# tightbeam 281

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This is issue #281 and is edited by Bob Jennings. Letters of comment are solicited from everyone reading this; also, reviews of books read, movies seen, and convention experiences recently attended, and any other fannish material that would be of interest to our members is also requested. Please contact Bob Jennings at—

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# LETTERS

**John Thiel; 30 N. 19th St.; Lafayette, IN 47904**

Flowers, jewels and minerals seem to figure quite a lot in the list of Hugo nominees Tom Feller presented, and the stories have rather ornate or nature-oriented titles with a tinge of artiness to them, and seem rather exotic. The nominations seem to be getting away from hard science and fairy-tale fantasies. I haven't seen a list of what won this year yet, people weren't talking as much about the winners as they have in earlier years when I'd find several different postings of Hugo winners.

One title in the list is somewhat disturbing to me; that's A TASTE OF HONEY, the title of which has been a title before on a non-fantasy novel that was made into an art movie and brought forth an instrumental song that lingered in the hit song range for a while. It seems to me that the title would not have occurred to more than a single person, if that many, spontaneously. Have we an example here of thought transference, or did the author see the book and think that it might make a good title for her own work? I don't know how else the title may have been duplicated.

I hope my comments aren't too brief for you, but I haven't read most of the things reviewed.

###"A Taste of Honey" was also the title of many different novels, including a very popular play by British author Shelagh Delaney. For me the title reminds me of "A Taste for Honey", a fairly well known detective story by H. F. Heard, a Sherlock Holmes related pastiche that gets reissued every five or six years.###

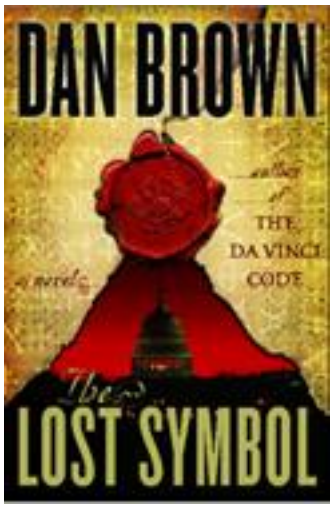
**EDITOR'S NOTE**---Due to holiday time pressures there is no fanzine review column this issue. The fmz reviews will return in out next issue. The deadline of issue 282 is **20 January 2018**.

# BOOKS

## and Other Stuff!

**Dan Brown's THE LOST SYMBOL, Random House/Doubleday 2009**

This novel follows upon a similar volume by the same author, THE DA VINCI CODE, which sold to best-seller proportions and was made into a television show which was accompanied by a tremendous television advertising campaign which thundered about what a grand spectacle it was. This book continues a saga which commenced in the Da Vinci Code, finding code significance and symbolism in cultural streams maintained through the ages and supposedly related to ancient wisdom concealed from most of humanity.



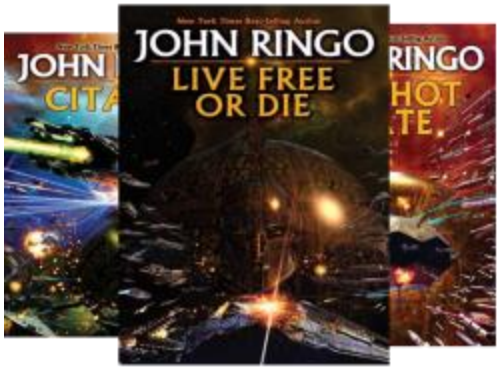

Mentioned several times are the Rosicrucians, whose advertising claimed that such prominent men as Benjamin Franklin and Isaac Newton had been Rosicrucians, and the book follows up this claim of the actual group with a reinforced claim that some of the wisest men from ancient times to the present have been part of an elite which preserved ancient wisdom and at the same time kept it concealed until the time would be right for its revelation.

We have as characters various people interested in the wisdom of the ancients who are trying to decipher the codes involved in the transmission of this knowledge. One is a speculator in early philosophy and theology, another an explorer into modern scientific techniques which transcend modern science, a third is an educator in history and anthropology. The author sees all of them as being on the brink of discovery. They are assailed, however, by dark forces, represented by a villain who wishes to make the hidden knowledge his own and become one with the dark gods of ancient times, at the same time making it impossible for the more civilized people ever to acquire and use this knowledge.

The conflict comes to a climax in a single day and night in the nation's capitol, and it is a night of intrigue, murder, and sabotage. Everyone is trying to find a supposed repository of knowledge in the capitol, and finally the clues do lead them to such a place. The discovery is made in the last chapters that the Bible has been a source of ancient wisdom all along.

This book did not arouse as much enthusiasm as did the earlier volume, but it is a stable, clearer, and more convincing tale than the novel which preceded it, and it gives a thorough treatment to its mystical premises, finding a greater logical explanation for the mysticism involved than has been noticeable generally. , Brown uses Jung, Freud, Einstein, and Aldous Huxley as references and the psychedelic revolution as establishing evidence. It has all the violence of modern confrontations with established reality and is therefore a book well worth reading if the esoteric is of any interest to you. Probably if one is interested in any of Dan Brown's mythos stories, this is the best of his books for an encounter with it.

**---review by John Thiel**




**Troy Rising—a 3 book series of novels by John Ringo**

John Ringo is somewhat fond of slightly over-the-top characters. Thus in "To Sail A Darkling Sea" he gives us thirteen-year-old Faith Smith, who, like some girls, has grown up to be rather tall (a shade under 6 feet) a bit early for her age. Her favorite sport is Australian rules football. Her complaint about it being that there are all these rules against using weapons. She spends some time complaining about her lack of upper body strength. This did not actually include the segment where she boards a large surface ship by climbing up an extremely long line hand over hand while wearing rather over 100 pounds of body armor, ammunition, knives, and other objects of destruction. There is also the point in the violent altercation, after she finishes boarding, in which she expresses her disapproval of a large male zombie (yes, it's one of those novels) by picking him up over her head and throwing him over the side of the ship, doubtless much to the delight of the sharks below. Her slightly-older and more lightly built sister Sophia is the sniper of the two, and just as dangerous in her own way.

This is meant as a comment on Ringo's writing style, not a review of the novel. He's a bit over the top, and Faith is a typical example. If you like zombie novels, over the top events, including a hot-pink Abrams tank, you might like this four volume series.

We now reach Ringo's Troy Rising series, the first volume of which is "Live Free or Die". Readers will probably not be surprised to learn that a significant part of the series is set in New Hampshire. The hero of the piece is Tyler Vernon, a somewhat down-on-his-luck jack of several trades, at the start of the piece working as a cartoonist, cutter of firewood, and part-timer at local stores. His world, and ours, is in an interesting position. A visiting alien species, the Grtul, has juxtaposed in the solar system a warp gate permitting travel to other solar systems. Apparently the Grtul simply deposit these and leave, not caring very much about the consequences of

what they have done. Fortunately, soon thereafter our "good friends", the alien species Horvath, show up to offer us protection. That's protection in the same sense that protection is offered to virtuous small storekeepers by a local chapter of the Mafia.

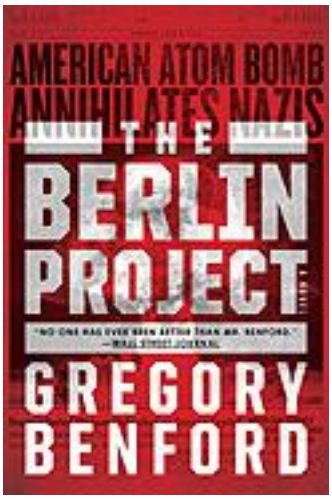
The Horvath have a list of things they want, failing which they will drop devices of mass destruction on major human cities. They do not, however, get in the way of other alien species that are visiting earth, for several reasons, not the least of which is that some of these other species would be perfectly happy to blow the Horvath into small pieces of plasma. And now the story reaches a science fiction convention, at which Tyler Vernon is a speaker based on his cartoons, and the convention has brilliantly managed to arrange as a guest a visiting alien, a Glatun. The clever alien species believes in merchants and trade, and Vernon has his brilliant idea. His plan is to discover what cheap objects the aliens will be willing to buy, and somehow arrange to get a monopoly. It's sort of like selling Manhattan Island, only backwards. In this case, the monopoly is on Maple syrup.

As a writer Vernon is steeped in the creative traditions of John Campbell, EE Smith, and other founders of modern science fiction. By various clever means, he bootstraps the trading arrangement and sets up an interplanetary project, the ostensible purpose of which is to mine asteroids to procure gold, palladium, osmium, and other materials for our Horvath masters. The Horvath are not exactly a high-tech species. One of the other species out there found them when they were at about an AD 1900 level of technology, and gave them all sorts of neat gadgets, most, apparently, focused on blowing things up. Tyler is actually doing other things, but he has to present his plans in a way that they do not make the Horvath suspicious, at least until they (the Hotvath), get blown away.

Vernon does such things as transforming a healthily large nickel iron asteroid into a mined object 5 miles across with mile-thick nickel-iron steel walls. Of course, no one would suspect that this object is possibly a warship. Only in the next book in the series does he equip it with atomic drive based on the Orion model. Tyler's technique for building the warship is clever and for all I know might actually work, though I certainly wouldn't bet on it. The super-science continues, with space battles, really huge space battles, trading with the Glatun, dealing with politicians on our earth, and other interesting challenges. Vernon occasionally hits obstacles he must work around rather than plow straight through, but he does so in the best EE Smith tradition. Through all of this Tyler is somewhat modest and retiring.

All total this is an interesting, very readable series with strong plots and solid action.

**---review by George Phillies**




**The Berlin Project by Gregory Benford; 480 pages; in paperback, trade paperback, hardback, and e-book form in prices from $7.95 to $16.99**

Greg Benford gives us "The Berlin Project", a novel of World War II whose lead figure is Karl Cohen, a real person who was Benford's father-in-law. Cohen was a nuclear physicist at the time of World War II. We have here a tale of extremely hard science fiction, entirely focused on alternative paths to the development of the atomic bomb. The lead character of the piece is really the isotope separator, not one of the humans.

The core issue is that naturally-occurring uranium cannot be persuaded to yield us an atomic bomb that explodes. To get something that goes kerblammo! you need plutonium or the rare isotope of uranium, uranium 235. The rare isotope does occur in nature, but the separation of the rare isotope from the common isotope is extremely difficult. In the real war, we used atomic reactors to make plutonium, and alternatively separated uranium isotopes by means of the calutron, which is a peculiar sort of mass spectrometer. The further alternative method was gaseous diffusion, but to make a gaseous diffusion system work you need a membrane that will survive exposure to fluorine gas.

This problem was eventually solved, but according to Benford the solution really did not take place until it was too late in the war to do anything. There are, however, two additional alternative methods of separating isotopes. The modern one uses something known as a crown polyether, an organic ring compound that selectively binds charged species. If you design the crown polyether and outside groups exactly right it will

selectively absorb one isotope or the other, allowing you to do a later separation. This technique was developed by a French scientist J.-P. Lehn in the 1970s or 1980s. He was adequately decorated by the French government, from which one may infer that the French are actually using the method, which has the great virtue that it can be run efficiently on any scale. The last method of performing separation is the gaseous centrifuge, as used in Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, and South Africa, among other places.

The theme of the novel is that the start of the war we had alternatives as to how we should advance. We are in the period when money for scientific research was very rare and limited. The hero of the novel and his friends managed to generate enough money to justify the utility of the centrifuge separation method, even though the advocate of gas separation was apparently something of a salesman giving a good pitch. There were some obstacles that had not been actually solved during World War II, but the theme of the novel is that they could have been solved with minor expenditures of funds. Does this matter? As you may be able to tell from the title of the book, we get our hands on the atomic bomb not in August 1945 but in June 1944, the month of the D-Day invasion, at which point we promptly start dropping them on the Germans.

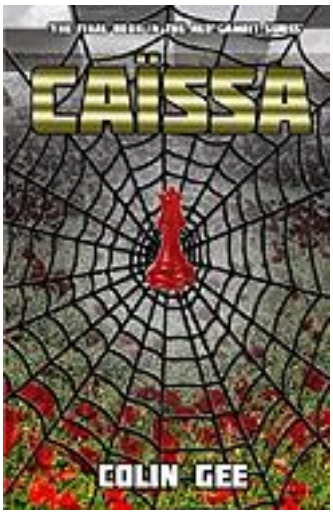
There is a great deal of background. The hero of the piece is Jewish, in a period when in many professions and parts of the country there was strong discrimination against Jews. His newlywed bride did convert to Judaism, a good week before the marriage. There is family friction. We actually get to see a considerable amount of life in reasonably well-to-do Jewish communities in New York City, where Cohen is a research assistant at Columbia University. It is perhaps worthwhile to note to moderns that if we go back before World War II, Columbia University, much more than now, was a first-line scientific and technical University. (They still have some very good people, including one good colleague of mine.)

This is hard science fiction, in which the hero must solve a variety of technical challenges. The difference between this hero and the hero of "Skylark of Space" is that the technical challenges being solved are the real technical challenges that actually existed. Reasonable solutions are found. Exactly as in the real war, John W Campbell and *Astounding Science Fiction* make a cameo appearance.

In addition, the hero has a certain amount of modestly bad luck. First he becomes excessively involved in assembling bombs. Then he is sent to England. Then he is told he must go along on the first serious attack, on Berlin, at first in the photo recon plane. Then he ends up in the plane dropping the bomb, in charge of assembling the bomb and dropping it at the right moment. Dropping was actually very dangerous. There was a significant question as to whether or not, if you dropped an atomic bomb from B-29 bomber, the bomber would make its escape or be destroyed by the bomb. (That's better than our very first deployed hydrogen bomb, which could only be dropped at the time from the B-29, where it was not emphasized to the bomber crews that there was absolutely no likelihood that they would survive the explosion. Very rapidly thereafter, a variant of the bomb with a drogue chute was deployed, so that the bomber could survive the experience.) And what does Benford say about the fate of the hero thereafter? Well, you would have to read the book to find out, now wouldn't you.

The counterpoint to the very hard technology is the matter that research assistants in this period in the physical sciences were extremely poorly paid, so that a significant part of the tale is frictions within the marriage and frictions with family because the poor guy who is the hero has trouble supporting his wife, paying the rent, and covering overdue bills. It's a very realistic look at 1940s America, supported by letters and diaries and other records from the real Karl Cohen and memories from his children. As Science Fiction, you can't get much harder than this.

**---review by George Phillies**

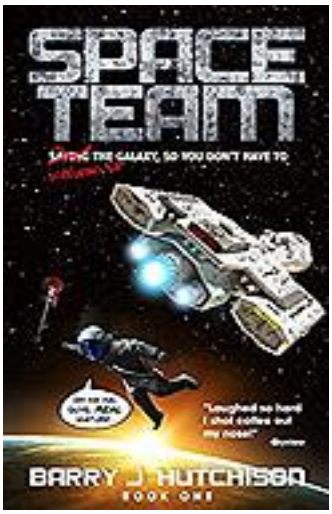



## Caissa; by John Gee; final book in the Red Gambit series; in multiple forms including e-book

For those of you who refuse to start a series novel until the last book of the series has been written, note that John Gee has finally given us Caissa, the last book of his World War III in 1946 series. The starting point of the series is Winston Churchill, who decided in 1945 that there was some likelihood that Stalin would finish World War II by attacking the Western Allies. He ordered the British General Staff to draw up a war plan for this contingency. The General Staff thought he was an idiot, but did as they were told.

Unfortunately, in this alternative history the Russians end up with a copy of the plan and interpret the plan as a secret Western plot to attack the Soviet Union in 1946. Stalin does the obvious thing. He orders a pre-emptive attack on Western Europe. Matters go downhill from there. Various terrible things might or might not have happened, but in the end in this novel we reach world peace. The tale is told in the style of Harry Turtledove, a style that I believe was originally introduced into science fiction by "A Torrent of Faces", and before that by the little-known novelization of "Forbidden Planet", in which we see things happening from a considerable number of different points of view. We do, however, follow a number of characters more or less all the way through the novel, though most of them reach their end before the book is finished. The planned Nazi revival comes to a bad end. A surprising number of good guys and bad guys spend the novel getting themselves killed.

**---review by George Phillies**




**Space Team by Barry J. Hutchison; 274 pages; Zertex Books; primarily an e-book at prices from $9 to $.99; or a print on demand trade paperback for $15.99**

If *The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet* was a character driven space opera, assuming that is not an oxymoron, then this book is definitely a plot driven one in which the characters are more like caricatures. Cal Carver is a con man/identity thief who gets on his prison warden's bad side and is forced to share a cell with a notorious serial killer and cannibal. This just happens to occur when aliens break into the prison to retrieve the killer but grab Carver instead. Although this was not their intention, the aliens wipe about two-thirds of the Earth's population as collateral damage. (*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* is a major influence on this novel.) Carver is then forced to join a team of alien criminals on a mission to stop a zombie virus from infecting the galaxy. The other members of the group are a dog woman, a cyborg, a beautiful female humanoid pilot, and a shapeshifting ball of slime. We read this for a book group, and the members who listened to the audio version thought this book was funnier than those of us who read it. My take on it was that the author was trying to be funny, (especially when he named their spaceship after William Shatner), but did not succeed.

**---review by Tom Feller**


**The Mongrel Mage by L. E. Modesitt, Jr.; available in multiple forms, including e-book**

L. E. Modesitt, Jr., takes us again to the world of Recluse, in the early era in which the women from beyond the stars still rule Westwind. In this world magicians are divided between the White Mages of Chaos and the Black Mages of Order; order and chaos being antitheses whose presence poisons mages of the other side. In the midst are a few extremely rare grey mages, people who can mix order and chaos. Modesitt describes a realistic more-or-less medieval culture, with expensive clothing, blacksmiths who must work hard for an entire day to cast a few plates or a sword, an economy based entirely on cash payments, horses that actually need to be cared for, rested, and fed, and soldiers armed with swords and bows and the like.

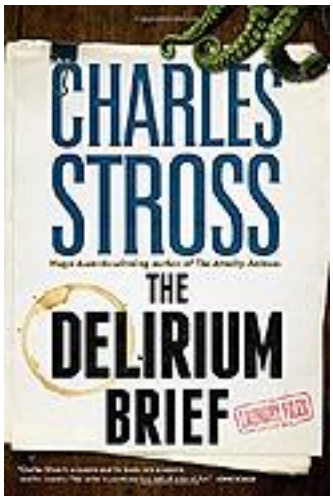
Beltur is an orphan and an apprentice mage, working for his uncle Kaerylt. His talents as a White mage appear to be mediocre. His life is disrupted when the ruler of Gallosia decides that all white mages are to become the ruler's servants to support his planned wars of conquest. The ruler murders Kaerylt in an ambush from which Beltur barely escapes. Beltur flees to the city of Elparta in the neighboring land of Spidlaria, trying to make his life again. His escape is assisted by several other mages, who are under the impression that he is a Black magician.

First Beltur pays his taxes by working in support for the local police force, a few days every season. Then the Gallosians invade, and Beltur is drafted as a mage-officer into the Spidlarian army. There are few magicians; Black magicians are constrained to protect but not to injure. Beltur begins by knowing nothing about warfare but gradually learns. Throughout the whole there is also a gradually developing romantic interaction between Beltur and the healer Jessyla. Healers work with order but technically not being viewed as mages.

Modesitt's writing focuses on the extreme practicalities of life. What do we have for breakfast? What about lunch? How do we raise enough money to pay for a new suit of clothing? The events of the character's life appear in diary-like detail, one piece after the next. I would not say the characters are cardboard. Beltur – who is the PoV character throughout – has definite objectives, but he is not wildly emotional. Like Cincinnatus, he fights in his war, and is significantly responsible for the Spidlarian victory, but at the end, like Cincinnatus, he returns from the war and goes back to working with a blacksmith, making a metal that others cannot copy. Even at the end of the book, he does not appear to have entirely worked out that he is in fact a gray magician of some sort.

If you like Modesitt's tales of people making their way through life, this volume is a good work.

**---Review by George Phillies**




## THE DELIRIUM BRIEF by Charles Stross; available in multiple formats include e-book

A new Laundry novel from Charles Stross is always a cause to stop what I'm doing and read. In this latest installment things have gone very badly for The Laundry after the events of "The Nightmare Stacks". After centuries of keeping magic out of the hands of mundanes and the knowledge of Seriously Dangerous Scary Stuff out of the public eye, the destruction of a significant part of the city of Leeds by the invading army of the Far means The Laundry's mission isn't hiding any more.

Agent Bob Howard is the public face of a Ministry which has presided over a major catastrophe, and rightly or not, must take the blame for massive loss of life and property as well as having a Fae army camping out in the Leeds countryside, ostensibly allied with humanity, but still dangerous and not much trusted. The British PM does what any career politician would do: sack The Laundry and contract paranormal control out to a private American company. This does not Go Well, because the American contractor has been subverted by an Entity masquerading as an American televangelist. Bob's in extra trouble because he'd once fought and banished this particular Entity to The Dungeon Dimension before, but it's back now with a vengeance.

Bob manages to restore order just barely with some help from our new fairy friends. There are many laugh-out-loud passages within as well as big battles and domestic problems between Bob and his demon hunter wife, Mo.

Charles Stross is one of the most talented woodsmiths in the business today, and I have over 50 pages in the book highlighted on my Kindle. Great fun, but the typically abrupt ending left me wishing there was more.

**---review by Gary R. Robe**

## THE SHADOW—EVIL LURKS; 9-CD Set (18 episodes); from Radio Spirits; $35.95

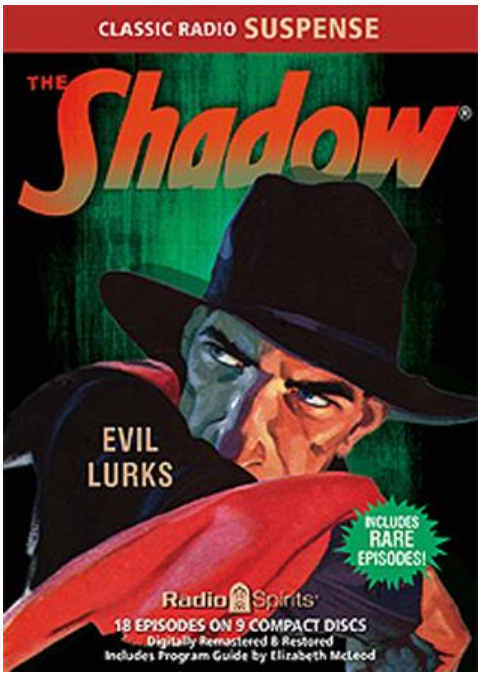
This is the newest release of The Shadow radio programs from Radio Spirits, the authorized seller of these programs. The random shows presented here cover a period from 1937 thru 1946. What makes this set very interesting and worth mentioning is that it happens to contain 6 episodes that have never been circulated in the OTRadio hobby before. These brand new, recently discovered programs have been digitally remastered (as are all Radio Spirits products), and are offered exclusively in this newest set.

This is worth getting not just because it happens to contain these brand new, ultra-rare shows, but also because this happens to be a very strong collection, concentrating on tales of horror and violent crime. The setups are eerie and grizzly, the resolutions are generally clever with well developed plots. Most of these

episodes feature Bret Morrison as the Shadow, a role he played longer than any other actor in this long running series, but there are also some episodes with Orson Welles and Bill Johnstone. I personally consider Johnstone to be the very best actor who ever played The Shadow on radio.

The Shadow typically aired on Sunday evening. Although it was possible to run the program straight across the country in real time by wire to the west coast, it would have aired at 2:00 on Sunday afternoon. Typically the show would be recorded and held for airing the following week at 5:00 o'clock for both the west coast and the mountain time zones.

Sunday nights were the busiest time for the radio networks, with more people listening then than at any other time during the week. The networks typically offered their best, most expensive programs on Sunday evenings. Jack Benny, Bergen & McCarthy, Amos & Andy and programs of that caliber were aired on Sunday nights, and as popular as the Shadow might have been with some listeners, Mutual was afraid to run it against the heavyweights the three other networks were playing in their Sunday night prime time hours. Five or six o'clock Sunday was The Shadow's radio slot from 1939 right thru his last program in 1954.

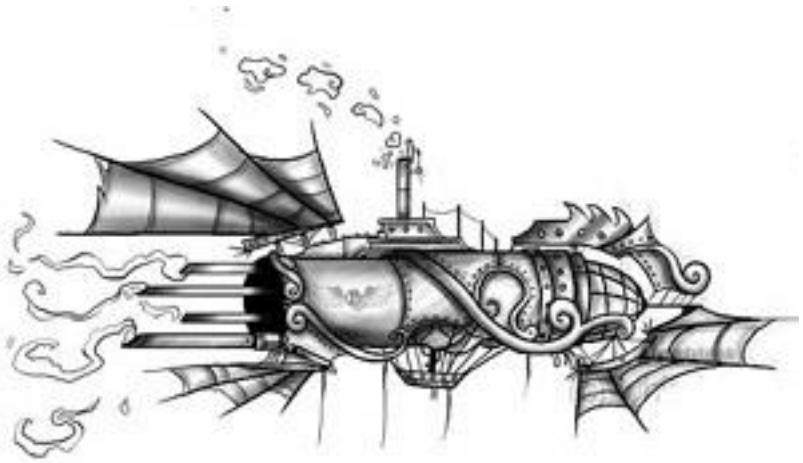



This is a great collection. Listening to some of these shows today you wonder what kind of nightmares they must have induced in the younger listeners to the program. Voodoo curses, a criminal doctor that operates on his patients without anesthetic, murderous gangsters out to silence squealers, supernatural spells designed to drive victims insane, homicidal maniacs masquerading as friends, demons that stalk a town on Halloween nights, missing persons who later show up on stage as life-sized puppets, these are just some of the plots that make up this collection.

There are a couple of weak shows in the set. One of the new, recently discovered episodes was a Christmas Shadow starring Orson Welles from 1937. Alas, this lame attempt to cross Dickens' Christmas Carol with a Shadow crime plot falls flat. The story is nonsensical, and the Shadow barely does anything to resolve the situation. Instead of being warm and folksy it is trite and dumb. But otherwise this is a strong collection, with plenty of creeps and chills, and lots of violence. This is an important collection because of the newly discovered material, but it is a stellar anthology collection because it showcases the kind of stories that made the Shadow radio show the ratings champion it was, and made his adventures so memorable.

The asking price works is quite reasonable for a collection full of the kind of thrills and chills that graphically demonstrate why The Shadow was the Mutual network's most popular radio program. You can hardly ask for better.

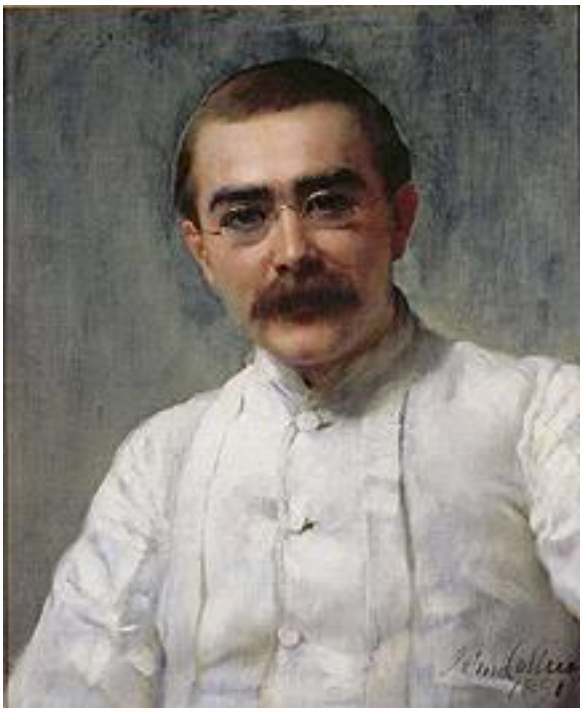
**---review by Bob Jennings**



# The Fantastic Fiction of Rudyard Kipling

by

Jon D. Swartz



Joseph Rudyard Kipling (1865 - 1936) was one of the most popular writers in English in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, in both prose and verse. He was the son of John Lockwood Kipling, a prominent sculptor and illustrator, and Alice Macdonald Kipling. The couple had met at Rudyard Lake in Rudyard, Staffordshire, England, and were so taken with the beauty of the place that they named their firstborn after it. Rudyard Kipling was actually born in Bombay, British India, where his parents had moved the year before so his father could take the position as Principal & Professor of architecture at the new Sir Jamsetjee Jeejbhoy School of Art.

Kipling himself regarded India and Bombay as his home, and regarded himself as an Anglo-Indian, even tho he lived most of his years in other countries. Many of his stories are either set in India or directly reflect the Indian historical culture.

At age five he and his younger sister were sent to England to be educated in the mother land. The pair were boarded at the home of the Holloways, and it was not a happy experience. Years later Kipling recalled those years with horror and loathing, referring to the almost casual malicious cruelty Mrs. Holloway exhibited and the indifference to the treatment Pryse Agar Holloway (a retired British Naval captain) displayed. On the other hand, he also suggested that the harsh treatment may have spurred him on his path to becoming an author, using his imagination to escape the painful conditions he was enduring.

Later his parents enrolled him in a school that specialized in preparing young men for British military service. His grades were good, but not strong enuf to rate him a scholarship to Oxford, and his parents did not have sufficient funds to pay for his college education. In 1882 at age 16-almost-17 (as he put it) he returned to India and accepted a position as assistant editor with a local newspaper, *The Civil & Military Gazette*.

Kipping found he had not only a natural talent for journalism, but both the drive and the imagination for creative writing. In addition to standard news stores, he turned out poetry and short stories which ran in the paper. His first book, a collection of his poetry titled "Departmental Ditties" appeared in 1886. His first prose collection, "Plain Tales From the Hills" saw print in 1888 and was mostly comprised of stories that had been printed in the *Gazette*.

The newspaper company transferred him to Allahabad where he was the assistant editor of the much larger daily journal *The Pioneer*. He wrote news dispatches and sketches of the region and its people, while continuing to offer poetry and short stories to the paper. Over the next few years six more hardback collections of his short stories appeared. These collections sold well, but his life changed when he had some kind of argument with the editors at *The Pioneer* and was fired. However the termination of his employment included six months severance pay.

Now seriously committed to making his career as an author, he sold the rights to most of his books for a flat figure, and pooling his capital along with the severance pay, decided to travel to London to explore his writing options in the literary capital of the British Empire. However, he went the long way, making a leisurely voyage around the globe, stopping in San Francisco, Singapore, Hong Kong, and then on Japan (which impressed him considerably).

In the United States he traveled from San Francisco up the coast to Seattle, into western Canada, then over to Yellowstone Park, Salt Lake City, Omaha and onward. Along the way he wrote numerous articles for his old paper *The Pioneer*, who paid slightly better rates to Kipling the free agent that they had when he was a salaried employee. These write-ups were collected a few years later in another book.

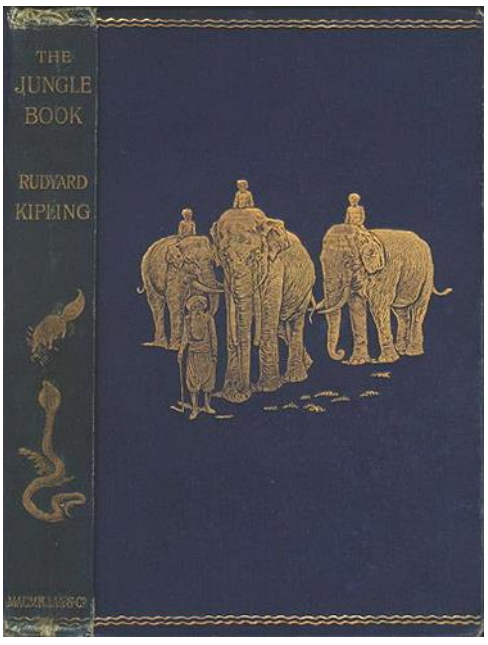
He called on Mark Twain, and the pair got along well. When he arrived in London he found he was already known, and had no problem selling articles and fiction to the popular magazines. His first feature length novel "The Light That Failed" appeared in 1891 when Kipling was twenty-six years old.

This novel was semi-autobiographical, relating to a hopeless love affair very similar to the unrequited love he experienced with Florence Garrard, whom he had known and loved since childhood. The book also stressed the themes of male friendship in difficult situations as well as the brutality and butchery of modern war. The hero is blinded during a war, abandoned by the woman he believed loved him, and is unable to cope with his condition. Yielding to pressure from many sources, including his mother, this novel exists in a shorter version with a happier ending, and the full length version with the more realistic, tragic ending. The critics were not happy with this novel, but the public bought it, and kept buying copies. From the date it originally appeared to the present day the book in both versions has never been out of print.

Somewhere during this period Kipling also suffered a nervous breakdown. Details of this are sketchy and he very rarely discussed the situation himself. The sales of this novel and his short stories firmly established his literary reputation.

The unexpected death of his close friend, American author and publishing agent Wolcott Balestier from typhoid fever brought him nearer to the Balestier family. In 1892 Kipling married Carrie Balestier, Wolcott's younger sister. This was a happy marriage that lasted until his death in 1936.

While on their honeymoon they learned that Kipling's bank had failed, wiping out all his available funds. Remarkably this didn't seem to upset the newly weds too much. They decided to settle in the United States in Brattleboro, VT, near Carrie's family, where Kipling rented a privative, uninsulated, unheated home near the town for ten dollars a month. They called it 'Bliss Cottage' and furnished the home with second, or third, or sometimes fourth hand used items, including a massive hot air furnace Kipling set up in the basement, and Kipling begin to write as fast as he could. It was here that he created some of his most famous works, including "The Jungle Book", "Captain Courageous", and two of his best known books of poetry, "Barrack-Room Ballads" and "The Seven Seas".




Two children were born during this period. Kipling loved the outdoor life in Vermont, and after a visit from Arthur Conan Doyle who taught him golf, he became an enthusiastic golfer, and would have stayed in Vermont forever, except that Carrie had another brother, named Beatty who was an ill tempered drunk and who was always broke. After numerous arguments and skirmishes, in 1896 while drunk Beatty accosted Kipling on the city streets and threatened him bodily harm, for which Beatty was arrested and tossed into jail.

This incident, coming at the same time as the British-Venezuelan border crisis which threatened to involve the United States and Britain in a war, caused Kipling to hastily pack up his wife and children and leave for England.

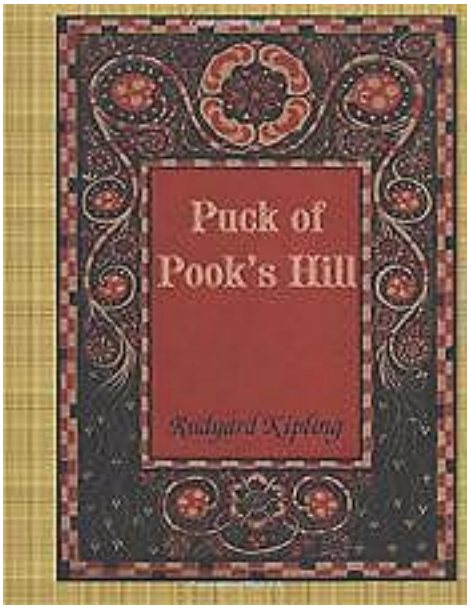
He lived in England, traveled to and lived briefly in South Africa, returned to the United States some years later, and wrote, constantly. After the death of his oldest daughter Josephine at age six he concentrated on producing a book of children's poems and stories, "Just So Stores". In 1901 "Kim" was published. "With the Night Mail" came out in 1905, and in 1912 "As Easy As A.B.C" appeared.

The early decades of the twentieth century were the time of Kipling's greatest popularity, and among his most productive writing years. He continued to write poetry, political articles, and short stories at a rapid pace. He was active thru the early 1930s, altho by then he was writing at a slower pace than before. His reputation as a writer has never been questioned, but his popularity with critics and social activists waxes and wanes as the political landscape shifts. To some he was strongly the voice of British imperialism, to others his works, particularly his poetry and his short stories, display a voice of conscience for people who were residents within the British Empire nations who too often overlooked or ignored. His influence as a writer on authors who followed has been enormous, particularly so in the fields of science fiction and fantasy.

Kipling is best known today for "The Jungle Book", and "Kim", as well as some of his short stories (e. g., "The Man Who Would Be King"), and a few of his poems (e. g., "Mandalay" and "Gunga Din"). Henry James said of him: "Kipling strikes me personally as the most complete man of genius (as distinct from fine intelligence) that I have ever known."

When Kipling received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1907, he was the first English language writer to receive the prize -- and to date he remains its youngest recipient. Among many other honors, he was sounded out for the British Poet Laureateship and on several occasions for a knighthood, all of which he declined.

Known for his fantasies, he also wrote several stories that can legitimately be classified as science fiction -- although some of them clearly span more than one literary genre.




**Genre Books**

Actions and Reactions (1909)
The Day's Work (1898)
Debits and Credits (1926)
A Diversity of Creatures (1917)
Life's Handicap (1891)
Limits and Renewals (1932)
Many Inventions (1922)
The Phantom Rickshaw (1898)
Puck of Pook's Hill (1906)
Rewards and Fairies (1910)
They (1906)
Traffics and Discoveries (1904)
With the Night Mail (1909)

**Science Fiction Stories**

His most popular SF stories were "The Mark of the Beast," "A Matter of Fact," "The Ship That Found Herself," ".007," "Wireless," "With the Night Mail," "As Easy as A. B. C.," "In the Same Boat," "The Eye of Allah," and "Unprofessional." These ten stories are discussed briefly below.

"The Mark of the Beast" (from Life's Handicap, 1891). A landowner, newly arrived in India, overindulges at a New Year's party and commits an outrage against the image of an Indian ape-god. After being touched on the chest by a naked "Silver Man," who steps out from behind the image, the landowner begins the gradual transformation into a beast. [reprinted in World of Wonder, 1951; reprinted in The Wordsworth Book of Horror Stories, 2004]

"A Matter of Fact" (Many Inventions, 1893). Kipling's tale of three journalists who share in a discovery about a sea monster that is so remarkable that their stories are not accepted as fact by any reputable newspaper.

"The Ship That Found Herself" (The Day's Work, 1898). This story reveals Kipling's fascination with the rapid advance of transportation technology, especially the steam ship and steam locomotive.

".007" (The Day's Work, 1898). This story allows the reader to observe the world from the perspective of an intelligent machine.

"Wireless" (Traffics and Discoveries, 1904). A tale involving an experimental technology, wireless telegraphy -- Morse code transmission without any connecting wires. Kipling actually interweaves two stories here, his account of this pre-radio technology as well as a mysterious transmission across time and space. It's apparent that he assumes his reader will have some familiarity with Keats' narrative poem "The Eve of St. Agnes." [reprinted in Strange and Fantastic Stories, 1946; reprinted in Great Tales of Fantasy andImagination, 1954; reprinted in Journeys in Science Fiction, 1961]

"With the Night Mail" (Actions and Reactions, 1909). Kipling's story describes a future world in surprising detail and accuracy. [reprinted in The Ascent of Wonder: The Evolution of Hard Science Fiction, 1994]


"As Easy as A.B.C." (A Diversity of Creatures, 1917). A sequel to "With the Night Mail," this is Kipling's most disturbing projection, set in August 26, 2065 A.D. -- a time when democracy is equated with mob rule. Kipling foresaw great advances in mechanical technology but missed corresponding advances in medicine. [reprinted in The Science Fiction Galaxy, 1950; reprinted in The Oxford Book of Science Fiction Stories, 1992; reprinted in The Science Fiction Century, 1997]

"In the Same Boat" (A Diversity of Creatures, 1917). Kipling looks at the possibility of prenatal influences on later psychological disturbances.

"The Eye of Allah" (Debits and Credits, 1926). An example of alternate history, in this case an alternative history that almost occurred.

"Unprofessional" (Limits and Renewals, 1932). Kipling explores the concepts of both a biological clock and circadian rhythms, despite the fact that neither term had been invented at the time.

Note : Many of these stories are available on the Internet. I guess copyright laws no longer apply to them. Some of them are also available in print form in the Brunner collection, referenced below.


Kipling on Writing

When people have wanted to make statements about the correctness of their methods, some have quoted Kipling, as follows:

"There are nine-and-sixty ways
Of constructing tribal ways
And every single one of them is right!"

**Conclusions**

SF writer and critic John Brunner claimed that Kipling has had more influence on the development of science fiction than either Jules Verne or H. G. Wells. There may be some exaggeration in such a statement, but nonetheless the stories discussed herein should appeal to readers interested in the roots of modern science fiction.

Jack Williamson said of Kipling: “He was writing great science fiction long before Hugo Gernsback invented the name.” Gene Wolfe wrote: “Rudyard Kipling did more than write science fiction. He wrote science fiction that was actually rooted in technology, and not in the writing of others.” Other SF writers have acknowledged a debt to Kipling, including Poul Anderson and Gordon R. Dickson.

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*It's an acquired taste.*

# WAR ROOM---

## Strategy War Gaming Gets a BIG Boost from its Fans

by

Louis Desy Jr.


There used to be an online version of Axis and Allies over at gametable.com; but it appears to be offline now and there have been no updates since 2015 on the company's Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/147500301969602/photos/a.875332055853086.1073741826.147500301969602/875332865853005/?type=3&theater

One positive sign however, is that they DO mention the 'new' Larry Harris project, so maybe they are waiting for the release of *War Room* by Larry Harris before putting gametable.com back online.

For those who might not know, Larry Harris was one of the primary talents behind the development of the very successful Axis and Allies strategy war game. Now, he and some friends have created Nightingale Games LLC specifically to print up and release an ambitious new WWII strategy war game called War Room.

War Room is a two to six person game encompassing World War Two armies and conflicts, with lots more detail, including economic and population resources, than have been encountered in most other big-scale war

gaming situations. This is a multi-complex, but hopefully not an unwieldy game that will allow players to handle full game resource planning, movement, and strategy, but will not bog down and prevent the game from playing to a successful conclusion.

Perhaps as a sign of the times, rather than seeking outside financing, the Nightingale company has decided to go directly to the people most interested in seeing this project completed, the gaming community itself. Harris and his fellow developers decided to create a *War Room* Kickstarter effort. The link is here---

https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1957090458/war-room-a-larry-harris-game

While the amount of money that was to be initially raised was extremely large by war gaming standards---the goal was $150,000---the actual retail price of *War Room* is going to be $150 per copy. That's a lot of money for one game, even a highly complex game with plenty of counters, a round map, multiple rules and movement booklets, over 1,000 game pieces, plus plenty of other add-ons to make the game work.

Remarkably, Nightingale was not only able to raise the full one hundred fifty thousand dollars, but they exceeded the goal by a considerable margin. As of this writing, they have managed to raise $295,000 from 1,482 donors. Considering that the overwhelming majority of Kickstarter campaigns fail to reach their goal, (only twelve to fifteen percent succeed, accord to the records), this effort has been quite impressive.

Even so, at the current level of funds raised--$295K; that works out to only about 2,000 printed copies of the game that will be printed up in the first run.

I also do not think that the profit margin is as great as one would have initially thought. The game has over 1,000 pieces plus a round map; all of which I think would push the production cost way above what one normally would expect. It looks like Nightingale Games LLC is four people plus Larry Harris, so any profit would have to the split among five people. Even if the project somehow generated $100,000 in gross profits, with no other costs, that comes out to only about $20K per person to compensate them for all of the time and work they put into it, and it looks like this has been under development and play testing for 3 or 4 years.

I was also impressed with the multiple play testing kits that are shown on youtube.com; examples of these kits are shown online at, WAR ROOM Preview Episode #1 - "The Components"
By Young Grasshopper https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cN7foTXhs0w . Also at the related web site at http://cliffsidebunker.com/. ; Those kits themselves must have cost a bit of money and lots of time to make.

Now, for a war game to have this many pre orders is impressive, but when compared to the broader board game market, it might have not have gotten developed at all if it had been offered to an established game company, especially with large corporations like Hasboro or Mattel looking for orders/demand in the range of tens of thousands of units.

The original Game Master Series from Milton Bradley had a print run of 10,000 for each game back in the early 1980s, including *Axis and Allies*. Later, in 2008, Avalon Hill, as part of Hasboro, printed 5,000 copies of what is called the Anniversary edition of Axis and Allies. That edition is promoted and called the 'Anniversary edition' because it was being put out to celebrate the 50th year of Avalon Hill being in business. That edition is considered one of the best of the line for play balance and time to play with it possible of being able to play a complete game within the same day.

In later years, when people were wondering about another print run of the Anniversary Edition, the thinking was that while the game did sell well, and even sold out, the expected print runs were not large enough for the size of a company like Milton Bradley (and later Hasboro) to justify the effort. There were some rumors of internal reports at Milton Bradley that while the games were profitable, the company did not expect that sales for another print run would be on the same magnitude of what they really wanted. However this part October I was

surprised and pleased to find that Hasboro did finally do another print run with some new material that Larry Harris added to the reprint to make the system work a little smoother.

Fortunately, with the ability to do smaller print runs thanks to the changes in printing and computer technology over the years; while a few thousand copies may not interest a large company like Hasboro, it is more than enough for Larry and a his people to create and produce a game.

Now, while all this sounds and appears negative from an overall economic projection considering the actual number of copies that will be printed up, within the realm of war games, those numbers are still very impressive. I am sure the creators of this new game are satisfied with the player support they have received, and I know that I would have loved to have been in one of their play testing groups. And it also means that there really are a group of hard-core war gamers who are willing to support tactical strategy games when something new and innovative comes along. That may be the best news of all.

# HOLLYWOOD SCIENCE… FICTION - NOT FACT

by

Jeffrey Redmond

**Productions**

In much of the Science Fiction genre the stories take place in a distant future. Novels and short stories are also used for screenplays to be made into movies. Some of these have been quite profitable, such as the Star Trek and Star Wars productions. Every movie made now seems to have plenty of expensive computer generated special effects that add to the visual impact the movie has on its audience.


Hollywood continues making films for profit, and audience entertainment. So Science Fiction films always have music, explosions, actors killing each other, actresses in skimpy outfits, evil space aliens, and cute robots. While Caucasian people are actually a small percentage of Earth's total population, most space ship crews are majority white. The males are always six feet tall, and the females are under thirty. Everyone speaks English, is over dramatic, and performs directly for the cameras.

Stunt men and women fill in for the stars (except in close ups). The final results are usually what survives the final editing processes. Academy Award wins mean vastly increased profits, and opportunities to make sequels. It is important to appeal to the fiction, and not the science in these films. Thus there is quite a bit of science that movies and television sci-fi usually get wrong. I am indebted to my Science major friends for their continued arguments about these:

## Outer Space

There is no sound in space, because there is no air. Any advanced aliens intercepting our TV transmissions are no doubt laughing endlessly at all the whooshing sounds.

Outer Space is not cold. Temperature is a property of matter, because it's from how fast the atoms are moving. Space is empty, so it has no temperature. Space is a vacuum, and is an excellent insulator. This means the problem most spaceships have is getting rid of excess heat. Space shuttles will open their bay doors as soon as they get into orbit, because that's where the radiators are to release their internal heat.

Nebulae do exist, but they are quite rare. So having a nebula in the background of every Outer Space shot is wrong. That's not what most of Space looks like. Though the special effects visual imagery of nebulae in wide screen movie theaters remains quite impressive.

## Space Ships

If two interstellar spacecraft collide, there will not be crew members thrown across the cabins. Instead there'd be crew members disintegrating into vapor in the resulting explosions. There wouldn't be big orange fireballs, as these ships don't run on jet fuel. And there's no oxygen in space to allow for any flame, anyways.

[Stars are suns burning brightly from compressed hydrogen, emitting solar radiation]

Automation, both robotic and artificial intelligence, is replacing humans in almost every job imaginable. This is going to be even more common in the future. In every futuristic starship, with a crew of as many as five hundred, almost all of the positions will be robotic and automated.

A spaceship cannot be maneuvered like a sports car when going through an asteroid field. It would be more like a boat, except that boats have water to push against. Spaceships only have an endless vacuum. Plus they are going so much faster.

If a spaceship is going anywhere near the speed of light, it is going to crash into the first things in its path. If it is going faster than the speed of light, the crew really won't see what hit them or what they hit.

Almost all planets and moons are spherical in shape. Space ships don't need wings or rocket shapes. Round is real and good.

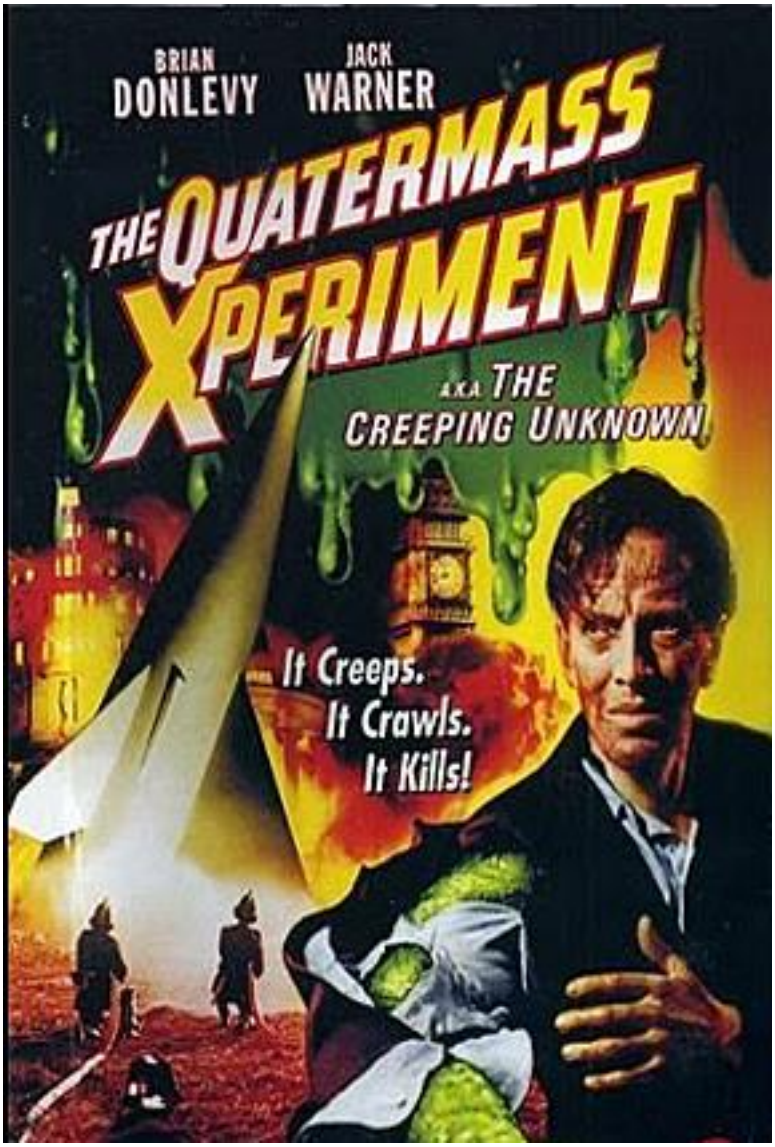

## Conclusions

Hollywood Science Fiction will continue to be fiction, with some occasional science thrown in. Actors will continue to win fights against bigger and stronger stuntmen. Actresses will have revealing costumes and more than enough makeup. Evil aliens will ultimately lose. Dialogue in the scripts will never be the way real people communicate. Characters will seldom eat or sleep.

It is fantasy and not reality. There will be as much entertainment value in the final versions as possible when released. And, sometimes, there might even be a few educational and inspirational qualities. All depending, of course, upon the budget restrictions. So, enjoy what you can. And relax, it's only a movie.

DEADLINE FOR ISSUE 282 OF TIGHTBEAM IS--- ***20 JANUARY 2018***

# cinema




The feature movie for the evening was "The Quartermass Experiment"; which was the 1955 film version of what had originally been a six part science fiction serial thriller that played to tremendous response on the BBC television network in 1953.

The film version was necessarily much shorter than the television production, and also starred American actor Brian Donlevy, with a British cast.

The plot is basic science fiction fare: Quartermass is head of the British effort to launch human beings into space. The first rocket with a three man crew crash lands after an extended radio silence. Rushing to the scene Quartermass and some of his technical staff discover that only one crew member is in the rocket ship, and he is apparently in a state of shock and near paralysis. The other two crew members have vanished without a trace.

It develops that something potentially dangerous is affecting the surviving crew member, Victor Carron. Carron escapes from the hospital with the help of his wife. He is being painfully transformed into something that is no longer human.

Meanwhile Quartermass and his team aided by a Scotland Yard Inspector have discovered that Carron has become the host to an alien life form that devoured the other two space ship crew members and is now prepared to feast on the human population of planet Earth. Hiding and snatching new victims, the entity is growing, and is now preparing to reproduce. Time is essential to stop the creature before it manages to split into new parts. They discover the trail of the monster leads to Westminster Abbey, where Quartermass with the help of the police corner the sprawling, blob like creature, and finally manages to kill it.

This plot was pretty old and hackneyed even back in the early 1930s. What makes it work with this movie, and on the television serial before that, are the successful efforts to create high-tension suspense thruout the production. The plot winds tight with the monster one step ahead of the authorities, as Quartermass and his crew try to figure out what they are dealing with, and how the creature can be located and contained. The plot keeps viewers anticipating the next move, then what comes next turns out to be something unexpected and startling.

The Quartermass Experiment was one of BBC TV's first great success stories in the 1950s. With commercial television looming on the horizon as the BBC was going to lose its monopoly on televised material, it was clear that classical works, low budget educational fare, and theatrical adaptations were not going to hold the audience any more. The BBC management decided they had to change the type of material they were presenting and get the audience involved enuf to come back to the service for new material.

Writer Nigel Kneale was given the green light to produce a six part science fiction thriller as a weekly serial to be broadcast in prime time. The production budget was limited, so several static sets had to be reused constantly thruout the series. The BBC has access to a large number of excellent actors, so casting the series was no problem. In order to make the series work, Kneale decided to ratchet up a combination of menacing suspense, with each episode ending on a crisis note (but not a cliffhanger, as was the case with traditional movie serials).

The series was successful beyond the wildest expectations of the network, gaining an audience that was even larger than wartime emergency radio broadcasts had been. This set the stage for the BBC to sell the movie rights. Interest was very strong among several British producers, but most of the major British studios were reluctant to commit to the production because they were afraid that the nature of the script would mean that the British Censorship Board would give the film an X Certificate, which would mean nobody under the age of sixteen would be admitted into the theaters showing it.

The rights to make the film were sold to Hammer Films, a British movie company that had been around since the early 1930s, but had functioned primarily as a poverty row studio, remembered mainly for turning out talky mysteries and low budget adventures that typically filled out the bottom half of double feature movies. Many of those films had been adaptations of BBC radio dramas, so the BBC brass were already familiar with the company and its producer, Anthony Hinds. Hammer wasn't concerned about the sensational nature of the script, and in fact, they declared immediately that they would title the film "The Quartermass Xperiment", telling the world that the film had an X rating right up front.

Initially Hammer secured rights to the production for 500-pounds. To many in the business it seemed unlikely that Hammer would be able to raise enuf money to produce the movie on the scale they discussed when initially negotiating the film rights. But, there was a hidden hand involved in the negotiations. The film was co-produced with American movie producer and distributor Robert L. Lippert. Lippert and his film company were actually a front for 20th Century Fox. Lippart and Hammer had made an agreement in 1951 whereby Lippart would supply name American stars for Hammer films, and would then distribute them in the United States. In return Hammer would also distribute Lippart's films, or any other film which he represented, in the UK thru their distribution arm, Exclusive Films, this side-stepping the British quota system on US films shown in the UK.

The first draft for the film was written by American scripter Richard Landau, who had worked on six previous Hammer productions, including their first SF movie "Spaceways". Addition script changes were made later by director Val Guest.

It was clear that quite a lot of changes would have to be made to cram six half hour long TV episodes into one 90 minute film. Most of the entire first chapter of the TV serial was eliminated entirely. Quartermass was portrayed as more of an action hero, a guy who got things done, and made them happen, rather than a thoughtful scientist as in the original production. The role of Carron's wife, a major staff member in the original series, someone who might have been involved in an extra-martial affair with another member of the project, was cut down to a smaller supporting part whose primary purpose was to harangue Quartermass and help her

husband escape the hospital. The horror elements of the plot were strongly emphasized, and the final meeting between the heavily mutated Carron and Quartermass was changed into a straight action confrontation between a monster and the hero. To maintain the high tension suspense the story unfolded in TV news-reporting style.

The BBC has final script approval even after selling the rights to the property, but despite serious misgivings by their executives and unofficial comments by some members of the British Censorship Board, the movie went into production. Shooting was begun in October 1954, and finished up by the end of December. The budget was remarkably low, even by Hammer's tight-fisted standards. The 42,000-pounds was stretched by using location shots, including unpaid extras and the volunteer fire brigade at the village near Hammer Studios. A major problem was the refusal of the Westminster Abby board to allow any filming inside their building, so exterior shots were plentiful, and one indoor set had to be constructed to represent the final climax of the drama that took place inside.

Most of the players quickly realized that star Brian Donlevy liked his movies to be shot fast, and without a lot of rehearsal time. What nobody knew until midway thru was that he was battling alcoholism at the time, until somebody discovered that the thermos bottle of coffee he carried with him everywhere was heavily fortified with brandy. Denied his brandy fix, he worked even harder to get the shoot over as fast as possible.

The actress who played Judith Carron was another American, Margia Dean. 20th Century Fox president Spyros Skouras was having a passionate love affair with the former beauty queen, and agreed to let her play in some movies, preferably movies not made in America where gossip might prove too embarrassing. His friend and business partner Robert Lippert insisted she be given the female lead in the film. Director Val Guest said later that she was a very sweet girl, but unfortunately she couldn't act. Her American accent was also jarringly out of place, so most of her lines were dubbed post-production.

Despite a number of other hurtles and problems, the film was in the can by the end of the year. Luck played a big part in the success of this movie. Director Val Guest had done mostly comedies before being tapped for this production, and he was less than enthused, until his wife prodded him into reading the original script for the TV series, and comparing it with the movie script. He decided to change his style, using storyboard breakdowns for each day's shooting, including discussions with the special effects department (who were working primarily with leftovers found around the studio), and the cameras crew as to how to keep the suspense moving. He decided to use hand-held cameras in a number of scenes, which horrified everyone, even after he explained that he was trying to recreate the feeling of an unfolding news story reported as it happened on television. He become totally involved with the project, including making the primary decision to show Carron as a sympathetic character thru most of the film, a man whose humanity is being relentlessly stripped away from him by a mindless alien entity determined to feed, and to reproduce.

The original composer of the music for the movie was too sick to work on it, so it passed to another symphony conductor, who in turn recommended James Bernard, who had primarily worked on BBC radio productions and had never done the music for a movie before. He also hadn't seen the BBC serial either, but he became fascinated with the script, and watched the completed film numerous times before turning in a score that emphasized a rising and falling three-note semi-tone. The orchestral arrangement was reduced to just the string and percussion sections, which merged very nicely with the feeling of mounting horror and tension that permeated the entire movie. He may have been the first composer to use atonal strings to develop a sense of menace in a film score. The entire music score for this film was released on CD in 1999 and is still in print.

As expected "The Quartermass Xperement" received an X Certificate in the UK, only the twelfth movie to be so designated since the rating system was introduced in 1951. Despite restricting admission to people over the age of sixteen, the movie did very well when it hit the theaters in mid 1955. Timed to be released at about the same time as the second Quartermass BBC serial was broadcast, it played as the top billing in several double feature releases and rapidly turned a healthy profit.

In the United States, Lippert, after some negotiations with several different studios, got the film released thru United Artists under the title "The Creeping Unknown" in June 1956 for a flat fee of $125,000. It showed as part of a double feature release with the gothic horror flick "The Black Sheep". Response was so good that United Artists offered to help fund a sequel.

Critical reviews were generally positive. The notable exception was Nigel Kneale, who hated the production, hated Brian Donley, hated the heavy editing of his original script, hated the special effects, and hated the shock ending. The fact that he, as an employee of the BBC, received no money of any kind from the filming of the feature bared on a character he had created probably had a lot to do with those opinions.

The financial success of this film saved Hammer Films from oblivion. By the mid 1950s most British movie studios were in serious trouble, facing stiff competition from television, radio, and increasing pressures from big-budget foreign films, particularly films from the United States and Italy. During 1955 Hammer only made one movie, the low budget exploitation flick "Women Without Men". The revenue that the Quartermass movie brought in allowed Hammer to finance other productions, including allowing for more expansive budgets. The success of the Quartmass movie also brought the studio to the attention of United Artists, who signed a


distribution agreement to run Hammer's future releases in the American market.

The studio began doing market research as soon as they realized they had a hit on their hands. They quickly discovered that the public was fascinated by the horror elements of the movie, not the science fiction plot. That information steered a company decision to concentrate on horror films almost exclusively from this point onward.

There was enormous pressure to produce a sequel to "The Quartermass Xperiment", but Kneale, who had quit worked as a BBC employee in 1956 after five years, but now worked for them as a freelance writer, refused, fearing to lose control of the character he had created. Kneale's influence at the BBC was much stronger as a freelancer, due to the success of this movie and the even stronger public response to his second Quartermass TV serial. Nevertheless, in 1956 Hammer produced "X the Unknown" featuring another SF/horror thriller with a lead character (played by American actor Dean Jagger) as a virtual clone of Quartermass as portrayed by Brian Donlevy. By 1957 Nigel Kneale had reconsidered his options and agreed to write the scripts for "Quartermass 2" and later, "Quartermass and the Pit" in 1967. He also wrote scripts for several other Hammer films. In the early 1960s the BBC officially recognized his contributions to their successful expansion into the science fiction field with a substantial cash bequest specifically for his work on Quartermass. Because of Kneale's insistence on using a science fiction theme with his first, and subsequent Quartermass TV serials, the BBC remained committed to science fiction as a lucrative entertainment area, which led to a number of other very popular SF serials and series including Dr. Who, the longest running and most successful science fiction series ever created.

**---review by Bob Jennings**