



Ben has brought his family a good side and a bad side and the viewer is left to draw his own conclusions. Rating: +2

#### I AM THE PRETTY THING THAT LIVES IN THE HOUSE

Suspenseful but slow as little by little we become aware the house the film is set in is sinister. Nurse Lily accepts a job of taking care of a very old writer of ghost stories. The young woman comes to believe the house is haunted. The film is made of eerie scenes and most of the words spoken are Nurse Lily's dialog with herself. The film had real possibilities, but it becomes mostly a test of viewer patience. Writer/director Oz Perkins takes a lot of time creating atmosphere, but the film really needs more story to hold the viewer. I notice this film is available for streaming on Netflix, but I am really not recommending it. Rating: high 0

#### THE LEGEND OF TARZAN

Tarzan films fail to have much story complexity, and this one is no exception. (As the villain says, "He's Tarzan. You're Jane. He'll come for you.") In this film bad men come to the jungle. They take Jane as hostage. Tarzan comes to the rescue protecting her from bad animals and the bad people. Isn't that the plot of a lot of Tarzan films? Visually the film is very nice in the first quarter but the novelty wears off. So most of the fun is in the first part of the film it is nice to see Tarzan on a realistic background rather than a Hollywood set, even if it is enhanced with CGI. Alexander Sarsgaard in the title role just does not look to me like the Tarzan of the books. He just does not seem like the wild man raised by apes in the jungle. Rating: +1

[-mrl]

#### **Microbes and Antibiotics** (letter of comment by Fred Lerner):

In response to [the comments on microbes](#) in the 02/24/17 issue of the MT VOID, Fred Lerner writes:

In this issue you refer to "Mark's comments that microbes resistant to antibiotics will survive better and reproduce in the 02/17/17 issue of the MT VOID". If that's the case I shall be sure never to read that issue again. [-fl]

#### **BURLESQUE: THE HEART OF THE GLITTER TRIBE and Luchadores** (letter of comment by Kip Williams):

In response to [Mark's review of BURLESQUE: THE HEART OF THE GLITTER TRIBE](#) in the 02/24/17 issue of the MT VOID, Kip Williams writes:

Another recent development in the art of the burly-Q is "Lucha VaVoom"--the intersection of luchadores, comedy, and striptease: <http://luchavavoom.com/>.

It sounds intriguing, at least in concept, particularly if you like to see outsized and overstated personalities showing their stuff. But I've never actually seen any, which may be just as well. [-kw]

Evelyn adds:

And speaking of luchadores, we saw a lunch trunk in Scottsdale, Arizona, called "United Luchadores". See Roaming Hunger's picture at <http://tinyurl.com/void-luchadores>. [-ecl]

#### **"Stigmata"** (letter of comment by Kip Williams):

In response to [David Rubin's story "Stigmata"](#) in the 02/24/17 issue of the MT VOID, Kip Williams writes:

Kind of gives it all away in the title, and continues telegraphing it. With no real surprise in store, I didn't get much out of the story. Of course I felt sorry for the kid. [-kw]

#### **THE SKILL OF OUR HANDS, Turner Classic Movies, and Near-Future SF** (letter of comment by John Purcell):

In response to [Dale Skran's review of THE SKILL OF OUR HANDS](#) in the 02/24/17 issue of the MT VOID, John Purcell writes:

Many thanks once again for the weekly MT VOID, Mark and Evelyn. Once again there are a couple items to mention.

First off, I enjoyed reading the first Incrementalist book by Steven Brust and Skyler White. It's a good concept and I thought they did very well in THE INCREMENTALISTS (2013), plus it played off of two of Brust's strengths: his love for playing poker and his ability to create believable characters and dialogue. He is a good writer, no doubt, with a long string of popular novels, like the Vlad Taltos series. Have not read anything by just White yet, although they do exist. Her debut novel AND

FALLING, FLY (2010) was well-received, and she has had quite a few e-books published since then, too. Anyway, Dale Skran's negative review of *THE SKILLS OF OUR HANDS* (2017) made me check out some of the user reviews on Amazon, and the four reviews published there rate *THE SKILLS OF OUR HANDS* quite highly. Well, I can see why some readers may not like the political commentary overtones of *SKILLS*--authors trying to make their work relevant, I guess--but I'm willing to give the second book of this series a shot. Maybe if I read it a little bit at a time... [-jp]

In response to [Mark's comments on Turner Classic Movies](#) in the same issue, John writes:

Back in late January we dumped our cable television provider and switched to DirectTV, which is not only cheaper (half the cost for the first year, and even when the second year hits it is still a good amount less than Suddenlink's basic cable charge), but now we get the Turner Classic Movies channel back--on our local provider it's channel 554 (so odd seeing listings of over a thousand channels!)--so the TCM listing for the weekend just after my birthday (March 22nd) looks like a lot of fun, especially since that is also AggieCon weekend (March 24-26, 2017), the local sf convention, which I will be attending. Between the local con and a bunch of fun sf and horror and horrible sfnal movies, that weekend looks like it's going to be a winner. Plus--and this is a big plus--our daughter's due date is March 25th, so we're going to get another grandchild that weekend, too. Heck of a deal, eh? [-jp]

Mark responds:

I wonder if you are going to have time for all those films. A new baby is a major distraction. [-mrl]

In response to [Kosmogrrrrl's tweet on near-future SF](#) in the same issue, John writes:

And finally, I have to agree with [the] comment that I am also "increasingly impressed with anyone who manages to write near- future SF under these conditions." Ain't that the truth, especially when it appears that the GOP apparently read Orwell's *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR* (1949) as a blueprint or instruction manual rather than as a cautionary tale. Here's hoping we can survive the next two to four years relatively intact. All I can say is that the way things are now, should I win this year's TAFF election to the Helsinki, Finland WorldCon, I may not bother coming back.

Hate to say this, but a strong part of me really does feel that way. Trust me: I really \*don't\* like to feel this way. [-jp]

And finally, John writes:

Enough of that. I doth not like to end on a downer. Thank you for the fanzine, folks, and I look forward to next week's installment. [-jp]

**This Week's Reading** (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

*IN SEARCH OF THE CASTAWAYS OR THE CHILDREN OF CAPTAIN GRANT* (ISBN 978-1-4191-2581-2) is a novel in the same "series" as *20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA* and *THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND*, but it is a very loosely connected series. Only one character connects *20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA* and *THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND*, and only one character (a different one) connects *THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND* and *IN SEARCH OF THE CASTAWAYS*. This connection means that those who have already read *THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND* will have some of the surprises in *IN SEARCH OF THE CASTAWAYS* spoiled for them.

I have a few complaints about Kessinger Publishing. First, the translator is uncredited. (This is undoubtedly a public domain translation by this point.) The "formatting" was not checked-- every few pages the string "V. IV. Verne" (preceded by two new- lines) appears in the text, often in the middle of a sentence. Also, when someone says that something cost (e.g.) six pounds seven shillings, it appears as "pound 6 7s." Obviously they just substituted the word pound for the actual symbol without worrying about the correct grammar.

The volume is also that new wide, floppy trade paperback format with large print and wide margins. They probably did this to justify the \$37.95 price tag, but at that price, I want decent proofreading. (Especially since the book is available from Project Gutenberg.)

Verne made his share of mistakes as well, though. The series as a whole has serious chronological problems: Captain Nemo is at the island for the entire period of *THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND*, which began during the American Civil War and ended several years later with Nemo's death. Yet *20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA* begins well after the end of the Civil War and Nemo is traveling around, hale and hearty. Nemo does not appear in *IN SEARCH OF THE CASTAWAYS*, but its story starts in early 1864, and in December of that year, the characters are talking about President Johnson and Lincoln's assassination--except that it is still four months before that assassination!

Without Captain Nemo and the Nautilus, there is no science fictional content to *IN SEARCH OF THE CASTAWAYS*, but it firmly in the "exploration of remote lands" genre that was so popular in Verne's time. [-ecl]

## Mark notes:

You are probably reading the Project Gutenberg copy of the book. At a convention I talked to a book vendor who was selling Dr. Syn books. The "publisher" had looked in Gutenberg for novels of fan interest. The book was all typed in for him and he needed to do only minimal, obvious editing. He had the text printed and slapped a large price tag on it as if this were a scholarly edition. It is being a minimalist book publisher. [-mrl]

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Mark Leeper  
mleeper@optonline.net

## Quote of the Week:

Do not let a flattering woman coax and wheedle  
you and deceive you; she is after your barn.  
--Hesiod

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