaniel Goldberg, to again discuss some of the core philosophical ideas in the trilogy. A couple of episodes ago I mentioned the comparison of the *Second Foundation* with the ideal state as described in Plato's *Republic*, and this is right up Nathaniel's alley, so I am sure there will be more to say on this topic and many others related to the themes of this masterpiece.

Until then, please keep interacting with me on Twitter @seldoncrisispod and via the website at seldoncrisis.net. I love your feedback, whether it's a tweet, a review, or an email. Please join me in thanking all of my wonderful contributors to these shows, including the wonderful cast of voice actors including Amanda and Zac Kreidler, Megan Skye Hale, and Jon Blumenfeld. As always, I am extremely grateful as well for the work of Jeremy MacKinnon on sound design, Tom Barnes on the theme orchestration, and Mike Topping for the iconic logo. I'd also like to thank my patrons on Patreon for their ongoing support, and to all of you, my regular listeners. I look forward to bringing you the next episode of Seldon Crisis!