Foundation marks the first of a series of tales set so far in the future that Earth is all but forgotten by humans who live throughout the galaxy. Yet all is not well with the Galactic Empire. Its vast size is crippling to it. In particular, the administrative planet, honeycombed and tunneled with offices and staff, is vulnerable to attack or breakdown. The only person willing to confront this imminent catastrophe is Hari Seldon, a psychohistorian and mathematician. Seldon can scientifically predict the future, and it doesn't look pretty: a new Dark Age is scheduled to send humanity into barbarism in 500 years. He concocts a scheme to save the knowledge of the race in an Encyclopedia Galactica. But this project will take generations to complete, and who will take up the torch after him? The first Foundation trilogy (Foundation, Foundation and Empire, Second Foundation) won a Hugo Award in 1965 for Best All-Time Series. Its science fiction on the grand scale; one of the classics of the field. -- Brooks Peck

My Personal Review:
Few works of literature merit me acquiring several copies and I must say that the Foundation series is one of those. Whenever I find an old edition of this series I tend to pick it up and now I own several copies of this series of books ranging from decrepit old paperbacks to some of these newer copies.

Here are a few spoilers about the story but I hope not too many:

Overall, the premise for foundation is quite interesting. The books take place in a far away future where humanity has colonized the galaxy. In this far future, a scientist discovers that he can tell the future...not for any particular person but for the aggregate of humanity as a whole and then only over long periods of time. The future that Hari Seldon, our scientist, sees is grim: the galactic empire and the society that billions upon billions of people depend on will fall. Nothing can stop this decline and fall.
The scientist though figures that his formulas and computers can find key inflection points in history when the future can be altered or helped along and if the right decisions are made, the empire can be restored much more quickly than if history was simply left to run its course.

So, the Foundation is created to safeguard human knowledge and especially this concept of psychohistory and every few millennia or so - whenever the computers predict that a shove is needed to get the empire back to its glory - the Foundation speaks and tells people what to do to fix things.

Overall, this is a fantastic series that Asimov at some point winds up tying into with his whole Robot series...you know the laws of robotics?...which winds up being just fantastic.

This book was written in the 50s or 60s so there is quite a propensity to use nuclear technology powered gadgets of all kinds and people smoke quite a bit and the characters don't tend to have that heavy gravitas that you find in some modern TV like Battlestar Galactica: it was a more innocent time and that comes across in his writing. It is quite interesting to read science fiction from this era as it shows some of the cutting edge thinking of the time, but Asimov was so good that his writing transcends through to today and in many ways is better than some of the overly complex baryon/tachyon hard sci fi of today. This is smart sci fi - and it is smart sci fi because Asimov is so well read. So please as you pick this up, put it in context - you're not going to get Stephen Baxter or even Gregory Benford and you're not going to get David Brin -- you are going to get Asimov and it just tastes different from modern sci fi. These words are 50 years old.

Now, Asimov was very well read and that comes across in his writing and if you read carefully you will find Machiavelli, Gibbon, Plato, and a slew of other writers concepts interwoven into some of the very original thinking of Asimov.

Asimov was truly a giant and the Foundation series is required reading along with the Robot series. A couple of things, one - there is quite a bit of mythology and gravitas associated with Foundation as one of the foundational works of science fiction and that causes people to approach the work with different emotions. Some people have their hopes way up. Others, like me approached Foundation with a bit of trepidation, I was a bit scared as a 15 year old whether I'd be able to read this book - my literature teacher recommended it to me. I must say that Foundation reads fast and it is a rather engaging story, so you get sucked in pretty quickly and there aren't a ton of turns or multiple branches like in Zelazny - Foundation is straight forward....and refreshing in many ways.

The second parting item I leave you with is regarding this edition. I found it to be more of a collectors paperback than a mass market paperback - a
bith higher quality. It does give you the feel that you're reading something special...but if you want to save yourselves a few bucks go for the mass market edition or if you want to dress it up a bit, get this one --- or if you really want to get an old copy, go to some antique book shop and pick up a leather bound edition with the gold trim (yes such a beast is out there).

In any case, enjoy - this is classic science fiction. Those are loaded words and I offer them as consideration before you pick this book up.

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Foundation - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!