The Expanse (novel series)

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The Expanse is a series of science fiction novels, novellas, and stories by James S. A. Corey, the pen name of authors Daniel Abraham and Ty Franck. The first novel, *Leviathan Wakes*, was nominated for the Hugo Award for Best Novel in 2012.[1]

As of 2015, *The Expanse* consists of six main novels and four shorter works (two prequel short stories, one prequel novella, and one novella set between *Caliban's War* and *Abaddon's Gate*). Three more novels are planned,[2] as well as three more novellas. The series has been adapted for television by the SyFy Network, also under the title of *The Expanse*. The series premiered on streaming services on November 23, 2015, and on SyFy on December 14, 2015.[3]

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Plot synopsis

The series mainly follows captain Jim Holden and the crew of the salvaged Martian warship *Rocinante* as they stumble into the greatest conspiracy that mankind has ever known, going against greedy corporations, corrupt politicians, and warmongering admirals to get the truth.

Publishing history

Novels

#	Title	Pages	Publication date	ISBN
1	*Leviathan Wakes*	561	June 15, 2011	ISBN 978-0-316-12908-4
2	*Caliban's War*	595	June 26, 2012	ISBN 978-1-841-49990-1
3	*Abaddon's Gate*	539	June 4, 2013	ISBN 978-0-316-12907-7
4	*Cibola Burn*	583	June 17, 2014	ISBN 978-0-316-21762-6
5	*Nemesis Games*	544	June 2, 2015	ISBN 978-0-316-21758-3
6	*Babylon's Ashes*[4]	608 (Orbit UK)[5]	June 16, 2016 (Orbit USA)[6]	November 1, 2016) UK: ISBN 978-0-356-50426-1 (USA:9780316334747)
7	Unknown		forthcoming 2017	
8	Unknown		forthcoming 2018	
9[4]	Unknown		forthcoming 2019	

Novellas

Three novellas have been published. The first, entitled *Gods of Risk*, was released on September 15, 2012. The story takes place between *Caliban's War* and *Abaddon's Gate*. On April 29, 2014, Corey released the prequel novella *The Churn* as an eBook. The third novella, entitled *The Vital Abyss*, was released on October 13, 2015.[7]

Short stories

- "Drive" (November 27, 2012 in *Edge of Infinity*, July 9, 2015 online)
- "The Butcher of Anderson Station" (October 17, 2011)

Audiobooks

All of the novels up to Nemesis Games and all the novellas have been released as audiobooks, with Jefferson Mays as the narrator for all novels (except *Cibola Burn*) and the novella *The Vital Abyss*. Erik Davies is the narrator for *Cibola Burn* and the first two novellas that were released (*Gods of Risk* and *The Churn*).

Characters

POV/Main Characters

There are two main point-of-view characters in the first book (plus two for the prologue/epilogue) and four main characters for each of the following books.

The *Rocinante*

An independent gunship crewed by the survivors of the ice hauler *Canterbury*. Formerly the *Tachi* & property of the Martian navy.

- **James "Jim" R. Holden**, the Earther captain of the *Rocinante*
  First Appearance: Leviathan Wakes (primary narrator in all novels)
- **Naomi Nagata**, a Belter engineer and executive officer of the *Rocinante*
  First Appearance: Leviathan Wakes (primary narrator in Nemesis Games)
- **Amos Burton**, the Earther chief engineer of the *Rocinante*
  First Appearance: Leviathan Wakes (primary narrator in Nemesis Games)
- **Alex Kamal**, the Martian pilot of the *Rocinante*
  First Appearance: Leviathan Wakes (primary narrator in Nemesis Games)

The Outer Planets

- **Josephus "Joe" Aloisius Miller**, a Belter who worked as a detective for the Ceres station security firm, Star Helix Security
  First Appearance: Leviathan Wakes (primary POV character)
- **Juliette "Julie" Andromeda Mao**, the oldest child of Earther plutocrat Jules-Pierre Mao, former pinnace racer, and Outer Planets Alliance convert
  First Appearance: Leviathan Wakes (epilogue POV character)
- **Frederick "Fred" Lucius Johnson**, a former UN marine reveled as the Butcher of Anderson Station and now the leader of the OPA
  First Appearance: Leviathan Wakes (epilogue POV character)
- **Dr. Praxilike "Prax" Meng**, the chief botanist of the RMD-Southern soy farm project on Ganymede and father of Mei Meng
  First Appearance: Caliban's War (primary POV character)
- **Mei Meng**, the daughter of Praxilike Meng and Nicola Mallo
  First Appearance: Caliban's War (prologue POV character)
- **Carlos "Bull" c de Baca**, a member of the OPA serving as chief security officer aboard the *Behemoth*
  First Appearance: Abaddon's Gate (primary POV character)
- **Basia "Baz" Merton**, a welder from Ganymede
  First Appearance: Caliban's War (primary POV character in Cibola Burn
- **Rev. Dr. Annushka "Anna" Volovodov**, a Methodist pastor at St. John's United on Europa
  First Appearance: Abaddon's Gate (primary POV character)
- **Manéo "Néo" Jung-Espinoza**, a young Belter from Ceres
  First Appearance: Abaddon's Gate (prologue POV character)
- **Filip Inaros**, a teenage member of the OPA
  First Appearance: Nemesis Games (prologue POV character)

Mars

- **Roberta "Bobbie" W. Draper**, a gunnery sergeant in the MCRN, of the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force
  First Appearance: Caliban's War (primary narrator)
- **Saaveteere**, the captain of the MCRN *Barkeith*
  First Appearance: Nemesis Games (epilogue narrator)

Earth

- **Dimitri Havelock**, a security contractor from Earth & former partner of Joe Miller
  First Appearance: Leviathan Wakes (primary narrator in Cibola Burn)
- **Chrisjen Avasarala**, the UN Assistant Undersecretary of Executive Administration
  First Appearance: Caliban's War (primary narrator)
- **Clarissa "Clarie" Melpomene Mao**, a daughter of Jules-Pierre Mao, magnate of Mao-Kwikowski Mercantile, from Luna
  First Appearance: Abaddon's Gate (primary narrator)
- **Melba Alzheta Koh**, a licensed electrochemical technician
  First Appearance: Abaddon's Gate (primary narrator)
- **Dr. Elvi Okoye**, a biologist from Earth
  First Appearance: Cibola Burn (primary narrator)

The Expanse

- **The Investigator**, a constructor of the Protomolecule, an infectious agent with extraterrestrial origins
  First Appearance: Abaddon's Gate (primary narrator in Cibola Burn)

Setting

The Expanse is set in a future in which humanity has colonized much of the Solar System, but does not have the means to travel to other systems. In the asteroid belt and beyond, tensions are rising between Earth's United Nations, Mars, and the outer planets.

The series similarly takes place in our solar system, using many real world locations such as Ceres and Eros in the asteroid belt, several moons of Jupiter, with Ganymede and Europa the most developed and small science bases as far out as Phoebe around Saturn and Titania around Uranus. There are also well established, domed settlements on Mars and the Moon.

As the series progresses, humanity gains access to thousands of new worlds by use of the ring, an artificially sustained Einstein-Rosen bridge, or wormhole, created by a long dead alien race. The ring in our solar system is 2 AU from the orbit of Uranus, and passing through it leads to a hub of starless space approximately one million kilometers across with more than 1,300 other rings, each with a solar system on the other side. In the center of the hub there is an alien space station that controls the gates, and can also set instantaneous speed limits on objects inside of the hub as a means of defense.

The first of the new worlds that is settled was named Ilus by the human refugees that first landed there, or New Terra by the United Nations. The planet is slightly smaller than Earth with slightly higher gravity and similarity of low large continent with thousands of archipelagos and thousands of islands spread throughout the large, single ocean. There are fauna and flora similar to that on Earth (creatures with eyes, mouths, limbs etc.) but still different enough to be visibly alien. There are also large plains on the southern and thirteen moons around the planet that are thought to be artificial, given their consistent spacing and identical orbit. Even using the ring system, the time it takes to get to Ilus is significant. It takes an average ship about eighteen months to get there from Earth, and transmissions take two years to travel the distance.

Politics

The three main political structures in the Solar System are the United Nations (UN), governing Earth and the Moon, the Martian government, and the Outer Planets Alliance (OPA), which begins the series as a terrorist organization that eventually becomes the de facto government of the asteroid belt and the moons of the outer planets, with the exception of Ganymede. Political tensions exist between all three factions, though the most palpable and far-reaching is the pseudo-racial division between Belters and Earthers. Earthers and Martians and those born among the outer planets, called Belters.

Belters, due to a life in reduced gravity, have developed a physiology that includes elongated limbs and spine and an enlarged head. However, while they are well adapted to space, most, even with extensive medicinal reinforcement of their bodies, find gravity wells lethal, forever barring them from the surface of Earth, Mars, or the Moon. Martians are described as "built like bulls" and are equipped and trained to fight in zero gravity, and, with centuries of history in space suits. The form of communication combines a mix of Earth tongues and physical signs (such as 'yes' in ASL) into a polyglot language that most non-Belters find unintelligible. Their comfort with the confined spaces of the remote habitations of human civilization and the ease and grace with which they move through zero-g environments also set them apart from their planet-bound brethren.

The OPA, in its initial confrontation with the UN and Mars, fought against what it perceived as oppression by these governments of the Belter populations of the moons and asteroids. Once it gains legitimacy, the OPA strives to act as a government for these peoples and reduce the tensions that brought about its existence. Though they are marginally successful in this endeavor within the Sol system, once humanity gains access to the ring gates, these racial conflicts rise once again.

Technology

While there are space ships and domed cities throughout the Solar System, the series features technology in a realistic way. Traditional projectile weaponry and missiles are the standard, with the exception of nuclear weapons. Artificial gravity is produced either through rotation or linear acceleration. Ship speed is limited to acceleration curves no higher than what the human body can handle. Standard practice is to keep ships at roughly 1g, but in emergencies crews may run at higher acceleration curves for short bursts. Crew and passengers are required to wear pressure suits at all times, but require long, and reusable, stints in space suits. The form of communication combines a mix of Earth tongues and physical signs (such as 'yes' in ASL) into a polyglot language that most non-Belters find unintelligible. Their comfort with the confined spaces of the remote habitations of human civilization and the ease and grace with which they move through zero-g environments also set them apart from their planet-bound brethren.

The ring gates, which are the only means of interstellar travel, are a mystery. Their speed of light, limiting both the dissemination of information and the ability of far off powers to respond to rapidly changing situations, a theme throughout the series.

The most advanced technology in the series is the Epstein Drive, a modified fusion drive invented by the Martian Solomon Epstein one hundred and fifty years before the start of *Leviathan Wakes*. Travel with an Epstein drive requires initial acceleration towards its destination for the first half of the journey, at which point it flips its ship around and decelerates with the same thrust for the remaining distance. The Epstein engine is far more efficient than traditional solid or liquid fueled rockets, allowing ships to devote more storage space to cargo while keeping fuel volume relatively low. It enabled humanity to expand outward from Earth and the inner planets, allowing them to colonize the asteroid belt and outer planets.

Inspiration and writing

Ty Franck began developing the world of *The Expanse* as an idea for a massively multiplayer online role-playing game. After a number of years the idea shifted to become the setting for a tabletop game. Abraham, who had been playing the game, noticed how several books on his own at this point, noticed the depth of the world that Franck had created and thought they should write a book series out of it: "People who write books don't do this much research."[8]

Writing process

James S. A. Corey is the pen name for writing partners Daniel Abraham and Ty Franck, who share the writing workload. Franck writes all the Holden, Bobbie, and Anna chapters, while Abraham writes the Miller, Melba, Avasarala, Bull, and Prax chapters.[9] They also meet weekly to discuss upcoming chapters and swap completed chapters for the other to edit.[8]

Narrative structure

The novels are written in third person limited style where each chapter takes place from the point of view of a particular character, with the prologue and the epilogue usually differing by being a one-off viewpoint, or a character from past books. There are two main point-of-view characters in the first book (plus two for the prologue/epilogue) and four main characters for each of the following books.

Viewpoint characters	
Name	**Viewpoint in book**
Jim Holden	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Bobbie Draper	2, 4 (epilogue)
Chrisjen Avasarala	2, 4 (epilogue)
Julie Mao	1 (prologue)
Josephus Miller	1
Fred Johnson	1 (epilogue)
Mei Meng	2 (prologue)
Praxilike Meng	2
Manéo Jung-Espinoza	3 (prologue)
Carlos c de Baca	3
Melba Alzheta Koh	3
Annushka Volovodov	3
Clarissa Melpomene Mao	3
Basia Merton	4
Elvi Okoye	4
Dimitri Havelock	4
The Investigator	4 (interludes)
Filip Inaros	5 (prologue)
Alex Kamal	5
Naomi Nagata	5
Amos Burton	5
Saaveteere	5 (epilogue)

Reception

Critical response

The series overall has been well received, with the first novel *Leviathan Wakes* being the highest praised.

For *Caliban's War*-Wired.com's Geek Dad and Publishers Weekly both praised the novel, with GeekDad citing the book's "believable characters, realistic and interesting settings, and a really recognizable" as a highlight.[10][11]

Publishers Weekly gave *Abaddon's Gate* a starred review saying "series fans will find this installment the best yet."[12]

Publishers Weekly also gave *Cibola Burn* a starred review and called it "splendid" and it "blends adventure with uncommon decency."[13]

Reviews

- "It's been too long since we've had a really kickass space opera." - George R.R. Martin
- "The science fiction equivalent of *A Song of Ice and Fire*." - NPR Books
- "This is the best space opera I've read since Iain Banks died. And right now." - *io9*
- "The is the best the way it's supposed to be." - *Wall Street Journal*
- "Superb...a thrill to follow." - *Washington Post*
- "Combining an exploration of real human frailties with big SF ideas and exciting thriller action, Corey cements the series as must-read space opera." - *Library Journal*

Awards and nominations

- *Leviathan Wakes* (2011) - Hugo Award for Best Novel nominee 2012, Locus Award for Best Science Fiction Novel nominee 2012
- *Abaddon's Gate* (2013) - Locus Award for Best Science Fiction Novel winner 2014, Goodreads Choice Awards, Best Science Fiction nominee 2013

Derived works

TV series

The American TV channel Syfy announced a straight-to-series commitment to a television adaptation of *The Expanse* in April 2014, ordering the production of ten episodes to premiere in a future season.[14] and premiered in December 2015. The series stars Thomas Jane as Josephus Miller and Steven Strait as Jim Holden. The rest of the crew of the *Rocinante* are played by Dominique Tipper as Naomi Nagata, Cas Anvar as Alex Kamal, and Wes Chatham as Amos Burton. Shohreh Aghdashloo as Chrisjen Avasarala, Chad Coleman as Fred Johnson, and Florence Faivre as Julie Mao are the other major cast members.

List of translations by language

Translations of The Expanse series	
Language ♦	**Title(s)**
Bulgarian	1. Левиатан се пробужда 2. Войната на Каliбан 3. Вратата на Абадон 4. Сибола гори
Chinese	1.
Croatian	1. Buđenje nemani 2. Kalibanov rat 3. Abadonova kapija 4. Kibola u plamenu
Czech	1. Leviatan se probouzí 2. Kalibanova válka 3. Abaddonova brána 4. O ogňad Ciboly
Dutch	1. Leviathan ontwaakt 2. Calibans strijd
French	1. L'Éveil du Léviathan 2. La guerre de Caliban 3. La porte d'Abaddon
German	1. Leviathan Erwacht 2. Calibans Krieg 3. Abaddons Tor 4. Cibola brennt 5. Nemesis-Spiele
Hungarian	1. Leviatán ébredése 2. Kalibán háborúja 3. Abaddon kapuja 4. Cibola meghódítása
Italian	1. Leviathan il Risveglio 2. Caliban - La guerra
Japanese	1.
Polish	1. Przebudzenie Lewiatana
Russian	1. Пробуждение Левиафана 2. Война Калибана 3. Врата Абаддона 4. Пожар Сибола
Turkish	1. Leviathan Uyanıyor 2. Caliban'ın Savaşı 3. Abaddon Geçidi

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3. "SyFy will premiere 'The Expanse' online before it hits cable". Engadget. Retrieved 2015-12-27.
4. Machinich, Cher. "Exclusive: The Expanse's James SA Corey talk TV adaptation, state of sci-fi". blastr.com. Retrieved 10 July 2015.
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6. "Babylon's Ashes". Hachette Book Group. Retrieved 2015-08-21.
7. "The Vital Abyss". Hachette Book Group. Retrieved 2015-08-21.
8. "Interview with James S.A. Corey (Ty Franck and Daniel Abraham)". Orbit Books. 23 January 2011. Retrieved on 2015-02-26 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaUpJqCy95o.
9. "JamesSACorey". *r/*. (2013-06-06). Reddit AMA with James S.A. Corey. Reddit. 6 June 2013. Retrieved on 2015-02-26 from http://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/1fm7tw/ama_or_james_sa_corey_pseudonymous_author_of_the/cadpbtt.
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12. "Abaddon's Gate: The Expanse, Book Three". 8 April 2013. Retrieved 2015-02-26.
13. "Cibola Burn: The Expanse, Book Four". 7 April 2014. Retrieved 2014-04-14.
14. Kroll-Zeldin, Amanda. "Syfy Gives Straight-to-Series Greenlight to 'The Expanse'". tvbythenumbers.zap2it.com. Retrieved 2014-02-26.

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- Abraham, Daniel; Franck, Ty (2014). *Cibola Burn*. Orbit. ISBN 978-0-316-21762-6.
- Abraham, Daniel; Franck, Ty (2015). *Nemesis Games*. Orbit. ISBN 978-0-316-21758-3.
- Abraham, Daniel; Franck, Ty (2016). *Babylon's Ashes*. Orbit. ISBN 978-0-316-33474-7.

External links

- Official website
- *The Expanse* (TV series) at IMDb
- *The Expanse* (novel series) at Wikipedia's sister projects

External links

- The-Expanse.com (http://the-expanse.com)
- SyFy.com/TheExpanse (http://www.syfy.com/theexpanse)
- Orbit Books (http://orbitbooks.net) (Newsletter (http://orbitbooks.net/booklink))
- Orbit Short Fiction (http://orbitshortfiction.com)

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