

SPECULATIVE FICTION REVIEW by Stephanie Young

TITLE *Metal Swarm (Volume 6 of The Saga of the Seven Suns)*
AUTHOR Kevin J. Anderson
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Précis The hydrogues were defeated in the last volume and now both the Hansa and the Ildirans are picking up the pieces. King Peter is strengthening his newly founded Confederation on Theroc and Basil Wenceslas, chairman of the Hansa is slowly losing his grip as he tries to discredit the Confederation and hang on to the colonies.

The new Ildiran Mage-Imperator Jora'h is taking a new approach to his position much to the dismay of many Ildirans, which eventually puts him in harm's way. Adding to his problems are the faeros, led by his brother Rusa'h who has been infused with by the faeros which is giving him tremendous power and control over the *thism* which links all Ildirans.

The Klikiss robots are still bent on destroying all humans until the real Klikiss emerge and start reclaiming their old worlds. The Klikiss prove to be virtually undefeatable but a small group of humans manage to escape. News is just starting to get around that the Klikiss threat is real and just as scary as the faeros.

The Roamers are back to mining the skies above the various planets and some are siding with the new Confederation. Clearly the final battles are being setup between the Klikiss, the faeros and humanity.

Protagonist: Humanity of all forms

Antagonist: Klikiss and the faeros

What I liked The continuing build up toward the climax, King Peter bringing humanity together, the intricate but easy to follow plotting is exciting to read. The addition of the Klikiss is also a terrific plot twist.

What I didn't like That this series is going to be over with the next book! The only other thing is that some of my favorite characters are killed in this book. I know that as we near the end, many will go but it is always hard to part with someone who you have known for several volumes.

Final Comments This series is everything I read science fiction for - great drama, sweeping story arc, heroic humans, cool aliens, awesome space battles and great characterization. This series is in my top five and has, in my opinion, brought Anderson to a new level. You cannot go wrong recommending this series to someone new to the genre. It simply doesn't get any better than this. What is sad is that none of these have ever been nominated for a Hugo. I nominate them every year but obviously not enough others do. The final volume - *The Ashes of Worlds* is out now in hardcover and I will pick it up in the next few weeks as I have to see how this all comes out.

Rating 🍪🍪🍪🍪🍪

