



of evil. And he can call up demons. So why wait? He magnanimously gives his two foes each three days more of life. He cannot be so tenderhearted as to be worried about Holden's next of kin. In any case Holden does not appear to have any next of kin the way he is all over Joanna Harrington, the first victim's daughter.

Well, it occurs to me now it must be there must be practitioners in the black arts all over the world. Many of them want the demon to do some killing for them and each have to give the demon or demons three days' notice for a home delivery. Do not ask me if those are 24-hour days or business days. It must be there are just not enough of those darn demons to go around. Three days is about the best service they can manage. If Karswell wants to borrow the use of a demon he has to do it three days in advance. He is Julian Carswell; maybe they are Julian days. In any case that three days grace period leads to Karswell's downfall.

It isn't that Karswell is particularly worried about Holden getting his affairs in order. As I said, there seems to be evidence in the film that Holden has nobody really close to him in his life for Karswell to be worried about. Karswell has to put in a reservation for "demon time." And let's face it, what makes this a fantasy is that in the film he schedules the demon to appear at midnight on the third day and dang-it-all this punctual demon does it right when he is supposed to. Have you ever gotten a plumber to do his job exactly when he is supposed to? I doubt it. An electrician? Are demons more polite and punctual than electricians and plumbers? Not on your life.

You know Karswell wants to schedule the demon for midnight, but he probably cannot expect a deal much better than "some time after 6:00 PM and before 6:00 AM." I am sure he has to wait for the demon to be in the neighborhood. I bet it would be well past midnight for the demon to deign to show up. The forces of evil may even call at 10:00 PM on the appointed night and say they got tied up at a political rally and will have to re-schedule for a later appointment. [-mrl]

### **THE DEVIL'S ENVOYS, HOLIDAY INN, and JUNGLE BOOK** (letter of comment by Taras Wolansky):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on the Retro Hugo Award finalists for Dramatic Presentation](#) in the 06/01/18 issue of the MT VOID, Taras Wolansky writes:

A couple of words on #2017: you will shortly enter the future!

Looking for movies to nominate for the retro-Hugo, I found one that sounded very interesting: THE DEVIL'S ENVOYS (LES VISITEURS DU SOIR) directed by the great Marcel Carne (CHILDREN OF PARADISE). I put it on my ballot but apparently nobody else did.

HOLIDAY INN is actually rather more than a light comedy: it's all about disillusionment.

It opens with the hero (Bing Crosby) discovering that his performing partners, his fiancée and his best friend (Fred Astaire), are running off together, leaving him to pursue his dream of becoming a farmer by himself. Then he discovers how hard a farmer's life actually is, and converts the farm into a resort with musical shows. Gradually he falls in love with his leading lady (again), but then Hollywood shows up waving money. Fearing to lose her, he tries to sabotage her chances, bringing about exactly the result he feared.

Months later, he visits Hollywood, where he wonderingly finds her in a recreation of his inn on a soundstage. Fake it may be, but it's enough to rekindle their feelings.

As I recall, the 1942 JUNGLE BOOK with Sabu really gave a feeling of wonder when Mowgli confronts vestiges of India's ancient religions. This may be why people found it a more acceptable Hugo nominee than Bambi with its typical cartoon animals, not intended to be taken as real in any sense.

Also, I think it's a kind of temporal parochialism to judge works of other times by our current (and constantly changing) standards.

Thanks for all the thought-provoking content. [-tw]

### **Radio Drama** (letter of comment by Howard Lapidow):

In response to [Mark's comments on television memories](#) in the 06/01/18 issue of the MT VOID, Howard Lapidow writes:

You're too young to remember radio drama but it was very good--it let you use your imagination. We didn't have television in Burlington until 1954 when cable was brought in. Two stations only--WRGB NBC from Schenectady NY and a Montreal station in French only. Television was active in Springfield [MA] at Lester Meyers's and George's house long before it was in Burlington. We loved to go there!

Early radio drama was excellent with a huge selection of programs including science fiction! [-hl]

Mark responds:

It is true that I missed radio drama on the first go-around. About 1972 I started listening to college campus "Old Time Radio" programs that would be two hours or so of rebroadcasts. I collected a very large cache of audio taped programs. I built and for a while I maintained a website source for OTR: <http://leepers.us/radio.htm>.

I sort of backed away from that as OTR became easily available as podcasts and at the mega-source <http://archive.org>.

But nobody is too young to remember radio drama. It is still going on. There is also new radio drama being written at places like the radio drama revival site <http://www.radiodramarevival.com/>. [-mrl]

**Television Memories** (letters of comment by Paul Dormer, Kevin R, and Keith F. Lynch):

In response to [Mark's comments on television](#) in the 06/01/18 issue of the MT VOID, Paul Dormer writes:

This brought back memories, but somewhat different to yours.

My earliest memory of watching TV was seeing an episode of something called "The Range Rider", an American western series, on a neighbour's set. I see from Wikipedia that this show ended in the US in 1953, the year I was born, but British television repeated it for many years after. I think I was still watching it in the sixties.

We didn't get a TV set till 1957, but I can't remember the screen size. Besides, I was smaller then. One of my earliest TV memories was the announcement of the launch of Sputnik 1.

At the end of 1957, the family moved from London to the north of England. Commercial television started in London in 1955. It hadn't reached the north-east when we moved there, so for the next year we could only get the BBC. But I remember that in January 1959, I went into hospital to have my tonsils out. When I got out, I discovered that Tyne-Tees television had started broadcasting in our area, and we were back to two channels. Just as well, as I'd caught measles in hospital and was off school for a period. Although I also recall there was little daytime television at that time, and what there was was educational programmes for schools.

Incidentally, an amusing thing about the start of commercial television in the UK.

When it was first launched in 1955, the BBC staged a response. There is a long-running radio soap called "The Archers" on the BBC. It started in 1950 and is still going. The night that ITV launched, they killed off the character Grace Archer. The next day, the papers were full of this news, relegating the coverage of the ITV launch.

Now, Grace Archer was played by the actress Ysanne Churchman. In the Sixties, she voiced Marla in the popular puppet series "Space Patrol". In the seventies, she played the ambassador from Alpha Centauri in "Doctor Who". Last year, she played that role again, at the age of 92. [-pd]

Kevin R replies:

"Range Rider" was a syndicated show produced by Gene Autry's production company. I've seen it replayed recently on one or another of the low profile networks that operate on digital subchannels: MeTV or Retro TV. It played like THE LONE RANGER without the neat stuff: the mask, silver bullets, faithful Indian companion and motivation to exact justice on owlhoots everywhere. It failed Sam Clay's "What is the why?" test.

It had excellent stunt work, though. Sidekick "Dick West" was played by Dick Jones, who had voiced Pinocchio for Disney!

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dick\\_Jones\\_\(actor\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dick_Jones_(actor))

Jock Mahoney, who was RR, had played Tarzan, and in the SF film, THE LAND UNKNOWN.

<http://www.dancebob.com/mahoney13/jm1.html>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Land\\_Unknown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Land_Unknown)

Note that he was also in various 3 Stooges shorts!

I remember waking up at 0-dark thirty to watch the Mercury launches, and certainly watched TV prior to 1961. TV was always there, and we watched so many reruns from the 1950s that I couldn't say what my first "small screen" memory was.

[-kr]

Keith F. Lynch adds:

My earliest memory I can assign a definite date to is my watching the live inauguration of JFK on TV, January 20, 1961. I have earlier memories, but none I can assign a definite date to.

My parents didn't yet have a TV, so that was probably at my maternal grandparents' home. [-kfl]

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

I will probably not get to the Hugo Award short fiction this year (having six finalists in each category meant that the Retro Hugo Awards took longer than before, and all the categories here will take more time as well). However, I did want to cover the Dramatic Presentation (Long Form).

BLADE RUNNER 2049: This has good set design, though not up to the original. Then again, the original was ... original. The plot of this is less engaging, and indeed, the problem with sequels is that while the first film in any series can be new and original, the second and later films can only expand on it. There is no gasp of amazement at the first view of a future city, or the surprise as someone becomes invisible, or the first impression of a light saber duel. Yes, there are sequels that are better than their origin films, but the smart money doesn't bet that way.

GET OUT: In one sense, this is an old idea, but because it has not been used much in film, it seems fresh. The film relies more on the idea and the dialogue than on action or special effects, and this is what I look for in a film. I am sure some will say this is getting attention because of political correctness, but I would disagree.

THE SHAPE OF WATER: This is a good film, but there's a problem with it. It is basically a remake/expansion of "Let Me Call You Sweetheart", a play by Paul Zindell that was filmed twice for television (once in 1969 and once in 1989), but there is no credit for Zindell or any mention of the earlier play. There is a lawsuit over this. Del Toro claims he had never seen the Zindell play (which is certainly possible for someone who was only five and in Mexico when the first telecast was made), but he got the idea from Daniel Kraus who (to the best of my knowledge) has made no statement regarding this. As a result, until this is resolved, I do not feel comfortable ratings this anything but last.

STAR WARS: THE LAST JEDI: I loved the 1977-1983 trilogy, disliked the 1999-2005 trilogy, and find the latest (and last) trilogy just okay. The whole "Star Wars" mythology does not enthrall me and is far too complicated to keep track of, given the length of time between films and the scrambled order of the films' releases.

THOR: RAGNAROK: How did this piece of hraka get nominated for a Hugo? It is a mess, with every actor seemingly in a different film (as they say): Goldblum's humor at odds with Thor's "California" character and Bruce Banner completely out of place.

WONDER WOMAN: As a superhero (superheroine?) film, this has a big advantage over the Marvel films: one does not have to know the back story provided by eighteen previous films, or keep straight two dozen (or more) superheroes. It does have all the flaws of superhero films, or for that matter, of James Bond films. In the Bond films, Bond is given a bunch of gadgets that turn out to be just the gadgets he needs. In this, Diana is able to deflect all the bullets aimed at her because they are all aimed between her head and her waist (so she can interpose her gauntlets). The bottom line is that I would rate this highly among superhero films, but they are not generally my favorite subgenre.

Rankings: GET OUT, BLADE RUNNER 2049, WONDER WOMAN, no award, STAR WARS: THE LAST JEDI, THOR: RAGNAROK, THE SHAPE OF WATER

[-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

The most exciting phrase to hear in science, the one that heralds new discoveries, is not "Eureka!" but "That's funny..."

--Isaac Asimov

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