

the light side of the Force. Wonder Woman was just not a science-fiction-based hero like Superman. What good is a superhero who does not feed my lust for science fiction?

Also I was not big on Wonder Woman's attire. It just looked silly to me. Why did her costume have several open windows where bullets or arrows could easily penetrate. No--I knew why her costume was revealing and it was the publisher trying to win back a teenage boy market they may have foregone by having a female heroine. I cannot say I did well with her trimmings. She had gauntlets, a shield, and a lasso that compelled people to tell the truth. She also has more a skill than a power, it is the ability to fend off bullets with her shield and gauntlets. Perhaps it is a superpower after all since she can fend off bullets coming at her from all directions at once.

She really cheats in the current film, but she probably always has in her previous appearances. In the time it takes for her to see she is in front of a bullet,

1. she sees the bullet coming;
2. evaluates it as a threat;
3. evaluates all other bullets coming her way;
4. chooses this bullet as the biggest threat;
5. repositions herself so that the bullet will hit the shield or gauntlet; and
6. braces for impact.

In the days that I saw Wonder Woman comic books I do not remember the publisher making much effort to bring Wonder Woman into a major starring position. I guess I saw her the most in Justice League of America comics and in those she was usually just one member of the team, frequently at the back of a room.

And she did get a small mark of respect in that her name was Wonder Woman. They allowed her to be a woman. Not Wonder Girl. I seem to remember most female characters were called {something}-girl. Prism-girl, that sort of thing. Wonder Woman got to be a *woman.* I think Cat Woman was a woman also. But usually a girl was a teenager and stuck around for maybe two issues. At least temporarily Wonder Woman is getting some respect from the comic book literati. [-mrl]

MABEL, MABEL, TIGER TRAINER (film review by Mark R. Leeper):

CAPSULE: This documentary, written and directed by Leslie Zemekis--wife of Robert Zemeckis--is the story of Mary Haynie, better known as Mabel Stark, who was the world's first female tiger trainer, and who returned to the circus ring time and again, many times after being attacked and mauled by her tigers. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4) or 7/10

The documentary **MABEL, MABEL, TIGER TRAINER** tells the story of the daughter of a tenant farmer who came to be known all over the circus world as the mistress of the tigers. Mabel Stark was born into poverty in 1889. Orphaned at age 17 she mostly had to fend for herself. She nursed for a while at a hospital in Louisville. She later joined a circus as a hoochie-coochie dancer for men-only attractions and did some animal riding. Then she saw the big cats of the circus and decided that working with the cats and playing with them was all she wanted to do. She was to become internationally known for being the first female tiger trainer. She loved the big cats, but that did not stop them from mauling her very badly and repeatedly.

Many times the dangerous animals found their way to Stark. Much of her act was performed in tight, round cages that put several tigers close enough to pounce on her. In the time it takes for a tiger to spring it could be on her and tearing a piece from a leg or an arm.

Mabel's courage came to the attention of the most famous circus, The Ringling Brothers. In 1922 she joined that circus. But in 1925 Ringling banned wild animal acts. It would be easy to say that this action was taken for the good of the animals and that was no doubt partially true. An animal who was born or has lived in the wild will probably not be satisfied living in captivity. But it is simply true that it is impossible to know what a wild animal is thinking now or will be thinking in five minutes. A tiger can switch from contented to attack mode in less than a second. Stark could never be safe from tiger attacks. She said, "There is no such thing as a tamed wild animal." So what was the secret that allowed her to get in a cage with a possibly lethal tiger awaiting her? Her secret was in accepting that being mauled within an inch of her life was just one of the drawbacks of her profession. She just seemed to not mind being ripped at by a tiger. Her body was a record of eighteen separate maulings and numerous other attacks. Mabel identified with her big cats and seemed to want to be one of them. She is quoted as saying, "My wiah is to be killed by my animals."

Writer-director Leslie Zemekis fills the film with stories of various people's near-fatal accidents and a few that were fatal. But she also gives the viewer a feel for the texture of life living in the circus. We see newspaper clippings and newsreel footage. We see excerpts of Mabel's appearance on "This Is Your Life." There must be thousands of news photographs and film clips of circus pictures. Clyde Beatty is brought into the story and we see some of his serial, **DARKEST AFRICA**. Mabel's life is covered from birth to death. That is sixty years of unpredictable circus life.

Zamekis is an entertaining if not particularly innovative documentary maker. I rate her MABEL, MABEL, TIGER TRAINER a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale or 7/10.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6010216/combined>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/mabel_mabel_tiger_trainer

[-mrl]

The Lambeth Walk, British Television, HAMLET, and Klingon (letters of comment by Richard Looney, Paul Dormer, Dorothy J. Heydt, Keith F. Lynch, Kevin R, and Scott Dorsey):

In response to [Mark's comments on the Lambeth Walk](#) in the 06/15/18 issue of the MT VOID, Richard Looney writes:

I first became aware of this song watching THE LONGEST DAY (one of the parachute or glider crews sing it, while waiting for their drop). Thanks for the story, I'd never heard; there's a similar mash-up of marching Nazis (as well as Italian Fascisti and Japanese soldiers) in the "Why We Fight" series (but with different music). [-rl]

Paul Dormer writes:

[ME AND MY GAL was] not a Broadway play. Originally done in the West End in London, music by Noel Gay, a British composer. It was even done on television in 1939, according to Wikipedia.

It was revived in the West End in the eighties. The script was updated by Stephen Fry. I read somewhere that it made him a lot of money.

Back in the Sixties there was a series on British television called ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, showing newsreels from 25 years ago that week, including tips on eking out you rations and how women could pretend to be wearing stockings by painting their legs with gravy browning and drawing a seam with nail varnish.

They showed that Lambeth Walk clip. Turned out there was still in place a post-war agreement with Germany not to show it.

ME AND MY GAL is very much a Cockney musical, I believe. The Lambeth Walk is a typical Cockney song. (See also Chas and Dave.) I remember hearing the comedian Bill Bailey once demonstrating the typical Cockney song, and then exploring Cockney influences in the music of Beethoven. [-pd]

Dorothy J. Heydt responds:

Was he serious? Beethoven wrote variations on "God Save the King," IIRC, but I don't think he ever visited England. [-djh]

Paul replies:

Well, I did say he was a comedian, so do you think he was serious?

I recall he also (when he did a gig with a full orchestra) demonstrated Abba's influence on Vivaldi.

Can't find the Cockney Beethoven bit online, (someone else has found it) but here he is giving us Kraftwerk's version of The Hokey-Cokey. "Das ist die ganze Sacher".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwaxWoJPUC0>

[-pd]

Keith F. Lynch notes:

The same tune was the anthem of Prussia ("Heil dir im Siegerkranz") and Russia ("Molitva russkikh") during Beethoven's lifetime. He may not have thought of the tune as having anything to do with Britain, any more than the average American singing "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" does. That melody really gets around. As do variations of it. [-kfl]

Paul replies:

Oh, I'm sure he did. He called it variations on "God Save the King". He also quoted the tune in his Wellington's Victory piece, to represent Wellington's forces. (He also wrote variations on "Rule Britannia".) [-pd]

Kevin R answers:

According to this, Ludvig never visited Britain, but corresponded with a George Thomson of Edinburgh, who paid Haydn and LvB to arrange Sottish, welsh and Irish folksongs.

There are also "7 popular English songs for one or several voices and piano trio, WoO 158b".

http://www.triovanbeethoven.at/cms_site_en/Programmes/Folksong-Arrangements-by-Haydn-and-Beethoven/Folksong-Arrangements-by-Beethoven

Mr Baily outlines his theory here, starting just after the ten- minute mark:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5_neq3EzM8

[-kr]

Paul responds:

Thanks, I didn't realise it was in that show. I remember that series, but heard the Cockney Beethoven theory again more recently, on Radio 3, the BBC classical music station. [-pd]

Kevin answers:

You're welcome.

I had thought I'd never seen him before, except that after looking him up I realized I must have, as I've watched a few episodes of "Black Books" when it was run on PBS affiliates, Stateside.

After spending a quarter century working in bookstores, I've felt like Bernard Black a time or 10,000.

Bailey's sort of a rock n' roll Victor Borge when he's at the piano! [-kr]

And Scott Dorsey comes in with:

Beethoven never actually existed. Most of his so-called works were written by Joseph Haydn, a dry-goods vendor in London who was also known for having written "Hamlet". [-sd]

Rincewind adds:

"You haven't lived until you've heard 'Hamlet' in the original Klingon!" [-rw]

Kevin R points out:

I expect a good number reading the group, if not the majority, know of this:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Klingon_Hamlet

[-kr]

Rincewind responds:

I actually didn't. I knew of the line, but not that someone had taken it and created an entire text! I guess I shouldn't be surprised, there are rules out there for 3-D chess and fizzbin! [-rw]

But Keith points out:

I had heard of 3-D chess before "Star Trek" ever aired. According to Wikipedia it dates to 1851, perhaps earlier. [-kfl]

WONDER WOMAN (letter of comment by Dan Cox):

In response to [Dale Skran's comments on Wonder Woman](#) in the 06/15/18 issue of the MT VOID, Dan Cox writes:

Re Wonder Woman blocking bullets: What happens if the other side invents a three-barrel gun that simultaneously fires three shots in a non-linear pattern? The same principal could be applied to blasters used when fighting Jedi knights. [-dte]

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

J. K. Rowling invented quidditch in HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE, but she did a rather sloppy job of it. It is like a lot of sports in that points are scored by getting your ball (puck, etc., here called a "Quaffle") through your opponents' hoops (goal posts, etc.). Chasers attempt to score; Keepers block them. Bludgers (iron balls, not players) try to knock players off their brooms; Beaters try to defend their Chasers from them.

But Rowling added the "Golden Snitch", which the Seekers attempt to catch. While a goal counts for 10 points, capturing the Snitch counts for 150 points and ends the game. (It is not clear if anything else can end the game.) Given that goals are not all that common (basically their frequency seems to match that of touchdowns in football or goals in hockey), it is not surprising that Harry is told that catching the Snitch not only ends the game, but also means the team that catches it wins.

Not surprisingly, people asked what the point of the Quaffle, the Chasers, and the Keepers is. (The Bludgers and the Beaters have some value if the Bludgers attack the Seeker.) So in HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE, Bulgarian Viktor Krum catches the Snitch while his team is still 160 points behind Ireland. The result was that he made his own team lose by 10 points.

Okay, so it is possible to construct a very artificial scenario where a team can catch the Snitch and still lose. The question now is, why would they? Why would Victor Krum catch the Snitch, knowing it would make his team lose?

There is actually a precedent for this (though I will say up front that I do not think it applies to quidditch).

In the 1994 Caribbean Cup, ties were not allowed, but also that the first goal scored in over-time not only won the match, but also counted as double. As described in Wikipedia:

"Barbados started the match needing to win by a margin of at least two goals to qualify for the final tournament. When Grenada scored late in normal time to bring the scoreline to 2-1, Barbados deliberately scored [on their] own goal to force extra-time, where they could get the two-goal winning margin they needed thanks to the unconventional golden goal rule. This meant that for the last 7 minutes of the match, Grenada was trying to score on either their own goal, or the Barbados goal, as either outcome (either 3-2 or 2-3) would have advanced them to the finals. Ultimately, Barbados was able to prevent Grenada from scoring, obtain the 30-minute time extension, and score the golden goal as hoped."

As I said, there does not appear to be this sort of convoluted match scoring system in HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE, so Victor would appear to have made a serious tactical error. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

Of remoter ancestors I can only discover one who did not
live to a great age, and he died of a disease which is
now rare, namely, having his head cut off.
--Bertrand Russell

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