



One of my favorite satanic horror films is THE DEVIL RIDES OUT (a.k.a. THE DEVIL'S BRIDE). There are a fair number of horror films on the subject of Satanism. Particularly in the 1960s a lot of them have the main character being very skeptical of Satanism and in the final reel becoming a believer. Then the last few minutes of the film have the hero knowing what he is fighting quickly dispatches the devil. More or less that is true of DRACULA and of NIGHT OF THE DEMON. There is little such wasted time in THE DEVIL RIDES OUT. At the beginning the main character already knows all about Black Magic and we jump quickly into the action. The story is set on the English countryside in the 1920s. When THE DEVIL RIDES OUT begins and the somewhat tricky plot has the main characters pitted against the forces of Black Magic. When the Devil shows up, he is much more tangible than he is usually portrayed. He is very evil-looking looking and corporeal. You can almost smell his sweat rolling off of him.

The film is based on a novel by British adventure writer Dennis Wheatley. The screen adaptation was provided by the ever-reliable Richard Matheson. Matheson based the story on the first Black Magic novel by Dennis Wheatley. Terence Fisher directed, and Christopher Lee played the lead. You cannot do much better than that. As the film starts we are going to a reunion of three adventurers, one of them being the Duc de Richleau (Christopher Lee). One of the friends dropped out of the circle. It turns out he has joined a group of Satanists. The Duc tries to rescue his friend only to find himself pitted against the very clockwork of the universe.

This is a film with its own cult--in more ways than one. If you have not seen THE DEVIL RIDES OUT this is the one horror film you should see. (By the way this is \*not\* a Western. When the film was brought to America the distributor changed its title from THE DEVIL RIDES OUT to THE DEVIL'S BRIDE so the title would not be misleading.) [Wednesday, October 10, 8:00 PM]

Best film of the month? THE GRADUATE is one of the best comedies you can choose. It helped change the attitudes of a whole generation in the 1960s. [Sunday, October 14, 4:15 AM]

[-mrl]

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#### **THE RAIN** (television review by Dale Skran):

I have long thought myself as being above a certain kind of SF fan who "hated on" a disfavored character, a great example being Wesley Crusher in STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION. However, I have now been humbled as I have encountered an SF character so annoying that I immediately started hoping he would die. Unfortunately, "Rasmus" turns out to be the McGuffin of THE RAIN, and so will surely survive to the very end of the series, which has been renewed for a second season.

As this Danish production available on Netflix begins, a scientist father rushes his family toward a distant bunker. Little Rasmus, perhaps about ten years old, refuses to put on his seat belt, although the father is driving like a madman down a crowded highway, and it is obvious to everyone involved that the world is pretty much about to end. This little brat is just getting going. Soon he is instrumental in opening the bunker door, and allowing an infected victim to kill his mother, leaving him locked in the bunker for five years.

So far, the story has proceeded a lot like many post-nuclear war stories, although the menace is a "virus" that is transmitted via water, and especially the rain. The onset of death is rapid, and it appears that something like 99% of Scandinavians have died. We never hear what happens anywhere else. Once the now teen-aged Rasmus and his caretaker sister emerge from the bunker on a journey to find the missing scientist father, they quickly fall in with a desperate band of teen-aged survivors. As in most CW shows, there is a conceit that somehow the main characters are all young. This is well explained in THE 100, but here makes rather less sense.

Our band of heroes wanders about looking for more bunkers full of food built by the scientist father's company Apollon, which it emerges appears to be the source of the deadly plague. Although it seems unlikely that a viral plague would be water-borne, but die out when things dry up (this sounds more like bacteria than viruses), but, hey, let's go with it. Apollon has built a giant wall across Scandinavia to create a "safe zone" and sends squads of "Strangers" roaming the infected areas using drones to look for survivors, which they apparently kill. I can believe that a big corporation could build a network of super-advanced bunkers (these are world-class bunkers!) but it strains credulity that they could build a wall that appears to be 100 feet high across a large part of Scandinavia. The main way you can tell this is the future is that the drones have fantastic batteries and never need to be re- charged. There is also some simple nanotechnology that plays a key role in the plot.

After a few adventures that pretty much turn out like you might expect (I mean, you know the happy religious cultists who live in the big scary house are really cannibals, right?), the story evolves into a teen dystopian adventure, based in large part on such familiar material as RESIDENT EVIL, MAZE RUNNER, and MOCKINGJAY.

Sadly, though all this, Rasmus grows ever more annoying. He is incredibly dense, and constantly does things that ought to kill him, but don't by dumb luck. In fact, many characters do dumb things routinely. There is a lot of "the idiot plot" in THE

RAIN (FYI--this is a plot that proceeds only because the characters are idiots). Rasmus' sister Simone is not as annoying as Rasmus, but when she runs around calling out "Rasmus, Rasmus where are you?" I am really hoping a Predator or an Alien shows up and gets Rasmus. It is possible that Rasmus is intended to be a warning about spoiled, over-protected Scandinavian kids, but I'm just not enough in tune with modern Scandinavia to know. All I know is that Rasmus is really, really annoying. He is also remarkably ignorant, but at the same time not very interested in understanding what is going on around him. And worst of all, Rasmus is the central character with a big secret.

Rating: A solid 0. Entertaining to a degree, but full of flaws that detract from the story. There is a good bit of violence, some fairly explicit sex (this is a Scandinavian production!), a topless girl, a rape scene, and a lot of people dying from the plague in a scary fashion. Although some might view this as a "young adult" story it is pretty adult in theme, and realistically scary much of the time. I'd suggest that this is an "R-rated" story for older teens and adults. Recommended mainly for post-Apocalypse completists like myself. Way too dark and scary for kids. [-dls]

**PARADISE LOST, MAKING MOVIES, Carpe Diem, Cliches, and Ethelred the Unready** (letter of comment by John Hertz):

In response to Evelyn's comments on PARADISE LOST in the 07/27/18 issue of the MT VOID, John Hertz writes:

Top of the month to you. Thanks for the MT VOID as ever.

In No. 2025 (v.37 n. 4, 27 Jul 18) E complains about Milton's PARADISE LOST (1674) with nothing to say for its beauty. I keep finding this in your zine, if one can find what isn't there, but we after all are talking of finding things in a Void.

It's hardly unprecedented; Johnson says of Milton, "He had determined rather what to condemn than what to approve" (LIVES OF THE ENGLISH POETS, 1781). A precedent more honored in the breach than in the observance. J Applauds elsewhere "A critic without malevolence, who thought it as much his duty to display beauties as expose faults; who censured with respect, and praised with alacrity" (L. ENG. P. at Pope, of Spence 1699-1768.).

Johnson observes that "Milton's design ... requires the description of what cannot be described, the agency of spirits.... immateriality supplied no images ... he could not show angels acting but by instruments of action; he therefore invested them with form and matter. This being necessary, was therefore defensible ... he should have secured the consistency of his system by keeping immateriality out of sight, and enticing his reader to drop it from his thoughts. But he has unhappily perplexed his poetry with his philosophy. His infernal and celestial powers are sometimes pure spirit, and sometimes animated body.... The confusion of spirit and matter which pervades the whole narration of the war of heaven fills it with incongruity."

But this follows extensive praise, against which it is weighed at the end. Milton, like Homer (M's work "is not the greatest of heroic poems, only because it is not the first"--a conclusion we can ponder because J carefully shows us what's in each pan of his scale), faces what we too must in fantasy. [-jh]

John also writes:

The arguments against using words well "Time marches on" or "Everybody does it" are unworthy of you. They are, to speak mildly, cheap. They dismiss art. However, to laugh at them at their level, I bring Goofy the Street Cleaner (WALT DISNEY'S SONGS OF THE CITY), "As soon as ever I clean the streets, they get all dirty again."

Not to fall into the pit I warn of, nor M's exegesis of carpe diem as "complain today", E's note on Lumet's MAKING MOVIES (1995; VOID 2024) is swell, and she's very helpful restoring the joke of Ethelred the Unready (VOID 2023). [-jh]

**Spy Films Spoilers** (letter of comment by Kip Williams):

In response to the [letters of comment on spy films](#) in the 09/21/18 issue of the MT VOID, Kip Williams writes:

You may have ruined THE PRESIDENT'S ANALYST for someone. The words "SPOILER WARNING" might have helped there. [-kw]

Evelyn responds:

Mea culpa--I missed that. My only excuse(s) are 1) the film is a half a century old, and 2) we were rushing around to get ready for a last-minute trip, and I probably wasn't concentrating as much as I should have been. [-ecl]

Mark adds:

It is generally assumed that there is a statute of limitations on spoilers. While the figure varies it is generally something like

20 years. That is a long time not to mention the ending of CITIZEN KANE. [-mrl]

Kip replies:

I don't assume that. If I haven't seen, heard, or read it, it's new to me.

The problem is, I suppose, that the effort and energy required to put the words SPOILER WARNING in there is just too much, especially when the only payoff is being considerate to others.

Please confirm if the 20-year figure is your actual policy, so that if it is, I can unsubscribe. [-kw]

Mark answers:

Well, my policy is not to have unlabeled spoilers in my reviews. In this case I only mentioned the film's title and the spoiler got through the editing process for an issue that had to be rushed. [-mrl]

Evelyn responds:

As noted above, it was not Mark but I who missed putting the spoiler warning on someone's letter of comment. [-ecl]

**The Beloit Mindset List and the Dubious Wisdom of Mark Leeper** (letter of comment by Jim Susky):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on the Beloit Mindset List](#) in the 09/07/18 issue of the MT VOID, Jim Susky writes:

Thank you to Evelyn for annual reminders of THE LIST and how our future (18-yr-old) leaders have thus far grown up with a somewhat different cultural legacy than "we" born ca. 1960 and before.

"1. ....their new designation--iGen, GenZ, etc.--has not yet been agreed upon by them."--which begs a question: Did I and my contemporaries agree to "be the Me Generation"? While I don't necessarily argue that this is appropriate for "late boomers", I wonder whether, aside from the Time Magazine "promotion", if this generational-tag ever got much "traction"?

"4. They have grown up afraid that a shooting could happen at their school, too."

Given that Mass Shootings (as defined by and documented by Mother Jones--and of which school shootings are a less-than 20% subset) are less common than Death by Lightning Strike, this is shame of sorts.

"14. They've grown up with stories about where their grandparents were on 11/22/63 and where their parents were on 9/11.

[And possibly where their great-grandparents were 12/07/41.]"

For my kids, it's their paternal grandfather, who was nonetheless two generations older (42 years) than me.

" 49. [three unaffected (Chernobyl) reactors were kept running, (until 2000).]"

This begs for a follow-up on those who worked there post-meltdown. [-js]

In response to the [dubious wisdom of Mark Leeper](#) in the same issue, Jim writes:

Those are good revisions, Mark--here's a "new" one-- not revised.

"No good deed goes unpunished." [-js]

Mark replies:

I should note that that phrase was not coined by me. [-mrl]

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

Nothing to do with books, but in THE ODD COUPLE have you ever wondered how a broke sportswriter can afford a beautifully furnished eight-room in New York City?

SEVERANCE by Ling Ma (ISBN 978-0-374-261597) is something we are seeing more of in the last decade or so--a science fiction novel written by someone apparently not familiar with science fiction, and not writing primarily for a science fiction audience. The book focuses as much on the isolation of living in New York as on the science fictional element, which is a

plague that causes people to perform some task repetitiously until they starve to death. We see the pre-plague world in flashbacks. There seems to be only our small band of survivors, but there don't seem to be piles of dead bodies around. Oh, when they go into a house in suburbia somewhere, there may find the corpses of the residents, but there is never any sense, for example, that the New York they leave is full of millions of corpses rotting away.

The thing is, the parts that had nothing to do with science fiction were quite good, and while I understand that the plague was supposed to make specific the automatic and unthinking routines of life, I wish the author had developed it with more care.

THE CALCULATING STARS (ISBN 978-0-765-37838-5) and THE FATED SKY (ISBN 978-0-765-39894-9) by Mary Robinette Kowal is an alternate history space exploration duology. It begins with a giant meteor crashing into Chesapeake Bay and wiping out most of the east coast of the United States. This triggers climatic changes that indicate the necessity of getting mankind (or some of it, anyway) off the earth and living permanently in space--on Mars, to be exact. Along the way, Kowal addresses gender and racial issues; for example, a space program much accelerated over our timeline means that the female (and often African-American) "computers" of our early space program were needed throughout Kowal's space program, and so became much more central to it.

Kowal's characters are well-drawn, although I found some of the developments predictable. Kowal also does a good job of showing the complicated state of civil rights in the 1950s and beyond. Highly recommended. [-ecl]

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Mark Leeper  
mleeper@optonline.net

Quote of the Week:

I don't have a bank account because I don't know my  
mother's maiden name.

--Paula Poundstone

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