



country that values one gender over the other is to remove the natural tyranny of the Law of Averages. Those laws say that it is a random chance what the gender of your children are. With a 50%- 50% distribution. But if you really could choose market forces would take over and they generally work smarter than pure chance.

So returning to full-fledged cloning, what will it mean when we can all choose to have superstar athletes for children? We won't have more superstars, we will just have stiffer qualifications for superstar status. Maybe basketball will get better. Maybe it will just mean become less egalitarian. The game may be taking over by clones of great basketball stars. Or maybe the rules will be changed so using clones of great basketball stars will be considered like using steroids. One difference, you won't have to do drug tests to find out if a basketball player has been cloned. The rule will be that if you look too much like some basketball star of the past, you are not welcome on our court.

I would hope we would also have a few Einstein clones. I am afraid that as things are going we would have people more willing to clone the great athletes than to clone the great thinkers, but we would probably have some of those also. But point-for-point I see far more advantages than disadvantages to the capability to custom- design the next generation. So why are so many people terrified of the concept? Well, it will lead to a very different world. Better the devil you know than the one you don't. But we have a world plagued with people who are selfish and unintelligent. We could use a few more of the brilliant thinkers. And cloning just might do that for us. The problem may be that people just will be reticent to use these techniques enough. I mean we have sperm banks now and we don't have very many people willing to give their children just half a good set of genes, effectively mating with the great minds of our times. [-mrl]

**THE RAIN** (letter of comment by Fred Lerner):

In response to [Dale Skran's review of THE RAIN](#) in the 09/28/18 issue of the MT VOID, Fred Lerner writes:

In his review of "The Rain", Dale Skran writes that "it strains credulity that they could build a wall that appears to be 100 feet high across a large part of Scandinavia". I believe that it has been established that with a sufficiency of ice and a dash of magic such a structure could be built (cf. "Game of Thrones"). [-fl]

**THE CALCULATING STARS and THE FATED SKY** (letter of comment by Daniel Kimmel):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on THE CALCULATING STARS and THE FATED SKY](#) in the 09/28/18 issue of the MT VOID, Dan Kimmel writes:

Currently reading the second book. Most entertaining. On top of what you mention I thought it interesting that she made her narrator a Jewish woman from the South. [-dk]

**THE ODD COUPLE** (letters of comment by Peter Rubinstein and Kevin R):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on THE ODD COUPLE](#) in the 09/28/18 issue of the MT VOID, Peter Rubinstein writes:

[Evelyn writes,] "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?" [-ecl]

Hardly a unique situation. The vast majority of TV domiciles are ridiculously unaffordable by their occupants. [-pr]

Kevin R writes:

They had "Friends" Rent Control?

<https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/FriendsRentControl>

I always figured Oscar was "broke" mainly because he made enough to play the ponies, or pay alimony, but not both. Betting on other sporting events might get him fired, or at least banned from major league press boxes and locker rooms, which would make it hard, if not impossible, to do his job.

[quote]

Oscar Madison: Blanche used to say to me, "What time do you want dinner" I'd say "I dunno, I'm not hungry". Then 3 o'clock in the morning, I'd wake her up and say "now". I've been one of the highest paid sports writers in the east for the past fourteen years, we saved eight and a half dollars in pennies. I'm never home, I gamble, burn cigar holes in the furniture, drink like a fish, lie to her every chance I get. Then on our tenth wedding anniversary, I took her to the New York Rangers-Detroit Red Wings hockey game where she got hit by a puck! I still can't figure out why she left me, that's how impossible I am.

[quote] - [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0063374/?ref\\_=ttqt\\_qt\\_tt](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0063374/?ref_=ttqt_qt_tt)

Oscar, in story, was making "Dick Young" money, but it went out as fast as it came in.

[quote]

At his peak, he {Young} was probably the highest-paid sportswriter in the United States.

[/quote] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dick\\_Young\\_\(sportswriter\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dick_Young_(sportswriter))

Guy pissed me off when he feuded with Tom Seaver, which many feel contributed to The Franchise being traded. [-kr]

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**December 7, 1941** (letters of comment by Joy Beeson, Keith F. Lynch, and Dorothy J. Heydt):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on where the latest generation's great-grandparents were on December 7, 1941](#), in the 09/21/18 issue of the MT VOID, Joy Beeson writes:

I have it on good authority that I was sitting on my mother's lap on that date.

Keith Lynch responds:

What, all day long? [-kfl]

Joy responds:

I presume that it was only during the radio broadcast.

I didn't ask whether we were at home at the time. This was before we got electricity and running water, but Dad had a wind charger to run the radio. [-jb]

Dorothy Heydt replies to Joy:

I was just a little closer to my mother than you were to yours: I was a three-month fetus. [-djh]

Mark notes:

My parents had just gotten engaged that morning and my father, who irritated easily, was bothered at first that he brought big news and a ring into the house only to find everybody huddled around the radio and nobody listening to his news. [-mrl]

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**Spoilers (Including Some Spoilers!)** (letters of comment by Kevin R, Tim Merrigan, Paul Dormer, Arthur T, and Dorothy J. Heydt):

In response to the comments on spoilers in the 09/28/18 issue of the MT VOID, Kevin R writes:

I will gauchely quote myself from an old rasfw thread:

[quote]

I'm still ticked at Charles Schulz for having Lucy spoil the Rosebud McGuffin for Linus in a Sunday "Peanuts". I knew of the movie, but it only ever aired on the Late Late show, and my bedtime was significantly earlier than that.

<https://fanboydestroy.com/2013/09/16/peanuts-citizen-kane-rosebud-strip-is-still-the-greatest-spoiler-ever-told/>

1973. I hadn't graduated high school yet. If he had held off for 18 months, I'd have seen it at one of my college's old film nights. AAAUUUGGGGGHHHH! Indeed. [-kr]

Tim Merrigan replies:

SPOILER

As I recall in the scene showing Little Charlie Kane being taken from his mother(?) nanny(?) there's a brief shot of the abandoned sled, showing its name. We, of course, never see it again until it's burning in the incinerator. [-tm]

Paul Dormer replies:

My memory is that in the earlier scene, the name is covered in snow. After all, the film opens with Kane saying "rosebud" and the reporters in the newsreel screening room then repeat that that was his last word before we start getting the flashback sequences with the sledge. (I could go down and get the DVD and check that.)

And, of course, we all know that "rosebud" was Hearst's pet name for Marion Davies' [private parts]. [-pd]

Arthur T also replies:

Some 20 or 30 years ago, the comic strip "The Born Loser" had a spoiler for THE MOUSE TRAP which was, at the time, still running in London. I felt I could not trust the writer and have not read that strip since. [-at]

Paul Dormer writes [in regard to a statute of limitations]:

Then again...

#### SPOILER

Some years ago, a group of friends organised a visit to the Shakespeare theatre in Stratford to see THE WINTER'S TALE. During the interval, someone pointed out from the cast list that the same actress was playing Hermione and Perdita, which would make the last scene difficult.

Now, Hermione had apparently just been killed off before the interval. This immediately told me that Hermione was not dead, which was a spoiler for me. (For those that don't know, in the final scene, a statue of Hermione is unveiled. Depending on how you read the play, either this is Hermione, who has been in hiding for sixteen years or an actual statue that is miraculously brought to life.) [-pd]

Dorothy Heydt responds:

Heck, in Greek drama they only had two, later three, actors. Character changes were effected by the actor putting on a different mask.

And A. E. Housman, who was a classical scholar when he wasn't writing sad poems, wrote a parody of an early Greek drama with only one actor plus chorus.

<http://faculty.georgetown.edu/jod/texts/housman.html>

[-djh]

Paul notes:

Indeed. I remember seeing a TV version of the Oedipus plays and there was a scene where Oedipus says to Antigone something like, "Why don't you speak?" and I was thinking there are already three speaking actors in this scene, Antigone would have been played by a silent slave at this point.

I once saw a production of THE COMEDY OF ERRORS where they had one actor playing both Antipholuses and one actor playing both Dromios. They had to have body doubles for some scenes.

Conversely, I once saw a review of THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE, Rodgers and Hart's musical version, where one of the Antipholuses and one of the Dromios was white and the other two were black, and nobody could tell them apart. [-pd]

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

SIX MONTHS, THREE DAYS, FIVE OTHERS by Charlie Jane Anders (ISBN 978-0-765-39489-7) is Anders's first collection, containing the Hugo-winning title novelette ("Six Months, Five Days") and, well, five others (all short stories). All were previously published on tor.com.

"The Fermi Paradox Is Our Business Model" does not give a new solution of the Fermi Paradox, but rather a suggestion of one possible consequence of one of a standard solution of it. (And a depressing solution it is, basically implying that while intelligence may be a common path of evolution, it is an evolutionary dead end. (Though this does lead to a bit of a paradox/contradiction in the story.)

"As Good as New" is a variation on the classic "three wishes" story, and proves it is true that a good author can take what seems an over-used idea and still find something new in it. And even though one is fantasy and one is hard science, there are definite connections in philosophy between this story and "The Fermi Paradox Is Our Business Model".

"Intestate" is an interesting twist on prosthetics and augmentation, but did not really seem to go anywhere.

"The Cartography of Sudden Death" has a strange view of time travel, presuming that is made possible by the unexpected death of an important person, which causes a time gate to open. Of course, since everything takes place on a world totally different from Earth, it is impossible for the reader to understand any of the historical issues involved.

"Six Months, Three Days" is at bottom a debate over the question of free will versus determinism. Judy can see many different futures branching ahead of her; Doug can see one future ahead of him. Judy is convinced she has free will; Doug is convinced there is no such thing. One can argue that she is deluded, but this raises a host of new questions. Even if one accepts free will, why does she not see an infinite set of futures? But Doug's ability leaves questions also. In "The Golden Man" (made into the film NEXT), the protagonist can see into the future, but he can also change the future. How is this possible?

I am sure "Clover" is more meaningful to people who have read ALL THE BIRDS IN THE SKY, to which it is apparently a sequel/coquel of sorts (or perhaps it is just an offshoot of a minor plot point), or to people who have cats. Since I am neither, I suspect that I did not get as much out of it as I should have. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

All models are wrong but some are useful.  
--George Box

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