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Look to Windward (Culture)

By Iain M. Banks



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Look to Windward (Culture) By Iain M. Banks

The Twin Novae battle had been one of the last of the Idiran war, and one of the most horrific: desperate to avert their inevitable defeat, the Idirans had induced not one but two suns to explode, snuffing out worlds and biospheres teeming with sentient life. They were attacks of incredible proportion -- gigadeathcrimes. But the war ended, and life went on.

Now, eight hundred years later, light from the first explosion is about to reach the Masaq' Orbital, home to the Culture's most adventurous and decadent souls. There it will fall upon Masaq's 50 billion inhabitants, gathered to commemorate the deaths of the innocent and to reflect, if only for a moment, on what some call the Culture's own complicity in the terrible event.

Also journeying to Masaq' is Major Quilan, an emissary from the war-ravaged world of Chel. In the aftermath of the conflict that split his world apart, most believe he has come to Masaq' to bring home Chel's most brilliant star and self-exiled dissident, the honored Composer Ziller.

Ziller claims he will do anything to avoid a meeting with Major Quilan, who he suspects has come to murder him. But the Major's true assignment will have far greater consequences than the death of a mere political dissident, as part of a conspiracy more ambitious than even he can know -- a mission his superiors have buried so deeply in his mind that even he cannot remember it.

Hailed by SFX magazine as "an excellent hopping-on point if you've never read a Banks SF novel before," *Look to Windward* is an awe-inspiring immersion into the wildly original, vividly realized civilization that Banks calls the Culture.



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Look to Windward (Culture) By Iain M. Banks Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #97790 in Books
- Published on: 2010-07-26
- Released on: 2010-07-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .90" w x 6.00" l, 1.23 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 384 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Set in Banks's far-future interstellar civilization known as the Culture, this highly literate novel from this celebrated British SF author (*Inversions*) centers on an act of revenge. The Culture is enormously rich and values personal freedom above all else, but it also has a tradition of meddling in the affairs of other, lesser civilizations. This is invariably done with the best of intentions, but occasionally things do go wrong. Parallels to U.S. foreign policy are probably intended, witness the book's dedication to "the Gulf War veterans." In a recent attempt to covertly overthrow the repressive caste system at the center of Chelgrian society, agents of the Culture's secret Special Circumstances unit accidentally triggered a civil war that left five billion Chelgrians both dead and dishonored. Now Chel has sent an ambassador named Quilan to the artificial, bracelet world of Masag' Orbital. Ostensibly he's there to try to convince Ziller, a famous Chelgrian expatriate composer, to return home, but his real mission is to eliminate the AI that controls the Culture orbital. This action will also bring about the destruction of approximately five billion human souls held in suspended animation, thereby, the Chelgrians believe, balancing the books. Although things start a bit slowly, Banks's fine prose, complex plotting and well-rounded characters will eventually win over even the most discerning readers, and all will find themselves fully rewarded when the novel reaches its powerful conclusion. (Aug. 14)Wasp Factory, etc.).

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From Library Journal

When the 800-year-old light of a distant space battle reaches the Masag'Orbital, an emissary from Chel arrives on a mission hidden even to himself. Only Ziller, a Chelgrian composer, can unlock a secret that could save or destroy an entire world. Banks (*Consider Phlebas*; *Inversions*) uses the far future as a playground for the interplay of ideas and images. First published in Great Britain, this literate and challenging tale by one of the genre's master storytellers belongs in most sf collections.

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From [Booklist](#)

The Masag Orbital is about to witness the light from an eight-centuries-old act of war, and the Hub Mind is concerned about the reaction of the Culture's elite. Meanwhile, Ziller, a Chelgrian composer, is preparing a major performance, and Chelgrian Major Quilan has come to the orbital to persuade Ziller to return home. Quilan is also involved in a plan to avenge the 800-year-old act of war. He is all the more willing to participate because he lost his wife in the Chelgrian Caste War, which is blamed on the intervention of the Culture, which is human. Banks makes the passions and follies of his characters real enough to remain distinct against a setting that includes continent-sized living entities and a culture embracing 31 trillion inhabitants. Even if this is no more than a thinking reader's space opera, it will definitely please such readers, in and out of Banks' established audience. *Roland Green*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Winston Nakashima:

Now a day folks who Living in the era just where everything reachable by connect to the internet and the resources in it can be true or not need people to be aware of each info they get. How individuals to be smart in obtaining any information nowadays? Of course the reply is reading a book. Studying a book can help persons out of this uncertainty Information specially this Look to Windward (Culture) book because book offers you rich details and knowledge. Of course the information in this book hundred per-cent guarantees there is no doubt in it you probably know this.

Terry Matlock:

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Jessica Keith:

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