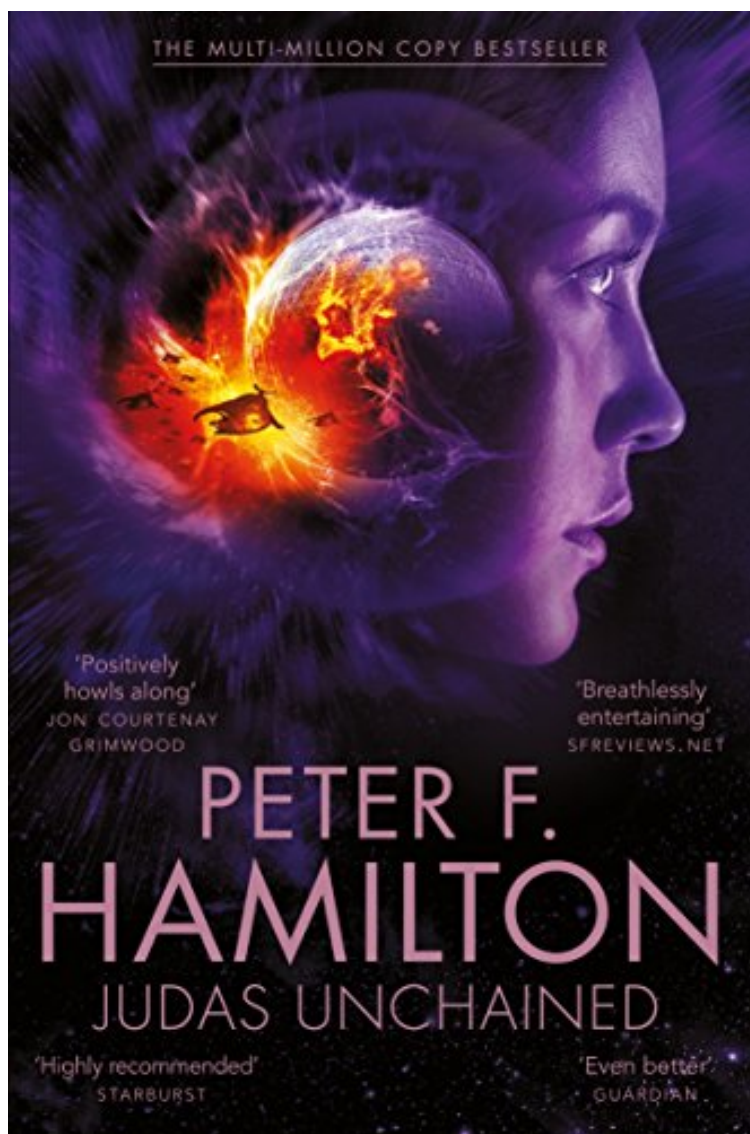


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# Judas Unchained



*Par Peter F. Hamilton*  
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(Free) Judas Unchained

**Par Peter F. Hamilton : Judas Unchained** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Judas Unchained:

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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurJudas Unchained is the high-action concluding novel of the Commonwealth Saga from Peter F. Hamilton, one of the world's bestselling science fiction writers.For hundreds of years the human race has been manipulated into starting a war that could destroy civilisation. As Chief Investigator Paula Myo hunts down the terrifying creature behind the ploy, the invasion continues and dozens of worlds fall to the enemy.Admiral Kime orders a defence with war-winning super-weapons, only to find that their adversaries have equally powerful armaments. How they got them is the question. Has the Commonwealth's top-secret defence project been compromised, or is the truth even worse?.co.uk sPeter F. Hamilton's flair for huge, star-spanning SF adventures continues with Judas Unchained. This concludes the single long novel-- over 1,800 pages in all--whose first half is Pandoras Star. Humanity's interstellar Commonwealth is in

serious trouble. Thirteen of its hundreds of worlds (linked by wormholes and high-speed trains) were lost to a first mass attack by the insanely hostile alien Primes. The controlling Prime intelligence,

MorningLightMountain, can imagine no way of dealing with first contact but genocide--and has the resources to do it. Amid political and personal chaos, it's becoming clear that the war was arranged by a third party. For centuries, only the fanatical, outlawed Guardians cult believed in this mysterious influence called the Starflyer. New evidence emerges, only to vanish again. Key figures are destroyed by near-invincible assassins crammed with inbuilt "wetwired" weaponry. One determined detective is on the track, but she faces massive political opposition. The multi-stranded action follows many criss-crossing human stories, with fights, pursuits, quests, deaths, resurrections, exotic landscapes and armaments, good sex, and several interesting aliens. Betrayals are frequent, thanks to brainwashed Starflyer agents in positions of trust. Only the Guardians have a scheme to deal with the Starflyer itself--a grandiose strategy known as "the planet's revenge"--but no one trusts those crazy cultists. In space, the arms race becomes dizzying, with Prime doomsday weapons used against suns while frantic human research leads to "quantumbusters" so appalling that there's serious moral debate about their use. Can we face the guilt of total genocide, even against a horror like MorningLightMountain? Or is there some way to force this psychopathic genie back into the bottle? The action climaxes in a long, exhilarating chase sequence spiced with ultra-violent skirmishing as the Starflyer comes into the open at last. Stormgliding, an extreme sport introduced in book one, becomes vital to the race against time. Meanwhile, rival starships with different plans chase one another to the Prime system. Hamilton delivers the expected multiple payoffs with suitable pyrotechnics and a satisfying scatter of happy endings. A long, colourful, suspenseful example of modern British space opera. --David

Langford

Extrait

Right from the start, there was something about the investigation that made Lieutenant Renne Kampasa uneasy. The first little qualm came sliding up out of her subconscious when she saw the victims loft apartment. She'd been inside loft apartments just like it a hundred times before. It was the kind of plush metropolitan pad that a group of funky TSI soap characters usually lived in: beautiful single people with well-paying jobs that gave them most of the day off so they could enjoy a floor space of around five hundred square meters as they lounged around in an extravagant decor provided by overpriced interior designers. The kind of scenario completely divorced from real life but full of dramatic or comic potential for the scriptwriters. Yet here she was, a day after the Guardians shotgun message that denounced President Elaine Doi as a Starflyer agent, being shown into just such an apartment on the top floor of a refurbished factory block in Daroca, the capital city of Arevalo. The massive open-plan lounge had a wide sunny balcony that looked out over the Caspe River which flowed through the heart of the city. Like all the capitals of successful phase one space planets, Daroca was a rich montage of parks, elegant buildings, and broad streets stretching away to the horizon. Under the planets bronze-shaded morning sunlight it glimmered with a sharp coronal hue, adding to the panoramas graceful appeal. Renne shook her head in mild disbelief at the fabulous view. Even with the decent salary the navy paid her, she could never afford the rent on this. And it was currently being paid by three first-life girls, all under twenty-five. One of them was showing Renne and Tarlo in: Catriona Saleeb, a small twenty-two-year-old, with long curly black hair, wearing a simple green dress with strong geometric lilac stripes--except Renne knew the dress was a Fon, which put its price tag over a thousand Earth dollars, and the girl was using it as a casual housedress. Renne's e-butler printed up Saleeb's file in her virtual vision; she was a junior member of the Morishi Grand Family, working at a bank in Daroca's large financial district. Her two friends were Trisha Marina Halgarth, who had a product placement job at Vecddale, a Halgarth subsidiary that designed chic domestic systems, and Isabella Halgarth, who'd taken a job at a contemporary art gallery in town. They fitted the whole profile: three bachelorettes sharing a place in the city, having fun together while they waited for their true careers to launch, or husbands of equal wealth and status to materialize and carry them off to a merged trust fund mansion to produce their contracted quota of children. "This is one great place you've got here," Tarlo said as they made their way into the lounge. Catriona turned and gave him a smile that was a lot more than simple politeness. "Thanks, it's a family place so we get it cheap." "Plenty of wild parties, huh." Her smile became teasing. "Maybe." Renne shot him an exasperated look; they were supposed to be on duty, not hitting on potential witnesses. He just grinned back, perfect white teeth gleaming out of his handsome tanned face. She'd seen for herself just how successful that grin could be in the clubs and bars around Paris. Catriona took them over to the kitchen section, which was separated from the lounge by a broad marble-topped breakfast bar. The kitchen was ultramodern, equipped with every convenience gadget possible, all built in to swan-white egg-shaped wall modules. Somehow, Renne couldn't imagine it being used for much actual cooking, not even by the

complicated-looking chef bots. The two other girls were sitting on stools at the bar. "Trisha Marina Halgarth?" Renne asked. "Thats me." One of the girls got to her feet. She had a heart-shaped face and light olive skin with small, dark green butterfly-wing OCTattoos flowing back from each hazel eye. She wore an oversize white toweling robe like defensive armor; she kept clutching at the fluffy fabric, pulling it tighter around her. Her bare feet had silver rings around each toe. "Were from navy intelligence," Tarlo said. "Lieutenant Kampasa and I are investigating what happened to you." "You mean, how gullible I was," she snapped. "Easy, babe," Isabella Halgarth said. Her arm went around Trishas shoulders. "These are the good guys." She stood to face the investigators. Renne found herself having to look up slightly; Isabella was several centimeters taller than she, almost Tarlos height. She was dressed in very tight jeans that showed off her legs. Her long blond hair had been gathered into a single tail that reached down to her hips. It was an image of casual elegance. Tarlos grin had broadened. Renne wanted to push him against a wall and shout a warning about professional conduct, wagging her finger in his face for emphasis. Instead, she did her best to ignore the mating dance appraisals going on all around her, and said, "Ive investigated several similar cases, Ms. Halgarth. In my experience, the victim is rarely gullible. The Guardians have developed a very sophisticated operation over the years." "Years!" Catriona snorted. "And you havent caught them yet?" Renne kept her polite expression in place. "We believe we are close to a resolution." The three girls exchanged doubtful looks. Trisha sat down again, gripping at her robe. "I know its unpleasant for you," Tarlo said. "But if you could start by telling me the mans name." His grin mellowed to sympathetic encouragement. Trisha gave a reluctant nod. "Sure. Howard Liang." She smiled feebly. "I dont suppose thats his real name?" "No," Tarlo said. "But that identity will have created a lot of data within Darocas cybersphere. Our forensic software teams will pull out a great many associated files. We can check on the false identity information, where it was inserted, possibly who was involved forging it. Every little bit helps." "How did you meet?" Renne asked. "Party. We get to quite a lot of them." She glanced at her two girlfriends for support. "This is a great city," Isabella said. "Daroca is a wealthy planet; people here have the money and time to play." Her eyes gave Tarlo an amused glance. "Trish and I are Dynasty, Catriona is a Grandee. What can I say? Were highly desirable." "Was Howard Liang wealthy?" Renne asked. "He didnt have a trust fund," Trisha said, then colored. "Well, he said he didnt. His family was supposed to come from Velaines. He said he was a couple of years out of his first rejuve. I liked him." "Where did he work?" "On the commodities desk at Ridgeon Financial. God, I dont even know if thats true." She pressed her free hand against her forehead, rubbing hard. "I dont know how old he really was. I know nothing about him at all. Thats what I hate most about this. Not that he stole my author certificate, not that he gave me a memory wipe. Just . . . being taken in like that. Its so stupid. Our family security office sends us enough warnings. I never thought they applied to me." "Please," Tarlo said. "Dont blame yourself. These guys are very professional. Hell, Id probably get taken in by them. Now, when did you last see him?" "Three days ago. We went out for the evening. Id been invited to the Bourne club, there was some event, a new drama series launch. We had a meal afterward, then I came home. I think. The apartment domestic array says I got in at five in the morning. I dont remember anything after dinner. Is that when they did it?" "Possibly," Renne said. "Did Mr. Liang share his apartment with anyone?" "No. He lived by himself. I met a couple of his friends; I think they were from Ridgeon. We only went out for a couple of weeks. Enough for me to drop my guard, I guess." She shook her head angrily. "I hate this. The whole Commonwealth thinks I believe the President is an alien. Ill never be able to face anyone at work again. Ill have to go back to Solidade and get my face changed and use another name." "That would probably help," Tarlo said gently. "But before that we need to run some tests on you. Theres a medical forensic team waiting down in the lobby. They can do this in a clinic, or here, whichever youre comfortable with." "Do it here," Trisha said. "Just get it over with." "Of course. Another team will sweep his apartment." "What do you expect to find there?" Isabella asked. "Well pin down his DNA, of course," Renne told her. "Who knows what else well uncover, especially if they used it as their base. And well pull his files from Ridgeon Financials personnel records, which Id like you to verify. It would help to have a picture of him." "Wont he have had reprofiling by now?" Catriona asked. "Yes. But its his background well be focusing our investigation on, his past. Thats where the clues to his origin are. You must understand, we have to crack the whole Guardian organization open; its the only way to bring Liang to justice. Were not pursuing him singularly." They spent another twenty minutes in the loft apartment, taking statements from the girls, then handed them over to the medical forensic team. Renne was halfway to the door when she stopped and gave the big lounge a thoughtful examination. Trisha was going into her bedroom with two of the forensic team. "What?" Tarlo asked. "Nothing." She gave Catriona and

Isabella a last look before leaving. "Come on," he said in the elevator back down to the lobby. "I know you. Somethings bugging you." "Deja vu." "What?" "Ive seen this crime scene before." "Me too. Every time the Guardians shotgun the unisphere the boss sends us out to have a look around." "Yeah, so you should have recognized it, too. Remember Minilya?" Tarlo frowned as the doors opened. They walked out into the lobby. "Vaguely; it was four years ago. But that was a bunch of guys sharing an apartment." "Oh, so what? Youre going sexist on me? Its different because its girls?" "Hey!" "It was exactly the same setup, Tarlo. And weve seen the all-girls group before as well." "On Nzega, April Gallar Halgarth. She was part of a holiday group." "Buwangwa, too, dont forget." "Okay, so whats your point?" "I dont like repetition. And the Guardians know well catch them a whole lot easier if they stick to the same pattern." "I dont see a pattern." "Its not a pattern, exactly." "What then?" "Im not sure. Theyre repeating their procedure. Thats not like them." Tarlo led the way out through the lobbys revolving doors and used his e-butler to call a city taxi over. "The Guardians dont have a lot of choice in this. Admittedly the number of dumb young Halgarths in the galaxy is pretty huge, but their living and social arrangements only have a finite number of permutations. Its not the Guardians who are repeating, its the Halgarths." Renne frowned as the taxi pulled up in front of them; he was right, though that wasnt the line shed been thinking along. "Do you think the Halgarth security is running an entrapment operation? They could have hung Trisha out as bait?" "No," he said heatedly. "Thats wrong. If it was an entrapment they would have caught Liang the first night he met Trisha. His identity history data might have stood up to a review by Ridgeon Financial, but a specific entrapment operation run by the Halgarths . . . no way." "They must be running entrapment operations. If I were the senior Halgarths Id be goddamn furious the family was constantly targeted by the Guardians." Tarlo settled back into the taxis leather seat. "They do tend to put a fair amount of pressure on the boss." "I dont think thats right, either. If they were running an entrapment theyd tell us." "Would they?" "All right, maybe not," she said, "but as this wasnt an entrapment, its irrelevant anyway." "We dont know it wasnt an entrapment." "They didnt catch Liang, and they havent told us, which they would do at this stage." "Alternatively, theyre busy tracking Liang, and dont want to spook him by telling us." "Thats not it." She was having trouble even looking at Tarlo. "Something is just wrong. It was too neat." "Too neat?" The tone of disbelief in his voice made her wince. "Yeah, I know, I know. But something bothers me. That loft apartment, those girls, it all shouted out, Here are dumb rich kids, come and rip them off. " "I dont get this. Whos in the wrong here, the Guardians or the Halgarths?" "Well . . . Okay, I dont suppose it could have been the Halgarths, unless that really was an entrapment operation." He grinned at her. "Youre getting as bad as the boss when it comes to conspiracies. Youll be blaming the Starflyer next." "Could do." She gave him a weak smile. "But Im still going to tell her I think somethings odd about this one." "Career suicide." "Come on! What kind of a detective are you? Were supposed to act on intuitive hunches. Dont you watch any cop soaps?" "Unisphere shows are for people without lives. Me, Im busy in the evenings." "Yeah," she said snidely. "Still putting on your navy uniform when you go around the clubs?" "Im a naval officer. Why shouldnt I?" Renne laughed. "God! Does that really work?" "It does if you can find girls like those three." She sighed. "Listen," he said. "Im serious. What can you tell Myo? You had a feeling? Shell just bawl you out big time. And dont look to me to back you up. There was nothing wrong with it." "The boss appreciates the way we consider cases. You know shes always saying we have to take a more holistic approach to crime." "Holistic, yeah, not psychic." They were still arguing about it forty minutes later when they arrived back at the Paris office. Five uniformed navy officers were standing in a group outside Paula Myos office. "Whats happening?" Tarlo asked Alic Hogan. "Columbias in there with her," the Commander said. He looked very uncomfortable. "Christ," Renne muttered. "Itll be the LA fiasco. I was supposed to be chasing the leads from that operation this morning." "We all were," Hogan said. He forced his gaze away from the closed door. "Did you find anything in Daroca?" Renne was trying to think what to say; Hogan was very by-the-book. "It was a standard Guardians operation," Tarlo said quickly. He was staring hard at Renne. "We left forensics working through the scene." "Good. Keep me updated." "Yes, sir." "Standard operation," Renne said scathingly as they walked back to their desks. "I just saved your ass back there," Tarlo said. "You can say all that kind of intuition stuff to the boss, but not Hogan. All that little prick is interested in is checkmarks in the box." "Okay, okay," she grumbled. Paula Myo walked out of her office, carrying her shoulder bag and the little rabbakas plant she kept on the windowsill. A red-faced Rafael Columbia was standing behind her, dressed in his full admirals uniform. Renne had never seen Myo look so shocked. It sent a cold shiver down her own spine; nothing ever ruffled the boss. "Good-bye," Myo told the office at large. "And thank you for all the hard work you did for me." "Paula?" Tarlo gasped. She gave him a small shake of her head, and he fell silent. Renne watched Paula

Myo walk out; it was like seeing a funeral procession. "Commander Hogan," Columbia said. "A word please." He vanished back into Myos office. Alic Hogan almost ran in after him. The door closed. Renne sat down hard. "That didnt happen," she mumbled incredulously. "They cant get rid of her. She is the goddamn Directorate." "But were not the Directorate," Tarlo said quietly. "Not anymore." From the Hardcover edition.