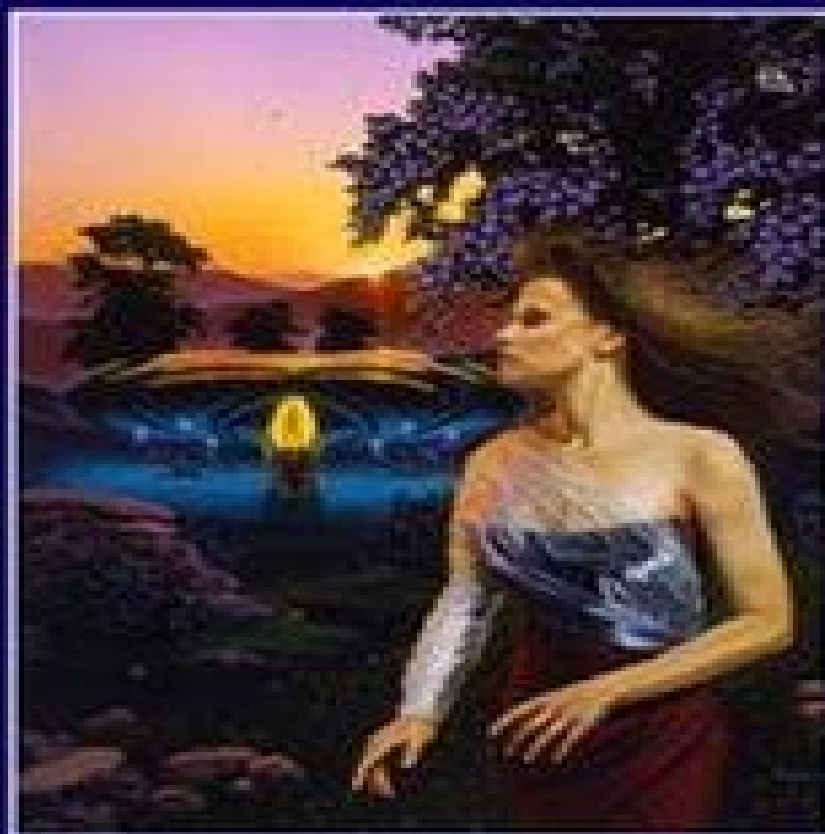


ISAAC

ASIMOV

THE FOUNDATION NOVELS



FOUNDATION'S
EDGE

Foundation's Edge

Isaac Asimov

It is 498 years since the establishment of the First Foundation. The threat of the Mule has been rebuffed; on Trantor it is a period of calm and prosperity. But an unexpected appearance by psychohistorian Hari Seldon raises some interesting questions and the young Councilman who asks them finds himself exiled into space in search of answers: Does the Second Foundation still exist? And does it continue to control human history from a secret Galactic refuge? At issue-the destiny of humankind.

FOUNDATION'S EDGE is the most eagerly anticipated science fiction novel of our time. It is the first science fiction novel from the Master in a decade-a stirring blend of actions and ideas with future technology and hyperspace travel. The sequel to The Foundation Trilogy has all the wisdom, humor, and intrigue that have made its predecessors the most widely read science fiction series of all time. Asimov has done his classic threesome one better.

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Isaac Asimov has written 260 books on subjects ranging from the Bible and Shakespeare to math and alien encounters. His Foundation Trilogy (Foundation, Foundation and Empire, and Second Foundation) is an international phenomenon-read by millions throughout the world and awarded a Hugo as "Best All-Time Science Fiction Series." He is the inventor of the Three Laws of Robotics and lives in New York City.

--- Back Cover information: -----

He was the analog-the mirror image-of the Mayor of Terminus, who ruled over the First Foundation. But they were different in every respect. The Mayor of Terminus was known to all the Galaxy and the First Foundation was therefore simply "the Foundation" to all the worlds. The First Speaker of the Second Foundation was known only to his associates.

And yet it was the Second Foundation which held the real power. The First Foundation was supreme in the realm of physical power, of technology, of weapons. The Second Foundation was supreme in the realm of mental power, of the mind, of the ability to control. In any conflict between the two, what would it matter how many ships and weapons the First Foundation controlled, if the Second Foundation could control the minds of those who controlled the ships and weapons?

But how long could this remain a secret?

from

Foundation's Edge

PROLOGUE

THE FIRST GALACTIC EMPIRE WAS FALLING. IT HAD BEEN DECAYING and breaking down for centuries and only one man fully realized that fact.

He was Hari Seldon the last great scientist of the First Empire, and it was he who perfected psychohistory-the science of human behavior reduced to mathematical equations.

The individual human being is unpredictable, but the reactions of human mobs, Seldon found, could be treated statistically. The larger the mob, the greater the accuracy that could be achieved. And the size of the human masses that Seldon worked with was no less than the population of all the inhabited millions of worlds of the Galaxy.

Seldon's equations told him that, left to itself, the Empire would fall and that thirty thousand years of human misery and agony would elapse before a Second Empire would arise from the ruins. And yet, if one could adjust some of the conditions that existed, that Interregnum could be decreased to a single millennium-just one thousand years.

It was to insure this that Seldon set up two colonies of scientists that he called "Foundations." With deliberate intention, he set them up "at opposite ends of the Galaxy." The First Foundation, which centered on physical science, was set up in the fuel daylight of publicity. The existence of the other, the Second Foundation, a world of psychohistorical and "mentalic" scientists, was drowned in silence.

In The Foundation Trilogy, the story of the first four centuries of the Interregnum is told. The First Foundation (commonly known as simply "The Foundation," since the existence of another was unknown to almost all) began as a small community lost in the emptiness of the Outer Periphery of the Galaxy. Periodically it faced a crisis in which the variables of human intercourse -and of the social and economic currents of the time-constricted about it. Its freedom to move lay along only one certain line and when it moved in that direction a new horizon of development opened before it. All had been planned by Hari Seldon, long dead now.

The First Foundation with its superior science, took over the barbarized planets that surrounded it. It faced the anarchic warlords who broke away, a dying empire and beat them. It faced the remnant of the Empire itself under its last strong Emperor and its last strong general and beat it.

It seemed as though the "Seldon Plan" was going through smoothly and that nothing would prevent the Second Empire from being established or, time and with a minimum of intermediate devastation.

But psychohistory is a statistical science. Always there is a small chance that something will go wrong, and something did—something which Hari Seldon could not have foreseen. One man, called the Mule, appeared atom nowhere. He had mental powers in a Galaxy that lacked them. He could mold men's emotions and shape their minds so that his bitterest opponents were made into his devoted servants. Aries could not, would not, fight him. The First Foundation fell and Seldon's Plan seemed to lie in ruins.

There was left the mysterious Second Foundation, which had been caught unprepared by the sudden appearance of the Mule, but which was now slowly working out a counterattack. Its great defense was the fact of its unknown location. The Mule sought it in order to make his conquest of the Galaxy complete. The faithful of what was left of the First Foundation sought it to obtain help.

Neither found it. The Mule was stopped first by the action of a woman, Bayta Darell and that bought enough time for the Second Foundation to organize the proper action and, with that, to stop the Mule permanently. Slowly they prepared to reinstate the Seldon Plan.

But, in a way, the cover of the Second Foundation was gone. The First Foundation knew of the second's existence, and the First did not want a future in which they were overseen by the mentalists. The First Foundation was the superior in physical force, while the Second Foundation was hampered not only by that fact, but by being faced by a double task: it had not only to stop the First Foundation but had also to regain its anonymity.

This the Second Foundation, under its greatest "First Speaker," Preem Salver, manages to do. The First Foundation was allowed to seem to win, to seem to defeat the Second Foundation, and it moved on to greater and greater strength in the Galaxy, totally ignorant that the Second Foundation still existed.

It is now four hundred and ninety-eight years after the First Foundation had come into existence. It is at the peak of its strength, but one man does not accept appearances—

CHAPTER ONE

COUNCILMAN

"I DON'T BELIEVE IT, OF COURSE," SAID GOLAN TREVIZE STANDING ON the wide steps of Seldon Hall and looking out over the city as it sparkled in the sunlight.

Terminus was a mild planet, with a high water/land ratio. The introduction of weather control had made it all the more comfortable and considerably less interesting, Trevize often thought.

"I don't believe any of it," he repeated and smiled. His white, even teeth gleamed out of his youthful face.

His companion and fellow Councilman, Munn Li Compor who had adopted a middle name in defiance of Terminus tradition, shook his head uneasily. "What don't you believe? That we saved the city?"

"Oh, I believe that. We did, didn't we? And Seldon said that we would, and he said we would be right to do so, and that he knew all about it five hundred years ago."

Compor's voice dropped and he said in a half-whisper, "Look, I don't mind your talking like this to me, because I take it as just talk, but if you shout it out in crowds others will hear and, frankly, I don't want to be standing near you when the lightning strikes. I'm not sure how precise the aim will be."

Trevize's smile did not waver. He said, "Is there harm in saying that the city is saved? And that we did it without a war?"

"There was no one to fight," said Compor. He had hair of a buttery yellow, eyes of a sky blue, and he always resisted the impulse to alter those unfashionable hues.

"Have you never heard of civil war, Compor?" said Trevize. He was tall, his hair was black, with a gentle wave to it, and he had a habit of walking with his thumbs hitched into the soft-fibered sash he always wore.

"A civil war over the location of the capital?"

"The question was enough to bring on a Seldon Crisis. It destroyed Hannis's political career. It put you and me into the Council last election and the issue hung—" He heisted one hand slowly, back and forth, like a balance coming to rest on the level.

He paused on the steps, ignoring the other members of the government and the media, as well as the fashionable society types who had finagled an invitation to witness Seldon's return (or the return of his image, at any rate).

All were walking down the stairs, talking, laughing, glorying in the correctness of everything, and basking in Seldon's approval.

Trevize stood still and let the crowd swirl past him. Compor, having walked two steps ahead, paused—an invisible cord stretching between them. He said, "Aren't you coming?"

"There's no hurry. They won't start the Council meeting until Mayor Branno has reviewed the situation in her usual flat-footed, one-syllable-at-a-time way. I'm in no hurry to endure another ponderous speech. —Look at the city!"

"I see it. I saw it yesterday, too."

"Yes, but did you see it five hundred years ago when it was founded?"

"Four hundred ninety-eight," Compor corrected him automatically. "Two years from now, they'll have the hemimillennial celebration and Mayor Branno will still be in the office at the time, barring events of, we hope, minor probability."

"We hope," said Trevize dryly. "But what was it like five hundred years ago when it was founded? One city! One small city, occupied by a group of men preparing an Encyclopedia that was never finished!"

"Of course it was finished."

"Are you referring to the Encyclopedia Galactica we have now? What we have isn't what they were working on. What we have is in a computer and it's revised daily. Have you ever looked at the uncompleted original?"

"You mean in the Hardin Museum?"

"The Salvor Hardin Museum of Origins. Let's have the full name, please, since you're so careful about exact dates. Have you looked at it?"

"No. Should I?"

"No, it isn't worth it. But anyway-there they were-a group of Encyclopedists, forming the nucleus of a town-one small town in a world virtually without metals, circling a sun isolated from the rest of the Galaxy, at the edge, the very edge. And now, five hundred years later, we're a suburban world. The whole place is one big park, with all the metal we want. We're at the center of everything now?"

"Not really," said Compor. "We're still circling a sun isolated from the rest of the Galaxy. Still at the very edge of the Galaxy."

"Ah no, you're saying that without thinking. That was the whole point of this little Seldon Crisis. We are more than the single world of Terminus. We are the Foundation, which sends out its tentacles Galaxy-wide and rules that Galaxy from its position at the very edge. We can do it because we're not isolated, except in position, and that doesn't count."

"All right. I'll accept that." Compor was clearly uninterested and took another step downward. The invisible cord between them stretched farther.

Trevize reached out a hand as though to haul his companion up the steps again. "Don't you see the significance, Compor? There's this enormous change, but we don't accept it. In our hearts we want the small Foundation, the small one-world operation we had in the old days-the days of iron heroes and noble saints that are gone forever."

"Come on!"

"I mean it. Look at Seldon Hall. To begin with, in the first crises in Salvor Hardin's day, it was just the Time Vault, a small auditorium in which the holographic image of Seldon appeared. That was a11. Now it's a colossal mausoleum, but is there a force-field ramp in the place? A slideway? A gravitic lift? -No, just these steps, and we walk down them and we walk up them as Hardin would have had to do. At odd and unpredictable times, we cling in fright to the past."

He flung his arm outward passionately. "Is there any structural component visible that is metal? Not one. It wouldn't do to have any, since in Salvor Hardin's day there was no native metal to speak of and hardly any imported metal. We even installed old plastic, pink with age, when we built this huge pile, so that visitors from other worlds can stop and say, 'Galaxy! What lovely old plastics!' I tell you, Compor, it's a sham."

"Is that what you don't believe, then? Seldon Hall?"

"And all its contents," said Trevize in a fierce whisper. "I don't really believe there's any sense in hiding here at the edge of the Universe, just because our ancestors did. I believe we ought to be out there, in the middle of everything."

"But Seldon says you're wrong. The Seldon Plan is working out as it should."

"I know. I know. And every child on Terminus is brought up to believe that Hari Seldon formulated a Plan, that he foresaw everything five centuries ago, that he set up the Foundation in such a way that he could spot certain crises, and that his image would appear holographically at those crises, and tell us the minimum we had to know to go on to the next crisis, and thus lead us through a thousand years of history until we could safely build a Second and Greater Galactic Empire on the ruins of the old decrepit structure that was falling apart five centuries ago and had disintegrated completely by two centuries ago."

"Why are you telling me all this, Golan?"

"Because I'm telling you it's a sham. It's all a sham. -Or if it was real to begin with, it's a sham now! We are not our own masters. It is not we who are following the Plan."

Compor looked at the other searchingly. "You've said things like this before, Golan, but I've always thought you were just saying ridiculous things to stir me up. By the Galaxy, I actually think you're serious."

"Of course I'm serious!"

"You can't be. Either this is some complicated piece of fun at my expense or you're out of your mind."

"Neither. Neither," said Trevize, quiet now, hitching his thumbs into his sash as though he no longer needed the gestures of hands to punctuate passion. "I speculated on it before, I admit, but that was just intuition. That farce in there this morning, however, has made it suddenly all. quite plain to me and I intend, in turn, to make it quite plain to the Council."

Compor said, "You are crazy!"

"All right. Come with me and listen."

The two walked down the stairs. They were the only ones left-the last to complete the descent. And as Trevize moved slightly to the fore, Compor's lips moved silently, casting a voiceless word in the direction of the other's back: "Fool!"

Mayor Harla Branno called the session of the Executive Council to order. Her eyes had looked with no visible sign of interest at the gathering; yet no one there doubted that she had noted all who were present and all who had not yet arrived.

Her gray hair was carefully arranged in a style that was neither markedly feminine nor imitation masculine. It was simply the way she wore it, no more. Her matter-of-fact face was not notable for beauty, but somehow it was never for beauty that one searched there.

She was the most capable administrator on the planet. No one could, or did, accuse her of the brilliance of the Salvor Hardins and the Hober Mallows whose histories enlivened the first two centuries of the Foundation's existence, but neither would anyone associate her with the follies of the hereditary Indburs who had ruled the Foundation just prior to the time of the Mule.

Her speeches did not stir men's minds, nor did she have a gift for the dramatic gesture, but she had a capacity for making quiet decisions and sticking by

them as long as she was convinced she was right. Without any obvious charisma, she had the knack of persuading the voters those quiet decisions would be right

Since by the Seldon doctrine, historical change is to a large degree difficult to swerve (always barring the unpredictable, something most Seldonists forget, despite the wrenching incident of the Mule), the Foundation might have retained its capital on Terminus under any conditions. That is a "might," however. Seldon, in his just finished appearance as a five-century-old simulacrum, had calmly placed the probability of remaining on Terminus at 87.2 percent.

Nevertheless, even to Seldonists, that meant there was a 12.8 percent chance that the shift to some point closer to the center of the Foundation Federation would have been made, with all the dire consequences that Seldon had outlined. That this one-out-of-eight chance did not take place was surely due to Mayor Branno.

It was certain she would not have allowed it. Through periods of considerable unpopularity, she had held to her decision that Terminus was the traditional seat of the Foundation and there it would remain. Her political enemies had caricatured her strong jaw (with some effectiveness, it had to be admitted) as an underslung granite block.

And now Seldon had backed her point of view and, for the while at least, that would give her an overwhelming political advantage. She had been reported to have said a year earlier that if in the coming appearance Seldon did back her, she would consider her task successfully completed. She would then retire and take up the role of elder statesperson, rather than risk the dubious results of further political wars.

No one had really believed her. She was at home in the political wars to an extent few before her had been, and now that Seldon's image had come and gone there was no hint of retirement about her.

She spoke in a perfectly clear voice with an unashamed Foundation accent (she had once served as Ambassador to Mandrels, but had not adopted the old Imperial style of speech that was so fashionable now-and was part of what had been a quasi-Imperial drive to the Inner Provinces).

She said, "The Seldon Crisis is over and it is a tradition, and a wise one, that no reprisals of any kind-either in deed or in speech -be taken against those who supported the wrong side. Many honest people believed they had good reason for wanting that which Seldon did not want. There is no point in humiliating them to the point where they can retrieve their self-respect only by denouncing the Seldon Plan itself. In turn, it is a strong and desirable custom that those who supported the lost side accept the loss cheerfully and without further discussion. The issue is behind us, on both sides, forever."

She paused, gazed levelly at the assembled faces for a moment, then went on, "Half the time has passed, people of the Council- half the thousand-year stretch between Empires. It has been a time of difficulties, but we have come a long way. We are, indeed, almost a Galactic Empire already and there remain no external enemies of consequence.

"The Interregnum would have endured thirty thousand years, were it not for the Seldon Plan. After thirty thousand years of disintegration, it might be there would be no strength left with which to form an Empire again. There might be left only isolated and probably dying worlds.

"What we have today we owe to Hari Seldon and it is upon his long-dead mind that we must rely for the rest. The danger henceforward, Councilors, is ourselves, and from this point on there must be no official doubt of the value of the Plan. Let us agree now, quietly and firmly, that there are to be no official doubts, criticisms, or condemnations of the Plan. We must support it completely. It has proved itself over five centuries. It is the security of humanity and it must not be tampered with. Is it agreed?"

There was a quiet murmur. The Mayor hardly looked up to seek visual proof of agreement. She knew every member of the Council and how each would react. In the wake of the victory, there would be no objection now. Next year perhaps. Not now. She would tackle the problems of next year next year.

Always except for-

"Thought control, Mayor Branno?" asked Golan Trevize, striding down the aisle and speaking loudly, as though to make up for the silence of the rest. He did not bother to take his seat which, since he was a new member, was in fine back row.

Branno still did not look up. She said, "Your views, Councilman Trevize?"

"That the government cannot impose a ban on free speech; that all individuals-most certainly including Councilmen and Councilwomen who have been elected for the purpose-have a right to discuss the political issues of the day; and that no political issue can possibly be divorced from the Seldon Plan:"

Branno folded her hands and looked up. Her face was expressionless. She said, "Councilman Trevize, you have entered this debate irregularly and were out of order in doing so. However, I asked you to state your views and I will now answer you.

"There is no limit to free speech within the context of the Seldon Plan. It is only the Plan itself that limits us by its very nature. There can be many ways of interpreting events before the image makes the final decision, but once he makes that decision it can be questioned no further in Council. Nor may it be questioned in advance as though one were to say, 'If Hari Seldon were to state thus-and-so, he would be wrong.'"

"And yet if one honestly felt so, Madam Mayor?"

"Then one could say so, if one were a private individual, discussing fine matter in a private context."

"You mean, then, that the limitations on free speech which you propose are to apply entirely and specifically to government officials?"

"Exactly. This is not a new principle of Foundation law. It has been applied before by Mayors of all parties. A private point of view means nothing; an official expression of opinion carries weight and can be dangerous. We have not come this far to risk danger now."

"May I point out, Madam Mayor, that this principle of yours has been applied, sparsely and occasionally, to specific acts of Council. It has never been applied to something as vast and indefinable as the Seldon Plan."

"The Seldon Plan needs the protection most, for it is precisely there that questioning can be most fatal."

"Will you not consider, Mayor Branno-" Trevize turned, addressing now the seated rows of Council members, who seemed one and all to have caught their breath, as though awaiting the outcome of a duel. "Will you not consider, Council members, that there is every reason to think that there is no Seldon Plan at all?"

"We have all witnessed its workings today," said Mayor Branno, even more quietly as Trevize became louder and more oratorical.

"It is precisely because we have seen its workings today, Councilmen and Councilwomen, that we can see that the Seldon Plan, as we have been taught to believe it to be, cannot exist."

"Councilman Trevize, you are out of order and must not continue along these lines."

"I have the privilege of office, Mayor."

"That privilege has been withdrawn, Councilman."

"You cannot withdraw the privilege. Your statement limiting free speech cannot, in itself, have the force of law. There has been no formal vote in Council, Mayor, and even if there were I would have the right to question its legality."

"The withdrawal, Councilman, has nothing to do with my statement protecting the Seldon Plan."

"On what, then, does it depend?"

"You are accused of treason, Councilman. I wish to do the Council the courtesy of not arresting you within the Council Chamber, but waiting at the door are members of Security who will take you into custody as you leave. I will ask you now to leave quietly. If you make any ill-considered move, then, of course, that will be considered a present danger and Security will enter the Chamber. I trust you will not make that necessary."

Trevize frowned. There was absolute silence in the hall. (Did everyone expect this - everyone but himself and Compor?) He looked back at the exit. He saw nothing, but he had no doubt that Mayor Branno was not bluffing.

He stammered in rage. "I represent an important constituency, Mayor Branno."

"No doubt, they will be disappointed in you."

"On what evidence do you bring forth this wild charge?"

"That will appear in due course, but be assured that we have all we need. You are a most indiscreet young man and should realize that someone may be your friend and yet not be willing to accompany you into treason:"

Trevize whirled to meet Compor's blue eyes. They met his stonily.

Mayor Branno said calmly, "I call upon all to witness that when I made my last statement, Councilman Trevize turned to look at Councilman Compor. Will you leave now, Councilman, or will you force us to engage in the indignity of an arrest within the Chamber?"

Golan Trevize turned, mounted the steps again, and, at the door, two men in uniform, well armed, fell in on either side.

And Harla Branno, looking after him impassively, whispered through barely parted lips, "Fool!"

Liono Kodell had been Director of Security through all of Mayor Branno's administration. It was not a backbreaking job, as he liked to say, but whether he was lying or not, one could not, of course, tell. He didn't look like a liar, but that did not necessarily mean anything.

He looked comfortable and friendly, and it might well be that this was appropriate for the job. He was rather below the average height, rather above the average weight, had a bushy mustache (most unusual for a citizen of Terminus) that was now more white than gray, bright brown eyes, and a characteristic patch of primary color marking the outer breast pocket of his drab coverall.

He said, "Sit down, Trevize. Let us keep this on a friendly basis if we can."

"Friendly? With a traitor?" Trevize hooked both his thumbs in his sash and remained standing.

"With an accused traitor. We have not yet come to the point where accusation-even by the Mayor herself-is the equivalent of conviction. I trust we never do. My job is to clear you, if I can. I would much rather do so now while no harm is done-except, perhaps, to your pride-rather than be forced to make it all a matter of a public trial. I hope you are with me in this."

Trevize didn't soften. He said, "Let's not bother with ingratiating. Your job is to badger me as though I were a traitor. I am not one, and I resent the necessity of having to have that point demonstrated to your satisfaction. Why should you not have to prove your loyalty to my satisfaction?"

"In principle, none. The sad fact, however, is that I have power on my side, and you have none on yours. Because of that, it is my privilege to question, and not yours. If any suspicion of disloyalty or treason fell upon me, by the way, I imagine I would find myself replaced, and I would then be questioned by someone else, who, I earnestly hope, would treat me no worse than I intend to treat you."

"And how do you intend to treat me?"

"Like, I trust, a friend and an equal, if you will so treat me."

"Shall I stand you a drink?" asked Trevize bitterly.

"Later, perhaps, but for now, please sit down. I ask it as a friend."

Trevize hesitated, then sat. Any further defiance suddenly seemed meaningless to him. "What now?" he said.

"Now, may I ask that you will answer my questions truthfully and completely and without evasion?"

"And if not? What is the threat behind it? A Psychic Probe?"

"I trust not."

"I trust not, too. Not on a Councilman. It will reveal no treason, and when I am then acquitted, I will have your political head and the Mayor's too, perhaps. It might almost be worth making you try a Psychic Probe."

Kodell frowned and shook his head slightly. "Oh no. Oh no. Too much danger of brain damage. It's slow healing sometimes, and it would not be worth your while. Definitely. You know, sometimes, when the Probe is used in exasperation-

"A threat, Kodell?"

"A statement of fact, Trevize. -Don't mistake me, Councilman. If I must use the Probe I will, and even if you are innocent you will have no recourse."

"What do you want to know?"

Kodell closed a switch on the desk before him. He said, "What I ask and what you answer to my questions will be recorded, both sight and sound. I do not want any volunteered statements from you, or anything nonresponsive. Not at this time. You understand that, I am sure."

"I understand that you will record only what you please," said Trevize contemptuously.

"That is right, but again, don't mistake me. I will not distort anything you say. I will use it or not use it, that is all. But you will know what I will not use and you will not waste my time and yours.

"We'll see."

"We have reason to think, Councilman Trevize"-and somehow the touch of added formality in his voice was evidence enough that he was recording-"that you have stated openly, and on a number of occasions, that you do not believe in the existence of the Seldon Plan."

Trevize said slowly, "If I have said so openly, and on a number of occasions, what more do you need?"

"Let us not waste time with quibbles, Councilman. You know that what I want is an open admission in your own voice, characterized by its own voiceprints, under conditions where you are clearly in perfect command of yourself."

"Because, I suppose, the use of any hypno-effect, chemical or otherwise, would alter the voiceprints?"

"Quite noticeably."

"And you are anxious to demonstrate that you have made use of no illegal methods in questioning a Councilman? I don't blame you ..

"I'm glad you do not blame me, Councilman. Then let us continue. You have stated openly, and on a number of occasions, that you do not believe in the existence of the Seldon Plan. Do you admit that?"

Trevize said slowly, choosing his words, "I do not believe that what we call Seldon's Plan has the significance we usually apply to it.

"A vague statement. Would you care to elaborate?"

"My view is that the usual concept that Hari Seldon, five hundred years ago, making use of the mathematical science of psychohistory, worked out the course of human events to the last detail and that we are following a course designed to take us from the First Galactic Empire to the Second Galactic Empire along the line of maximum probability, is naive. It cannot be so:"

"Do you mean that, in your opinion, Hari Seldon never existed?"

"Not at all. Of course he existed."

"That he never evolved the science of psychohistory?"

"No, of course I don't mean any such thing. See here, Director, I would have explained this to the Council if I had been allowed to, and I will explain it to you. The truth of what I am going to say is so plain-"

The Director of Security had quietly, and quite obviously, turned off the recording device.

Trevize paused and frowned. "Why did you do that?"

"You are wasting my time, Councilman. I am not asking you for speeches."

"You are asking me to explain my views, aren't you?"

"Not at all. I am asking you to answer questions-simply, directly, and straightforwardly. Answer only the questions and offer nothing that I do not ask for. Do that and this won't take long."

Trevize said, "You mean you will elicit statements from me that will reinforce the official version of what I am supposed to have done."

"We ask you only to make truthful statements, and I assure you we will not distort them. Please, let me try again. We were talking about Hari Seldon." The recording device was in action once more and Kodell repeated calmly, "That he never evolved the science of psychohistory?"

"Of course he evolved the science that we call psychohistory," said Trevize, failing to mask his impatience, and gesturing with exasperated passion.

"Which you would define-how?"

"Galaxy! It is usually defined as that branch of mathematics that deals with the overall reactions of large groups of human beings to given stimuli under given conditions. In other words, it is supposed to predict social and historical changes:"

"You say `supposed to: Do you question that from the standpoint of mathematical expertise?"

"No," said Trevize. "I am not a psychohistorian. Nor is any member of the Foundation government, nor any citizen of Terminus, nor any-"

Kodell's hand raised. He said softly, "Councilman, please!" and Trevize was silent.

Kodell said, "Have you any reason to suppose that Hari Seldon did not make the necessary analysis that would combine, as efficiently as possible, the factors of maximum probability and shortest duration in the path leading from the First to the Second Empire by way of the Foundation?"

"I wasn't there," said Trevize sardonically. "How can I know?"

"Can you know he didn't?" No.

"Do you deny, perhaps, that the holographic image of Hari Seldon that has appeared during each of a number of historical crises over the past five hundred years is, in actual fact, a reproduction of Hari Seldon himself, made in the last year of his life, shortly before the establishment of the Foundation?"

"I suppose I can't deny that."

"You `suppose.' Would you care to say that it is a fraud, a hoax devised by someone in past history for some purpose?"

Trevize sighed. "No. I am not maintaining that."

"Are you prepared to maintain that the messages that Hari Seldon delivers are in any way manipulated by anyone at all?"

"No. I have no reason to think that such manipulation is either possible or useful."

"I see. You witnessed this most recent appearance of Seldon's image. Did you find that his analysis-prepared five hundred years ago-did not match the actual conditions of today quite closely?"

"On the contrary," said Trevize with sudden glee. "It matched very closely."

Kodell seemed indifferent to the other's emotion. "And yet, Councilman, after the appearance of Seldon, you still maintain that the Seldon Plan does not exist."

"Of course I do. I maintain it does not exist precisely because the analysis matched so perfectly."

Kodell had turned off the recorder. "Councilman," he said, shaking his head, "you put me to the trouble of erasing. I ask if you still maintain this odd belief of yours and you start giving me reasons. Let me repeat my question."

He said, "And yet, Councilman, after the appearance of Seldon, you still maintain that the Seldon Plan does not exist."

"How do you know that? No one had a chance to speak to my informer friend, Compor, after the appearance."

"Let us say we guessed, Councilman. And let us say you have already answered, `Of course I do: If you will say that once more without volunteering added information, we can get on with it."

"Of course I do," said Trevize ironically.

"Well," said Kodell, "I will choose whichever of the `Of course I do's' sounds more natural. Thank you, Councilman," and the recording device was turned off again.

Trevize said, "Is that it?"

"For what I need, yes."

"What you need, quite clearly, is a set of questions and answers that you can present to Terminus and to all the Foundation Federation which it rules, in order to show that I accept the legend of the Seldon Plan totally. That will make any denial of it that I later make seem quixotic or outright insane."

"Or even treasonable in the eyes of an excited multitude which sees the Plan as essential to the Foundation's safety. It will perhaps not be necessary to publicize this, Councilman Trevize, if we can come to some understanding, but if it should prove necessary we will see to it that the Federation hears."

"Are you fool enough, sir," said Trevize, frowning, "to be entirely uninterested in what I really have to say?"

"As a human being I am very interested, and if an appropriate time comes I will listen to you with interest and a certain amount of skepticism. As Director of Security, however, I have, at the present moment, exactly what I want"

"I hope you know that this will do you, and the Mayor, no good."

"Oddly enough, I am not at all of that opinion. You will now leave. Under guard, of course."

"Where am I to be taken?"

Kodell merely smiled. "Good-bye, Councilman. You were not perfectly co-operative, but it would have been unrealistic to have expected you to be."

He held out his hand.

Trevize, standing up, ignored it. He smoothed the creases out of his sash and said, "You only delay the inevitable. Others must think as I do now, or will come to think that way later. To imprison me or to kill me will serve to inspire wonder and, eventually, accelerate such thinking. In the end the truth and I shall win."

Kodell took back his hand and shook his head slowly. "Really, Trevize," he said. "You are a fool."

It was not till midnight that two guards came to remove Trevize from what was, he had to admit, a luxurious room at Security Headquarters. Luxurious but locked. A prison cell by any name.

Trevize had over four hours to second-guess himself bitterly, striding restlessly across the floor for much of the period.

Why did he trust Compor?

Why not? He had seemed so clearly in agreement. -No, not that. He had seemed so ready to be argued into agreement. -No, not that, either. He had seemed so stupid, so easily dominated, so surely lacking a mind and opinions of his own that Trevize enjoyed the chance of using him as a comfortable sounding board. Compor had helped Trevize improve and hone his opinions. He had been useful and Trevize had trusted him for no other reason than that it had been convenient to do so.

But it was useless now to try to decide whether he ought to have seen through Compor. He should have followed the simple generalization: Trust nobody.

Yet can one go through life trusting nobody?

Clearly one had to.

And who would have thought that Branno would have had the audacity to pluck a Councilman out of the Council-and that not one of the other Councilmen would move to protect one of their own? Though they had disagreed with Trevize to their very hearts; though they would have been ready to bet their blood, drop by drop, on Branno's rightness; they should still, on principle, have interposed themselves against this violation of their prerogatives. Branno

the Bronze she was sometimes called, and she certainly acted with metallic rigor--

Unless she herself was already in the grip-

No! That way led to paranoia!

And yet-

His mind tiptoed in circles, and had not broken out of uselessly repetitive thought when the guards came.

"You will have to come with us, Councilman," the senior of the two said with unemotional gravity. His insignia showed him to be a lieutenant. He had a small scar on his right cheek, and he looked tired, as though he had been at his Job too long and had done too little-as might be expected of a soldier whose people had been at peace for over a century.

Trevize did not budge. "Your name, Lieutenant."

"I am Lieutenant Evander Sopellor, Councilman."

"You realize you are breaking the law, Lieutenant Sopellor. You cannot arrest a Councilman."

The lieutenant said, "We have our direct orders, sir."

"That does not matter. You cannot be ordered to arrest a Councilman. You must understand that you will be liable for court-martial as a result."

The lieutenant said, "You are not being arrested, Councilman."

"Then I don't have to go with you, do I?"

"We have been instructed to escort you to your home."

"I know the way."

"And to protect you en route."

"From what? -Or from whom?"

"From any mob that may gather."

"At midnight?"

"It is why we have waited for midnight, sir. -And now, sir, for your protection we must ask you to come with us. May I say-not as a threat but as a matter of information-that we are authorized to use force if necessary."

Trevize was aware of the neuronics whips with which they were armed. He rose with what he hoped was dignity. "To my home, then. -Or will I find out that you are going to take me to prison?"

"We have not been instructed to lie to you, sir," said the lieutenant with a pride of his own. Trevize became aware that he was in the presence of a professional man who would require a direct order before he would lie-and that even then his expression and his tone of voice would give him away.

Trevize said, "I ask your pardon, Lieutenant. I did not mean to imply that I doubted your word."

A ground-car was waiting for them outside. The street was empty and there was no sign of any human being, let alone a mob-but the lieutenant had been truthful. He had not said there was a mob outside or that one would form. He had referred to "any mob that may gather." He had only said "may."

The lieutenant had carefully kept Trevize between himself and the car. Trevize could not have twisted away and made a run for it. The lieutenant entered immediately after him and sat beside him in the back.

The car moved off.

Trevize said, "Once I am home, I presume I may then go about my business freely-that I may leave, for instance, if I choose."

"We have no order to interfere with you, Councilman, in any way, except insofar as we are ordered to protect you."

"Insofar? What does that mean in this case?"

"I am instructed to tell you that once you are home, you may not leave it. The streets are not safe for you and I am responsible for your safety."

"You mean I am under house arrest."

"I am not a lawyer, Councilman. I do not know what that means."

He gazed straight ahead, but his elbow made contact with Trevize's side. Trevize could not have moved, however slightly, without the lieutenant becoming aware of it.

The car stopped before Trevize's small house in the suburb of Flexner. At the moment, he lacked a housemate-Flavella having wearied of the erratic life that Council membership had forced upon him-so he expected no one to be waiting for him.

"Do I get out now?" Trevize asked.

"I will get out first, Councilman. We will escort you in."

"For my safety?"

"Yes, sir."

There were two guards waiting inside his front door. A night-light was gleaming, but the windows had been opacified and it was not visible from outside.