



# Beyond The Fall Of Night

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Gregory Benford expands Arthur C. Clarke's novella, *Against the Fall of Night*, into a novel-length adventure set billions of years in the future about human destiny among the stars.

## Beyond The Fall Of Night Details

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Author : Arthur C. Clarke , Gregory Benford

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# From Reader Review Beyond The Fall Of Night for online ebook

## Robin says

Diametrically opposite to Clarke's original in style and tone, featuring borderline purple prose most of the time, this is an unusual book. It has an interesting focus on biological world building and a promising opening, but is ultimately almost entirely bereft of plot (especially in the second act). There are only a few characters, and none of them undergo any particularly meaningful journey. It's just a jaunt through Benford's admittedly fecund imagination. Not recommended for fans of the original, as it squanders most of the promise there in favour of very 90s biopunk stuff.

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## Christian Kern says

Loved Clarke's beginning. Benford's continuation lacked action and was stuffed full of forced existential conversations trying to prove way too many points. His new protagonist was also irritably defiant (to a fault), underdeveloped, and makes no attempt to develop an ability that is somehow learned by the end of the novel.

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## Florin Constantinescu says

Pointless sequel to an okay story from the master Arthur C. Clarke.  
Benford attempts here to modernize a story which did not age so well, but his story adds nothing useful.

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## Stewart Tame says

This book is more about ideas than action.

We open in the far future. What's left of humanity is confined to a single, magnificent city: Diaspar. The rest of the world seems to be a vast desert. Alvin--only a boy when the book begins--dreams of exploring the world beyond the city, but society frowns upon such dreams. It's not even certain how one could exit the city. There seems to be no break in the walls that enclose it. There are hints of some sort of ancient battle fought against alien forces known simply as "the Invaders. " But, as with leaving the city, the very subject seems to be taboo ...

I don't think it's revealing too much to say that Alvin does eventually leave Diaspar, and his actions eventually have dire consequences that are explored in Gregory Benford's portion of the book. The entire book is essentially a travelogue, first of Alvin's journey, and then of Cley, a genetically engineered Ur-human who ventures off-planet in an attempt to escape from ... but you'll have to read the book for that.

Of the two halves of the book, I think I enjoyed Clarke's original novella the best. Alvin's journey is a classic SF tale, well told. If it has any faults it is that it's rather smoothly linear--what propels the reader through the story is not anxiety over what's going to happen to Alvin, but rather curiosity over what he's going to find next. There are very few conflicts along the way; he just kind of goes places and does stuff. This is not a

thrill ride.

In Benford's portion of the book, we once again have a journey, this one a bit more thrilling since Cley's on the run. But he seems to be going out of his way to keep hitting the reader with Mind-Blowing Concepts. I can picture him in my mind's eye telling Clarke, "Right, old man. This is how we science fiction nowadays!" (I'm exaggerating to make a point here. Nothing I can glean from this book suggests that Clarke and Benford had anything other than a deep respect for each others talents.) The effect is somewhat akin to going from a folk, acoustic number to a heavy metal version of the same song.

On the whole, this wasn't a bad book, just not a terribly memorable one. I know Clarke has written better, and I rather suspect Benford has as well. Do check it out if you're a fan of either's work, but it's probably best not to expect too much.

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### **Mace Reynr says**

I guess I'm just not an Arthur Clarke fan.

Most reviews of this books extoll the value of Clarke's original story and pan the poor execution of Benford's sequel. I found it to be more or less the opposite.

Clarke's original chapter was the kind of science fiction that really wears on me; a slow, tedious journey into seemingly nothing. I mean, hundreds of pages to tell a simple tale of a child leaving a city and discovering more to what he once perceived of the world.

Benford's part on the other hand is infinitely vaster, stretching far beyond the constraints of Earth into essentially the discovery of a new God.

So, Clarke's part I found kind of boring, but at least he had set up a template for Benford to work with. Benford on the other hand I found confusingly transcendent for most of the time. Once the travelers first move from Earth to Space at the hands of the colossal pinwheel, I was struck by irritated disbelief for a long time before my mind adapted to the grand scheme of things again.

The ending was sudden, but apropos for the scope Benford was going for.

Overall, this was just okay. I would not be seeking out something like it again however.

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### **Micky says**

I got lucky, and this was the first time I read the story by ACC. I, honestly really liked the follow up by GB better. I recommend this edition if you can get it.

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### **Steve says**

Only three stars because of the sequel included with this. It just doesn't have the same feel as the first book. I

know that it is another author, but it is too great a difference. Otherwise Against the Fall of night would be 4 stars.

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### **Xabi1990 says**

6/10.

La combinación de Clarke y Benford produjo unas cuantas obras que están bien, sin más.

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### **Mark says**

The first half of this novel is Aurthur C. Clarke's classic "Against the Fall of Night"; the second half is a sequel written mostly by Benford, I believe; incredible imaginations; an inspiring vision of a galaxy filled with bizaare biological organisms, structures and forms the size of planets in some cases (!)

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### **Anna says**

Beyond the Fall of Night consists of two parts, a novella by Arthur C. Clarke called Against the Fall of Night and a continuation of this novella by Gregory Benford. The first I found interesting and unique, the second too abstract and rambling.

The original novella was unique and interesting, as it was set billions of years in the future and it was about earth, but so different that it was not recognisable. In this setting, today's time were the Dawn Ages, a very ancient past. This was an interesting perspective. The story itself was ok and just really follows the discovery of different aspects of the world. For instance, the novella describes a machine that operates a lot like a google search, albeit with a waiting period and having the answers printed out on a slip of paper.

The continuation by Benford is set a few centuries after the original novella. It focuses heavily on the biological aspect of the world and universe. Toward the end, the story's climax occured, but it was so abstract and "up in the air" that it didn't really feel like it resolved any of the conflict. The conflict itself was very abstract and ex machina was a recurring theme.

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### **Angela Randall says**

We really own this as an omnibus: Against the Fall of Night/Beyond the Fall of Night

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### **Skylar says**

I really want to rate this higher, and I would if it were published separately. Unfortunately, while the actual

Beyond the Fall of Night plot is quite interesting and engaging (Benford clearly let his creative imagination and humor run wild), there are some critical flaws:

First, the synopsis implies this was a collaboration between Clarke and Benford. As far as I can tell, it's not; rather, it's a re-publishing of *Against the Fall of Night* (Clarke) coupled with *Beyond the Fall of Night* (Benford).

(view spoiler)

I was certainly entertained by *Beyond*, but simply can't get beyond the flaws in Benford's plot.

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### **Raja99 says**

I'm not sure how to rate this one. If I remember correctly, the American edition has deceptive cover blurbs implying that it's a novel-length collaboration between Gregory Benford and Arthur C. Clarke; in reality, it's an omnibus pairing Clarke's sublime first novel, *Against the Fall of Night*, with Benford's not-nearly-as-good sequel written 37 years later. (The UK editions referred to the same book as *Against the Fall of Night / Beyond the Fall of Night*.)

Though I haven't read it in decades, I loved *Against the Fall of Night*, and it's one of the two books (along with Bradbury's *The Halloween Tree*) that made me a lifelong reader in general, and a lifelong reader of SF in particular. In terms of the goodreads rating scale, "It was amazing."

*Beyond the Fall of Night* was rather less to my tastes. It didn't feel like it really fit as a sequel to *Against the Fall of Night* in style, scope, content, or characters. Clarke's novel is about a naive young boy, told in a way that appeals almost perfectly to naive young boys (as I was when I first read it). The setting and prose are austere, and dominated by elegant machine-based technology that largely gets out of the way. Benford's sequel is about a slightly shell-shocked young woman in a lush, riotous setting where biology dominates. In any case, that's my recollection; which may be wrong--frankly, I didn't find the book all that memorable, and I'm in no hurry to reread it. From what I'd recall, I'd give it a rating of "It was ok" on the goodreads scale--or maybe even less than that.

One thing I **do** recall clearly--and really disliked--in Benford's sequel was a huge contradiction between one of the features of his setting and Clarke's. The contradiction clearly showed that the two stories could not be set in the same universe--it knocked me out of the story, and made me wonder if *anyone* had bothered to read the stories back to back before publishing them. My wife was bothered by the same contradiction when she read the book years later.

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### **tim says**

i give this 4 stars for the part I, Clarke's original story "Against the Fall of Night", but give part II, Gregory Benford's sequel to the original story, 1 star.

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## **Stephen Collings says**

Mr. Benford spent several very boring pages in his sequel describing this fantastical ecosystem on the moon. Unfortunately, the moon was BLOWN UP in the first book. Disintegrated. Death Star to the head.

Does Benford even read the novels he tries to write sequels to? Honestly?

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