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Use Of Weapons



Synopsis

The man known as Cheradenine Zakalwe was one of Special Circumstances' foremost agents, changing the destiny of planets to suit the Culture through intrigue, dirty tricks, and military action. The woman known as Diziet Sma had plucked him from obscurity and pushed him toward his present eminence, but despite all their dealings she did not know him as well as she thought. The drone known as Skaffen-Amtiskaw knew both of these people. It had once saved the woman's life by massacring her attackers in a particularly bloody manner. It believed the man to be a lost cause. But not even its machine could see the horrors in his past. Ferociously intelligent, both witty and horrific, *Use of Weapons* is a masterpiece of science fiction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ian Banks is not an easy person to follow, he's extremely literate and you will find yourself looking up words and checking your vocabulary because he's that good at writing. I've been reading this series and "Use of Weapons" and it's a very good read. Banks has several books in this series and I'd highly recommend you pick one up and enjoy.

If you can get through the first half of the book, you'll be sucked in for the rest. It's confusing with the chapters skipping back and forth from the past to the future, but it ends up creating a very interesting picture of the main character. This is the third book from Banks that I've read and I plan to keep reading more. I enjoy that all his books from the Culture series are independent from each

other and so far have been very different reads. I'm looking forward to moving on to reading the 4th book in the culture series next!

This is the second Culture series book I've read, Surface Detail was the first, and it certainly lives up to my expectations. There's a great deal more here than meets the eye at the level of the story vignettes, on a number of levels. I'd certainly recommend it to anyone who likes their SF to be about something more than the Space Opera action packed thriller that initially pulls you in. On content, I'd give this 5 stars. That said, this is the first Kindle book I've downloaded, and I'm not very impressed with the state of the technology if this is a fair sample. I used the Windows 8 Kindle app, and let's just say it would be a stretch to say it works properly. Text resizing didn't work until I had gotten through a certain fraction of the book, then suddenly it started to work. Later in the book I encountered randomly resized portions of the source text, sometimes it would get larger for several paragraphs or even pages, sometimes smaller, never for any reasons related to the content. Fortunately, by the time I got to this part, the resizing function was working, so I could read everything. Overall, using the Kindle app and book was not very impressive, I'm hesitant to repeat the experience, and I downrated the book a bit as a result.

I really enjoy Ian Banks and his culture novels but this one was frankly tedious. It is a long, needlessly drawn out story with a bit of a twist at the end. While initially fun, the banter is larded onto the story in such quantities that it becomes gratuitous rather than clever, which negates the point of banter...

I will be quick to point out that there many reviewers here that have done a splendid, professional job of writing reviews of this and other Banks books. My points here are simply my impression of the book after finishing it. If I could break out the rating into three parts, they would be: Quality of writing: 5 stars Quality of plot: 3 stars Quality of ending: 0 stars Novels, from a traditional understanding, involve a protagonist or two, a conflict of some type that builds to a final outcome or resolution. IN "Use of Weapons" Mr. Banks demonstrates that he is an absolutely brilliant writer. His use of complex, layered sentences places him on a pedestal as a demigod of science fiction writers. With no regard to the plot, a reader can be completely submerged in the river of words spewing forth from the pages. You can be so completely caught up in the images Mr. Banks creates that you simply don't care where it came from or where its going. Which is, when one takes a higher level view, one of the books biggest problems. If there is a plot here, I've had a very tough time

determining what it is. The main protagonist goes through one crisis after another without ever giving the reader a sense that he's going somewhere or accomplishing anything. Things happen and the descriptions of those events are absolutely brilliant, compelling and even amusing at times. But, as we branch from one epoch to another or one location to another, I remain completely lost in understanding how it all hangs together. When I got to the ending, and it ends very abruptly, I threw the book across the room feeling absolutely cheated. I was actually angry that I had read the entire book, having developed the very highest of expectations for a satisfying ending, only to have those expectations badly trashed. The ending couldn't be less satisfying. It makes no sense and intentionally destroys the sympathetic relationship so carefully built up between you as the reader and the troubled, melancholy and incredibly complex protagonist. Perhaps Mr. Banks sees this as his own personal form of the art of writing Science Fiction. You will have to decide for yourself whether the vivid, compelling, panoramic writing that can leave other writers (such as myself) breathlessly envious and with our heads bowed before a true master of writing, is ultimately worth that lack of any sort of reasonable and satisfying resolution to the chaotic, fractured and often frustrating plot that precedes it.

I've been a big fan of the Culture novels for some time now and I've just recently started re-reading them. The scale and scope of Bank's SF universe is hard to compare. Not many writers could imagine on this scale let alone make it highly readable and gripping. Banks never shies away from moral problems and "Use of Weapons" has more than most. The main character has been working for the Culture and is basically a burnt out vet with PTSD. Out of all the Culture novels I would rate this one higher than "Look to Windward" but not as good as "Consider Phlebas" if you have already started reading the Culture novels you will enjoy this one, if you're new to this magnificent SF universe then dive right in and get hooked!

Not my favorite Iain M. Banks book, but still well written. I've enjoyed his Culture novels, but this was my least favorite, for no particular reason. I will read the others, but this one could be low on your priority list if you have limited time.

Fair read but not great. I correctly guessed the big reveal ahead of time but only because the reviews said there would be one, and I ran the possibilities in my head. The problem with Culture books is that the Culture is too powerful and too unstoppable so there is no drama in the storyline. This book is one big line of repeating Deus ex machina so no real suspense with any of Zakalwe's

escapades.

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