

Tightbeam

April 2022



Stormtrooper by Jose Sanchez

Tightbeam 331

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Editorial

One of the wonderful aspects of the N3F Revival has been the efflorescence of new N3F fanzines. A few years ago, we barely had three zines, our club zine *The National Fantasy Fan*, our genzine *Tightbeam*, and an APA, N'APA, reduced to two fine members exchanging emails. We are now up to ten fanzines. Film reviews, traditionally seen here, are now sent to *Films Fantastic*.

We had longer articles, like Justin E A Busch's *Fanfaronade* and Cathode Ray's multiple columns, that became more and more difficult to include in *Tightbeam's* page limits. Those excellent columns are now appearing in *FanActivity Gazette*. Correspondingly, *Tightbeam* is a bit shorter. Before *FanActivity Gazette* appeared, I proposed that the N3F should publish a newszine, and doubts were expressed as to whether or not we have enough material. The latest issue of *FanActivity Gazette* now included 15 pages material, including forthcoming SF conventions, a list of birthdays, an SF calendar, and announcements of forthcoming SF&F films.

News

Smashwords and Draft 2 Digital are merging under the Draft 2 Digital title.

Silver Empire Publishing is in the process of returning all funds and closing.

Letter of Comment

Editors:

John Thiel asked: Why is a unicorn revered and what does a unicorn symbolize?

As with many fantasy tropes, unicorns are real things, got wrong. In his book *The Natural History* (the earliest surviving encyclopedia; ca 78 AD), chapter 31 "Terrestrial Animals of India", Pliny the Elder mentions "oxen also with solid hoofs and a single horn" and (possibly from another source's account of the same animal) "a very fierce animal called the monoceros, which has the head of the stag, the feet of the elephant, and the tail of the boar, while the rest of the body is like that of the horse; it makes a deep lowing noise, and has a single black horn, which projects from the middle of its forehead, two cubits in length. This animal, it is said, cannot be taken alive." Cuvier (1769-1832) tied this to the Indian Rhinoceros (actually called *Rhinoceros unicornis*), of which about a thousand are still to be found in the shadow of the Himalayas; though the extinct *Elasmotherium*, whose fossils and even permafrost-preserved whole carcasses may have been met (and tasted--"too bitter to eat", says Ctesias) by humans, is a still more striking fit--this is the unicorn of my own submitted novel, "Fallen World". The King James Version of Psalm 22 has "Save me from the lion's mouth and from the horns of the unicorns", though the "re'em" of the original Hebrew was more likely an auroch.

The second-century *Physiologus*, later translated into the "bestiaries" of medieval Europe (see T.H. White "The Book of Beasts", 1954), posited that Nature, being, like the Bible (as Christians believe), also from God's hand, could likewise present lessons for our edification. Its Chapter 36 took the story of this ur-wild beast that could only be tamed by a gentle maiden--perhaps the original "Beauty and the Beast" motif, itself from tribal memories of wars ended by intermarriage--as an image of the "capture" of the Word Incarnate by Mary Ever-Virgin. The

unicorn here then stands for Christ, born without sin but with the moxie to face down the Devil and Death, and for the medieval mind, you can't get more admirable than that.

-Graham J. "GrayJay" Darling

Anime

Winter 2022 First Impressions – Shenmue the Animation By Jessi Silver



Episode Summary: Ryo is an accomplished student and well-known as a martial artist. The training he received from his father allows him to lead his high school's Karate club to victory. When Ryo returns home to his father's dojo, however, he notices a conspicuously open door and finds his father fighting a losing battle against a man dressed in striking green kung-fu robes. The man blames Ryo's father for an individual's death, all while demanding the location of a

mirror his father possesses. After learning its location, the man dressed in green finishes off Ryo's father.

The aftermath of this incident is confusing – who was this man and why did he label Ryo's father a killer? Some folks around town suspect the Chinese Mafia based out of the port of Yokohama might be to blame. It turns out that Ryo may not have known his father as well as he may have thought. As he begins to put the pieces together, Ryo finds himself under attack again, though this time his father's teachings and wisdom prove invaluable. Rather than continue on to college as he'd planned, Ryo decides to use this time to learn more about his father's dealings and perhaps gain more insight into his family's past.

Impressions: Shenmue is one of those video games I've always heard talked-up quite a bit over the years. It's also a game that I've never had the opportunity to actually play myself. I wasn't lucky (or aware) enough to have ever gotten my hands on a Sega Dreamcast; while in retrospect I can now appreciate the groundbreaking nature of the game system, at the time I had fully bought into the notion that gamers were to segregate themselves based on company loyalty and I was definitely team "PlayStation," so I didn't really pay it any mind. Now that I'm older and don't have a lot of time to play video games anymore, hindsight has allowed me to lament the things that I've missed. So it's a nice convenience when an old story gets dusted off and re-shared in a format that I do have more time for.

Shenmue: The Animation bridges the gap between two things that I really enjoy seeing depicted – the aesthetics of old kung-fu movies, and the milieu of 1980's Japan. Its place in time is subtle, to be sure; aside from some brief glimpses of automobiles and perhaps some of the fashion, it wouldn't be out-of-line to believe that this is a story set in the modern day with some old-style sensibilities. Yet, there's some essence of it that feels definitively old-school in a similar way to Yakuza 0 (which, judging by having actually played that through somehow, seems like

it might have a lot of similarities to Shenmue as a video game). If I were more of a historian I'd probably have something more substantial to say about it, but I'm not; it's simply a feeling and an atmosphere that I have a difficult time quantifying.

Leaving that aside, this episode serves as a good jumping-off point for what seems to be a solid, entertaining, and almost defiantly trope-y action-adventure series. It gives off some real Karate Kid II vibes (and not just because Ryo is educated in and uses karate to fight). Its martial arts flavored story, which appears to take place between multiple nations, just harkens back to that sort of tale in my mind. To be honest, I went into this viewing with few expectations – I've been a little bit underwhelmed by some of the other Crunchyroll/Adult Swim partnership productions. This one, however, starts off on the right foot and seems like it could be a lot of fun.



Perhaps someday I might even give the games a try!

Ryo must try to understand the essence of his father's teachings before it's too late.

Pros: This is a nice-looking show which does a good job capturing the look of the characters from the game while also ensuring that they don't retain too much of the "early CG cut-scene" rubber-faced look that ensures that

it and many of its contemporaries seem extremely dated today. It seems to be one of those shows that puts its animation resources where they'll be most appreciated – in the action scenes – which isn't the criticism it might seem to be; it's more that the animation quality is functional most of the time but there are moments that are more visually-interesting to look forward to.

Cons: I'm often a little bit wary when it comes to Japanese depictions of other Asian nations and nationalities, considering their history in the region. I watched an interesting video essay recently which talked about Hollywood's use of Asian cultures and tropes in movies over the years, and the things that might make them successful or not in the eyes of people from those cultures. Obviously that's Hollywood and not Japan, but I think the same sort of critical eye is required when watching fiction created from the perspective of a culture that has, in relatively recent history, done the oppressing. Is this simply a question of paying homage to kung-fu movies, or are the allusions to the "Chinese Mafia" something more? It's hard for me to say at this point, but I think it's something worth keeping in mind.

Content Warnings: Violence, including martial-arts hand-to-hand-combat with blood and a fight resulting in a character's death off-screen.

Would I Watch More? – Before watching this episode, I wasn't really interested in the series. Now that I've gotten a sense for what the story is about, I'm a lot more interested. That said, though I have limited time lately I'm tempted to pick up the game(s) on Steam (at least the first two of the three in total; I hear the third was a real let-down, especially after so many years). And in that sense, perhaps this anime adaptation is serving its purpose – bringing in new fans to a story that's spent years cultivating a cult following.

Winter 2022 First Impressions – FreakAngels By Jessi Silver



Episode Summary: 6 years after the apocalypse, Britain's citizens live out a hard-scrabble existence amongst the rubble and ruin. While most folks simply try to get enough food and clean water to live out their lives, this world is also populated by 12 individuals with certain psychic gifts, called the "Freak Angels." Their benefits vary, but they're all powers of the mind. Despite that, though, their users often find themselves bickering amongst one another

rather than collectively joining forces for anything constructive.

After an encounter that resulted in the death of her brothers, Alice enters White Chapel in search of the Freak Angels – and of revenge. What she learns is that her memories were likely tampered with, and that a man named Mark, whose relationship to the Freak Angels seems strained at the very least, may be responsible. The Freak Angels call a meeting – quite the task considering that getting them to tolerate one another in one room is a feat in-and-of-itself – but soon find themselves under attack and on the defensive. As their hideout crumbles all around them, it seems this issue with Mark may be an even bigger deal than it appeared to be at first blush.



A fateful encounter, and a memory corrupted.

Impressions: I recently mentioned that I was unsure whether I wanted to count this series as part of the regular Winter 2022 anime season, partly because its original author Warren Ellis has been accused of some nastiness, but also (and maybe this is the larger reason after all) its pedigree is a bit outside of what I'd normally talk about in this space

– at least as far as seasonal first impressions are concerned. I think there's still an ongoing debate about what actually constitutes an "anime" series, with purists arguing a very narrow definition of "Japanese animation" and those on the other side applying the label to all animation that has a similar visual and storytelling style to anime.

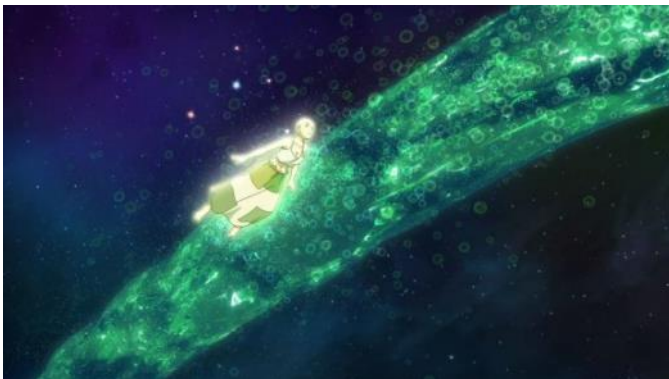
To be blunt, I'm finding that I'm more the former, despite the fact that even Japanese animation nowadays has heavy contribution from animators outside of Japan. Coming from the viewpoint of someone who's been in the lolita fashion community for a long time, the general belief there is that, if you disregard the basic rules – skirt shape, quality of construction, type and fit of pieces and accessories – too much then the fashion itself no longer has a clear definition (with the end result being that it ends up not existing any longer as a separate concept, making lolita fashion enthusiasts across the world cry, or something). I really like all types of animation, and that's partly what drew me toward anime in the first place as a younger person. And here's the

thing – not all animation aimed at adults should have to call itself “anime” to be respected as “not cartoons for kids” (and heck, even some cartoons for kids are great). It’s a messy discussion that bothers me every time I have to have it.

Anyway, perhaps that makes it a discussion more appropriate for a separate post; if I continue it here it will likely look like a rant, and also like I’m trying to disrespect this series, which I’m not. Is *FreakAngels* anime? No, I wouldn’t say so. Is the first episode fun and interesting? Yes, I had a decent time with it. One thing I respect about the first episode is that it doesn’t attempt to infodump about what happened to lead up to the apocalypse that has so clearly and literally altered the landscape of England (at least). We join our characters after six years of learning to live in the aftermath of whatever disaster befell the world. Some of them have adapted through mechanical acumen, while others are more keen to try to grow plants and food. Some use their skills to scavenge items from the former world that can still be used. Some simply spread love to others in the ways they’re able to. I think the popular conception of post-apocalypse society is that it necessitates aggressively defending oneself from other people who are only out to pilfer what you’ve hoarded in preparation. There’s a whole community of doomsday preppers whose toxic mentality leads them to hoard guns and canned rations in underground bunkers. But what about developing the skills of diplomacy? What about growing food? Making clothing? Building things? Providing medical care? The idea that human beings – social animals through-and-through – can somehow live solitary lives without the skills other people bring to the table, is absolutely goofy. It’s the rare person who can develop every single skill they would need to live on their own, and I’m guessing most of those bunker-dwellers aren’t so rare as they may believe.

This episode shows folks living and working together. It’s not all sunshine and rainbows of course; the *Freak Angels* are like a big bickering family whose personalities seem to clash more than harmonize, and beyond that it would be silly to claim that all the normal people living around them are living carefree lives. But they’re seemingly living somewhat normal lives and interacting with others in ways that make sense, which I appreciate.

This episode isn’t necessarily what I’d call notable, but it’s decent and has some fun moments. I know some of the Crunchyroll Originals (a label that seems to indicate various things, from having some funding contributed by the company to being animated at their in-house studios like this one) haven’t always managed to hit in the way that they’d probably like, but this one seems like it could be a fun story, albeit one that sticks very closely to the sort of genre and age-focus that Western anime-like animation seems to.



Disentangling mental toxicity requires a delicate touch.

Pros: One thing that I enjoy about Western animation is that, on average, it tends to feature more character diversity (though that still doesn’t always mean that it reflects reality completely). This series has a large cast with some decent racial representation among the characters (even more so than the original comic, judging by what I

can glean from a minor amount of research). That said, there's not a lot of body diversity; the spread seems to range from "slender" to "muscled" without much other variation.

I think this episode does a good job providing hints about its various character relationships without spending a lot of time elaborating on them. The various entanglements are expressed mostly through dialog. Being written natively in English helps with this; as an English speaker, it's easy to understand the characters through their use of vocabulary and slang in addition to what's visible on screen.

Cons: The type of dialog that this series features also boxes it in a bit, however. There's been some... writing on disgraced TV writer Joss Whedon as of late, including some discussion about the stylistic elements he popularized in the series his hands touched. One of his major contributions is notably his tendency to have characters quip back-and-forth at one another in lieu of more constrained or realistic conversation. While this has left us with a lot of memorable one-liners to chew on even in the aftermath of Whedon's own struggle with being (allegedly) shitty and abusive to others, it's a style of writing that seems to have also taken away from the ability of characters to feel like genuine people. They're masked behind "too smart for the room" word-smithery and lack depth.

This episode's writing seems to originate from that same mindset and thus struggle with the same related issues. The characters clearly don't get along, possibly for some genuine reasons. Yet, there are many character-building moments that just feel clouded by the tendency to have those characters quip back and forth at one another, attempting to out-smart-ass each-other with clever insults instead of having a regular conversation. It's exhausting.

Content Warnings: Strong language. Violence, including blood from telekinetic mangling. Gun use. Mild nudity.

Would I Watch More? – There are things I liked about this episode, and things I didn't.

Comics

Shogun Warriors

Reviewed by Thomas E. Simmons

Marvel Comics

Shogun Warriors #1 (Feb. 1979)

Writer: Doug Moench

Artist: Herb Trimpe

The Shogun Warriors – along with Rom and the Micronauts – were toy-based comics produced by Marvel in the late 1970s. The Shogun Warrior comics featured mecha, that is, massive robots piloted by humans. Marvel licensed a trio of Shogun Warriors from Mattel. Their names were Raydeen, Combata, and Dangard Ace. Each was operated by a human pilot.

The operators of each ginormous robot formed an international cast of twenty-somethings: Richard Carson (an American stuntman) manipulated Raydeen. Genji Odashu (a female Japa-



nese test pilot) operated Combatra. And Ilongo Savage (an African oceanographer) piloted Dangard Ace. In the first issue, these three are selected for their valor by a polite and technologically advanced group of extraterrestrials who call themselves the Followers of the Light. They may be scientifically stratospheric, but they apparently lack the grit and heart of a heroic pilot. So, they turn to Genji, Ilongo, and Richard.

The Followers of the Light are members of an alien race, a small cluster of whom have been living quietly in a mountain sanctuary in Japan for eons. Millions of years ago, they battled a second set of aliens, the Maur-Kon, in a series of conflicts on Earth which are remembered as the Great Chaos Wars. Apparently, the Great Chaos Wars were fought long before homo sapiens began strutting about.

In that conflict, the good guys prevailed and placed their foes in a state of suspended animation in their evil underground hide-out. (Somehow, the Followers of the Light lacked the foresight to choose a seismically stable location. The prison/freezer is, unfortunately, located beneath a volcano). The Followers of the Light then constructed a trio of giant robots, just in case the Maur-Kon ever awoke.

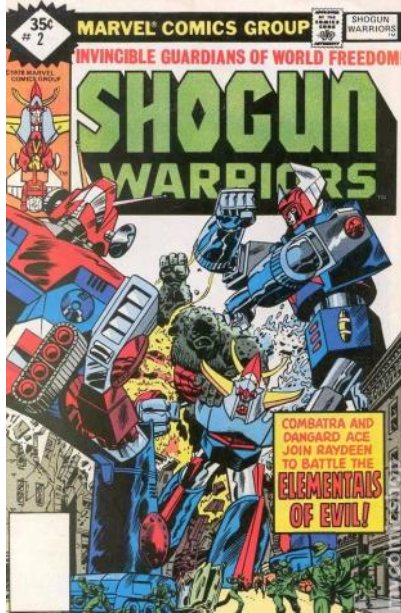
Predictably, the eruption of the volcano capping the prison awakens the Maur-Kon. Their leader is a dead ringer for Ming the Merciless and he, too, invests his military stratagems in large bi-pedal constructs, the difference being that unlike the Followers of the Light, who are good, the Maur-Kon are evil. And so too are their magical creations. The initial foe for the Shogun Warriors is a gargantuan, tentacled villain who introduces himself as Rok-Korr: “You face Rok-Korr,” he announces. “And Rok-Korr claims this day for Evil!” he boasts.

The Followers of the Light pluck their pre-selected heroes out of their day jobs and instantly transport them to Shogun Sanctuary. There, they give them a crash course on how to operate the three mecha and hastily dispatch them to battle Rok-Korr (who, being evil, is busy destroying Tokyo). Ilongo, Genji, and Dick do their thing and – although unable to best Rok-Korr – at least succeed in luring him away from Tokyo and into the mountains. It’s a modest but promising beginning to the heroic careers of this trio of Shogun Warriors.

Marvel Comics
Shogun Warriors #2 (Mar. 1979)
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Herb Trimpe

With the introduction of the three human heroes, their massive Shogun Warrior suits, the good aliens (the Followers of the Light), and the maniacal aliens (led by Lord Maur-Kon) out of the way, the second issue of Shogun Warriors returns Ilongo, Genji, and Dick to the Shogun Sanctuary.

There, they complete their training. They practice their battle skills in a vast underground chamber reminiscent of the X-Men’s danger room. In the process, the narrative maps the various



weapons and characteristics of Raydeen, Dangard Ace, and Combatra.

The super-strong Raydeen can deploy a breaker blade and a steel bow with rocket-arrows.

Dangard Ace features “photon-spheres, launched from twin chambers in his chest housing” as well as a rocket-fist.

The super-durable Combatra enjoys a torso-mounted laser cannon and finger missiles which fire in sets of three (“Voosh – voosh – voosh!”). She also has a rocket-fist of her own.

A helpful outline and glossary in Issue 3 provides additional detail. There, for example, one learns that Combatra has the ability to split into five discrete components, Delta-V One (the robot’s head), Skyskater Two (thorax), Earthmover Three (torso), Turbostreaker Four (pelvis), and Groundover Five (feet). (This reminded me of the short-lived robot hero derivatively named “Captain Marvel” (four issues were published by M.F. Enterprises in 1966), whose signature super-power was to detach his various body parts and send them flying against his enemies whenever he shouted, “Split!”)

Tambura, the grey mustached host of the Followers of the Light, stresses the subtle connections between each massive mecha-warrior and its human pilot. The three human agents of the Followers of the Light must unite with each of their enormous robot suits. The robot shells have incipient personalities of their own matching their respective pilots. It is thus critical, Tambura explains, for each pilot to “become fully aware of your mutual, opposing, and complementary strengths and weaknesses.” The Shogun Warriors are, in a sense, cyborgs.

Each pilot operates his or her mecha from a cockpit in the robot’s head. Although directing a giant robot from a distance would also be theoretically possible, it’s not the favored technique.

The Followers of the Light, despite their sophisticated technology, have not yet succeeded in inventing any sort of remote control device that functions over a sizable distance. So, to operate a Shogun Warrior, the pilot must operate a joystick from within the giant robot’s head, which can be a dangerous place to be. One must be close to one’s mecha, both physically and spiritually, to operate it successfully.

The Shogun Warriors are endowed with the power of flight with their “foot-jets” and can use a kind of PA system to communicate with any civilians within earshot as well as radios to talk to each other and Tambura, back in Shogun Sanctuary.

Issue two is mostly devoted to this sort of expository background. The three heroes have to rush off and contend with Rok-Korr anew when he threatens to derail a passenger train. Since Raydeen has supersonic capabilities, he reconfigures himself into Firehawk, jets ahead of his friends, saves the train, and decks Rok-Korr with his breaker-blade.

But just as Combatra and Dangard Ace arrive on the scene, Rok-Korr splits into three titans – a being of earth, a second of wind, and another of fire. We conclude Issue two on this cliffhanger.

Marvel Comics
 Shogun Warriors #3 (Apr. 1979)
 Writer: Doug Moench
 Artist: Herb Trimpe

In Shogun Warriors' third issue, the three mecha battle for the first time as a cohesive team. They go toe-to-toe against three elemental-evils (earth, wind and fire). Just in case the reader is uncertain about which team to root for, the water-titan-being clarifies that "we are the servants of evil!"

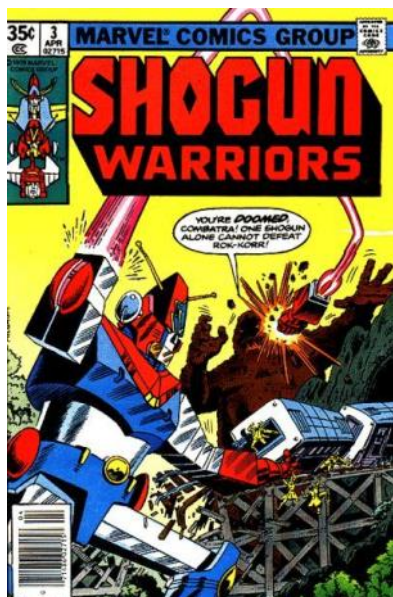
His fire-ally concurs: "The servants of good must die!"

The three against three battle is a delicate one because the endangered passenger train which required the Shogun Warrior's intervention is still unprotected. It balances unsteadily on a half-destroyed trestle. Ultimately, the three Shogun Warriors use teamwork and missile tricks to defeat the three titans.

Maur-Kon responds by unveiling a new adversary for them. This one is a robot, the lazily named "Mech-Monster," which appears to be a purple-and-gold duck with Tommy guns growing out of its shoulders. Mech-Monster (admittedly a better title than Mallard-Monster) displays its weaponry in the next issue.

An interesting thematic development takes shape in the third issue; it is the comic's concern with technology. When Genji (Combata) is knocked unconscious, Tambura radios her frantically: "You are in extreme jeopardy. You must merge with Combata – you must regain control." Indeed, the Shogun Warrior's training facility is called the "Training and 'Merging' Center."

Is *that* what the Followers of the Light require – for humans to *merge* with technology? To become cyborgs? Is that a good idea?



Meanwhile, Lord Maur-Kon, within his underground lair (aptly named the "Haunt of Evil"), discerns that the Shogun Warriors are besting Rok-Korr. Maur-Kon therefore decides to abandon sorcery and utilize science instead. ("Do not forget," he underscores, "Science may also serve evil.") He's got a point, but one of his underlings is having none of it.

Lieutenant Magar is a traditionalist. He is scandalized by Maur-Kon's suggestion that "the arcane ways" should be discarded in favor of science. He turns traitor, declares his allegiance to magic, and vows to undo the ducklike robot.

Must humanity be melded to circuits to prevail? Is evil more suited to witchcraft than science?

In the seventeen issues of the Shogun Warriors comics which fol-

lowed, this theme was never fully realized, but the limits of technology – contrasted against the lure of magic – were repeatedly emphasized.

Mister Jinx, Recalled by Will Mayo Will Mayo Thinks On Mr. Jinx

Among the characters in comics that interested me as a child was a curious one in Al Capp's Li'l Abner comic strip called Mr. Jinx that wandered from town to town with a storm cloud over his head, bringing sorrow and grief wherever he went. He seemed a strange mix of side street hustler and demon out of hell and as an outcast in a class numbering in the 20s I could relate to the fact that this Mr. Jinx could seem to find no friends anywhere. It was like that old Albert King rock and roll song, Mr. Jinx appeared to be born under a bad sign and bad luck and trouble came with him wherever he might go. Yet he seemed every bit the cool guy as well. Look him up if you like. Surely worth a trip to your comics dealer.

Will Mayo Reviews Dick Tracy

Around 50-odd years ago, one comic strip predicted much of today's world, whether it be wrist-watches that telecommunicate with people far away or a world filled with crime and distrust. And that comic strip was Dick Tracy. Although I didn't care for the movie of the same name that came out in the 1980s (its Claymation just didn't work for me) the original comic strip remains an inspiration. It's a pity that it didn't last as long as some of the others.

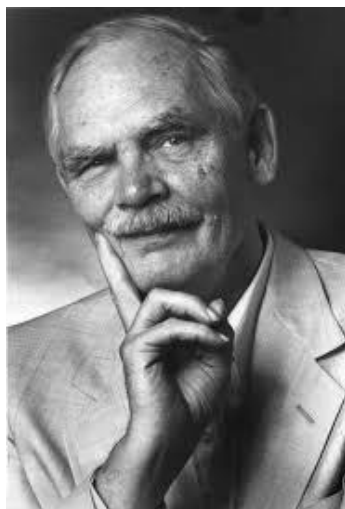
SerCon

Frederik Pohl Bio-Bibliography by Jon D. Swartz, Ph.D. N3F Historian

Frederik Pohl, author, editor, anthologist, agent, science fiction (SF) fan and goodwill ambassador, was born on November 26, 1919, in New York City; he died on September 2, 2013, in Palatine, Illinois.

Educated at Brooklyn Technical High School, 1934-1936, he was married five times: 1) Doris Baumgardt (Leslie Perri), 1940 (divorced); 2) Dorothy LesTina, 1945 (divorced); 3) Judith Merrill, 1949 (divorced), one daughter; 4) Carol Metcalf Ulf, 1952 (divorced), 2 sons, 2 daughters; 5) He was survived by his last (m. 1984) wife, Dr. Elizabeth Anne Hull (1937 - 2021). Emily Pohl-Weary, the daughter of Pohl and Merrill, is a Canadian novelist.

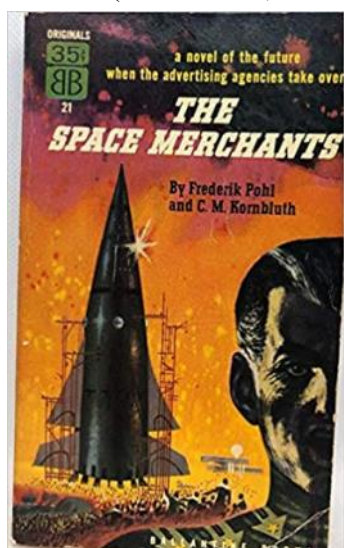
Pohl, one of the original members of the Futurian Society of New York, published his own fanzine (Mind of Man) at 16, set himself up as a literary agent for his friends in the late 1930s; and, in 1940, became editor of two low budget SF pulp magazines (Astonishing Stories and Super Science Stories). In these pulps he published stories by himself and his fellow Futurians, who collaborated with each other under a host of pseudonyms and house-names.



Pohl used the pseudonym James MacCreigh for himself and Edson McCann, Jordan Park, S. D. Gottesman, Lee Gregor, and several others when collaborating with friends. He later collaborated, using his own name, with Jack Williamson on two trilogies, a juvenile SF series (“Undersea Trilogy,” 1955-1958), and an adult SF series (“Starchild Trilogy,” 1964-1969).

During World War II he served in the U.S. Army Air Force as a weatherman in Italy, and then worked for a short time in an advertising agency, before returning to writing and editing. He, Judith Merril, Lester del Rey, and six other SF professionals formed New York’s Hydra Club in 1947.

First professional publication: “Elegy to a Dead Satellite: Luna” (a poem, under the pseudonym of Elton V. Andrews) in *Amazing* (October, 1937); first published book: *Beyond the End of Time* (Permabook, 1952) [as editor]; first novel: *The Space Merchants* (Ballantine, 1953) [with Cyril M. Kornbluth]; first short story collection: *Danger Moon* (American SF, 1953, published in Australia) [as by James MacCreigh].



Pohl wrote novels in collaboration with others, usually Kornbluth, before his first solo effort in 1957 (*Slave Ship* for Ballantine). His first short story collection published in the U.S. was *Alternating Currents* (Ballantine, 1956).

He edited a number of SF magazines, most notably *If* and *Galaxy* (1961-1969), and many anthologies, including the *Star Science Fiction Stories*, a groundbreaking six-volume anthology series of original SF stories during 1953-1959.

A novel, *All the Lives He Led*, appeared in 2011; and a collection of his short fiction, *Anthology of Sci-Fi 29, The Pulp Writers – Frederik Pohl*, was published in 2013.

Awards/Honors/Recognitions

Awards/honors in the SF genre: Invisible Little Man Award, 1964; Skylark Award, 1966; Hugo (Professional Magazine), 1966, 1967, 1968; (Short Story), 1973, 1986; (Novel) for *Gateway*, 1978; Nebula (Novel) for *Man Plus*, 1977, for *Gateway*, 1978; John W. Campbell, Jr. Memorial Award, 1978 for *Gateway*, 1985 for *The Years of the City*; GoH, World Science Fiction Convention, 1972; SFWA President, 1974-1976; National Book Award, 1980 for *JEM: The Making of a Utopia*; SFWA Grand Master, 1992; SF & Fantasy Hall of Fame, 1998; LRH Lifetime Achievement Award, 2000; J. Lloyd Eaton Lifetime Achievement Award in Science Fiction, 2011; several other awards, including a Prix Utopia Award in 2000.

He was president of the SFWA during 1974-1976, and served as president of World SF in 1980-1982. Even though his formal education was limited, he was so knowledgeable about science that he was elected a Fellow of the AAAS in 1982. One of the original members of First Fandom, Pohl was elected to the First Fandom Hall of Fame in 1989.

Important Works

A collection of his early short fiction, *The Early Pohl*, appeared in 1976. His non-genre novels included *Terror* (1986) and *Chernobyl* (1987). More recently, he wrote the three-novel “Eschaton Sequence”: *The Other End of Time* (1996), *The Siege of Eternity* (1997), and *The Far Shore of Time* (1999), in addition to *O Pioneer!*, a SF novel about civic virtue (1999), and the non-fiction *Chasing Science* (2000), subtitled *Science as Spectator Sport*.

He also edited the SFWA Grand Masters reprint anthology series. A collection of his short fiction, *Platinum Pohl* [career-spanning collection of 30 of his stories], appeared late in 2005; and his novel, *The Boy Who Would Live Forever*, another book in his famous “Heechee” series, was published in 2004. Other popular Pohl series were “Space Merchants” (with Kornbluth), “Man Plus,” and “Omega Point.”

Critical Evaluations

Genre critic Thomas Clareson wrote about one of Pohl’s novels: “In *Black Star Rising* (1985), Pohl has produced a delightfully caustic satire that deserves a high place in the tradition going back through Orwell, Huxley, and Swift. It surpasses anything such of his contemporaries as Ray Bradbury and Kurt Vonnegut have attempted.”

In his *New Maps of Hell*, Kingsley Amis wrote of Pohl: “[His] field of interest is contemporary urban society and its chain of production and consumption.” In addition, he once called Pohl “the most consistently able writer that science fiction, in its modern form, has yet produced.”

David N. Samuelson wrote in 1984: “SF had been good to Pohl, and he continues to return the favor.”

Pohl himself on reading/writing SF: “When I was ten years ago, I began to read science fiction, when I was twelve to write it. Ever since then it has been what I have done with my life, in one form or another: writer, editor, lecturer, occasionally teacher, always reader.”

Concluding Comments

For over 30 years Pohl served as SF’s unofficial ambassador to dozens of countries, including Japan, China, and the Soviet Union. The September, 1973, issue of *F&SF* was a special Frederik Pohl issue [containing his bibliography, a novella by Pohl, an appreciation of Pohl by Lester del Rey, and with cover art by Pohl’s wife Carol]; he was interviewed in the July, 1978, issue of *Galileo*, and the subject of the October, 1978 “Biolog” department in *Astounding Science Fiction*.

An interview with Pohl appeared in *Science Fiction Voices #1* (1979) [edited by Darrell Schweitzer]; he was interviewed in the Fall 1986 issue (Number 60) of *Science Fiction Review* in *Nickelodeon #2* (1976), and in the March, 2001 issue of the *Science Fiction Chronicle*. He was interviewed several times in *Locus*, with “On My Way to the Future” appearing in the January, 2009, issue.

Pohl’s autobiographical work, *The Way the Future Was: A Memoir*, was published in 1978. After his death his website, “The Way the Future Blogs,” continued to publish new posts from a

file of items he had left behind.

Sources

Bloom, Harold. Science Fiction Writers of the Golden Age. NY: Chelsea House, 1995.

Clareson, Thomas & Thomas Wymer. Voices for the Future, Volume Three. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1984.

Clute, John & Peter Nicholls (eds.). The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction. London: Orbit, 1993.

Currey, L. W. Science Fiction and Fantasy Authors. Boston, MA: G. K. Hall, 1979.

Pohl, Frederik. The Way the Future Was. London: Granada, 1983.

Note: In addition to the above works, various Internet sites were consulted, including Wikipedia and Fancyclopedia 3.

Short Stories

Will Mayo Reviews Ray Bradbury's The Pedestrian

You know, there's a Ray Bradbury short story I read about fifty years ago that sums up the dangers of an ignorant society even more than his novel "Fahrenheit 451" about the book burning firemen. This short story is called "The Pedestrian." And in this story a man is walking along the roadway with a book in his hand. Driving by, the police see him and stop to ask him some questions. "What are you doing?" they ask the man. "Doing?" he replies. "Why, I'm going for a walk. It feels good to get some air." "And what's that you have in your hand?" the cops ask the pedestrian. "This?" The man says. "Why, it's a book. It helps to pass the time." "A book, you say?" the cops reply. And they take him away, though whether to the madhouse or the jailhouse is unclear. This story, more than anything, shows what we have come to as a society today.

Music

Will Mayo's Review Of Elton John's Rocket Man

In this song, one of the first records I got as a boy, Elton John sings of an astronaut who misses his wife, misses his kids as he journeys from Earth to far away Mars. He sings this song in the early 1970s, a time in which the promises of space seem every bit as near as they do now. Yet he can't help but feel he'll be "gone a long, a long time." This may be a pioneering voyage but it's also a lonely one. Tune into Elton as he sings the rocket man forward.

Food of Famous Authors with Cedar Sanderson

This Month: George Phillies and Greek Stew

The last time I had a recipe from George, it was a fun hot mess, not because of his snicker-doodles, but because I was baking under unusual circumstances. This recipe was a bit more pulled-together, but not by much, because...

But first! You should check out George Phillies' books. *Minutegirls* is my favorite, not only because (full disclosure) I created the cover art and design for him, but because it's a fun military science fiction and it's a fat book. But if you want something lighter, check out his *Against Three Lands*, but something you should know: George writing 'light' is still incredibly well constructed and detailed. Any of his work shows that he's spent a lifetime designing worlds for gaming, and his work shows that he understands economics on a level most of us don't bother with.



But for this meal, the economic struggle was real. Ok, it's a long story, but for whatever reason, we here in the US of America just don't eat goat and sheep the way most of the rest of the world does. I personally love both, for different reasons, but that just goes to show that I'm weird, to begin with, for an American. So when I needed to acquire a lamb neck to make this stew, I was both excited and apprehensive. Lamb in Ohio is hard to find, and expensive. The halal market where I used to get it is now a hookah café. I knew of another one nearer to home, but less friendly. I ventured in, smiled politely a lot, and voila! One lamb neck, ready for stew. Also, at 5.99 a pound, reasonably priced for lamb.

Here's a sample of why you'll like George's fiction, as it's the tale of how this recipe came to be, and it made me laugh. I think you'll like it, too, dear readers.

Greek Lamb Stew

Perfect for sitting out with on a cool and raining summer's eve. Better for winter, but this worked nicely! George writes:

There is a story behind this. My mother's parents were Hungarian. My father's parents were Greek. My parents carefully gave everyone minimum notice that they were getting married, so that my father's parents would have enough time to recover from the news that he was not marrying a woman from my grandfather's village, and not enough time to do anything else. In any event, my mother actually did not know how to cook at the time they got married. Fortunately, she had taken college chemistry, so she knew what boiling water looked like. The first morning on returning from their honeymoon after they were in her now their apartment, and my father asked about breakfast, my mother was able to boil water for eggs and coffee. She improved a great deal.



In particular, my mother realized that in order to make peace with her husband's parents she would have to learn how to cook Greek as well as Hungarian food. My father had Greek friends, older women, who were delighted to help. There

came the day when she invited my paternal grandparents for dinner, cooked everything in the Greek style, and proceeded to see what would happen. There first came the point where my grandfather lectured at vast length about the glories of Greek history. From the Greek point of view, history consists of the glories of pre-Roman-conquest Greece and the Byzantine Empire. My mother blandly said, I am told, “that’s absolutely fascinating. But what the Greeks done since then?” My father had to flee to the kitchen so that his parents would not see him attempting not to laugh. However, my grandfather had already turned to the food, clearly loved absolutely everything, and in the end turned to my grandmother and said “Yaya, this was all wonderful. We have a wonderful new daughter. You used to cook this way.” After that last sentence, relations between my parents and my grandmother took a little longer to improve.

In any event, the recipe: 3 pounds lamb stew meat (this is a neck or shoulder piece in square chunks) one small onion per pound meat. Brown the meat in a dry pan (do not add shortening!) browning the lamb’s neck. I didn’t bother to cut it down, as I knew it would cook just fine as is, and I could pull the meat off later.

Chop onions, add to the pan when meat is browned, and sauté. Add salt and pepper. Add water to barely cover the meat and simmer.

Add one can tomato paste (scant) with water and simmer until meat is tender. Remove meat and to sauce in skillet add a vegetable of choice: green beans, or peas, or okra, or zucchini, or: add about a quart of water to the sauce, bring to boil, and add two thirds of box of Rosa Marina, stir well, cover, simmer, stirring occasionally. The “minestra” can stick to the bottom of the pan if you are not careful. If the water cooks down before the Rosa Marina is tender add more water.

If you use this recipe with chicken rather than Lamb, brown the chicken in a little olive oil. I added carrots for the veg (it was what I had on hand) and fresh herbs.

Cedar’s notes: I cut the recipe in half. None of the kids living at home currently will eat tomatoes in any form, so I knew this would just feed the First Reader and I. I also added about 6 garlic cloves, minced, with the onions to saute at the beginning, and then a handful of fresh herbs (mostly oregano and thyme) to the stew. I cooked it overnight in the crockpot, then pulled the meat off the bones and removed the bones. I cooked the pasta separately as the stew was already quite thick (my crockpot runs very hot. If it’s thinner, you could do the pasta in the broth). Finally, I served it with feta crumbled on top and fresh bread on the side. Mmmmm!

Lamb stew with orzo
pasta and feta crumbles.



2022 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest

Story Contest Rules and Entry Blank

1. This contest is open to all amateur writers in the field, regardless of whether they're members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. For the purposes of this contest, we define an amateur as someone who has sold no more than two (2) stories to professional science fiction or fantasy publications.
2. Stories entered in the contest must be original, unpublished, not longer than 8,500 words in length—and must be related to the science fiction, fantasy, or similar genres in the opinion of the judge.
3. Email attachments of Word documents are acceptable for submission. Manuscripts on paper should be typed, single sided on 8 1/2"-by- 11" white paper, double spaced, with pages numbered. The name of the author should not appear anywhere on the manuscript to ensure impartial judging. Photocopies are acceptable, if they are of good quality. Computer printouts must be legible.
4. Contestants can enter up to three stories. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) if you would like your story returned at the end of the contest. Stories will not be returned without an SASE. Do not send your only copy in case of accidental loss. We are not responsible for lost manuscripts.
5. Email entries will be accepted. Send to Jefferson P. Swycaffer at abontides@gmail.com. No guarantee can be made of email receipt. Privacy and property rights will be absolutely respected. No one other than the Short Story Judge will ever see the submission.
6. There are no entry fees.
7. Cash prizes totaling \$100 will be awarded as follows: First prize is \$50, second \$30, and third \$20. Honorable mentions and semi-finalists will receive a certificate of award.
8. Send all manuscripts to the contest manager: Jefferson Swycaffer, P. O. Box 15373, San Diego, CA 92175-5373; abontides@gmail.com. Emails with the story attached in word format are preferred. Paper manuscripts are acceptable. All entries must be received or postmarked no later than Dec. 31, 2022.
9. The Short Story Judge is a published science fiction professional, and also a loving fan of the sf and fantasy genres. All comments and critiques are solely the Short Story Judge's opinion, but he promises to be constructive and polite.
10. Stories will also be reviewed by the Editor of the N3F Fiction zine *Eldritch Science*; authors of suitable tales will be invited to submit their tales for publication in our zine. This review and invitation will only occur after contest winners have been announced, so it can have no effect on the contest outcome.
11. The NSF may want to publish an electronic book including top entries from one or more years of publication. You will not be contacted about this until after the contest is over and prizes have been awarded. If we want to publish your story, you will have to sign over to us first world serial rights. Your willingness to sign over rights cannot affect whether or not you win the contest. Winners will be notified as soon as the judging is completed. Announcements and notifications of winning entries will be made by March 2022. Please take your time and submit your best work. You can resubmit stories previously entered if they did not win previously. All entries will be kept confidential and will be judged fairly and anonymously. The deadline for all entries is Dec. 31, 2022. Good luck!

Please supply on a separate page the following information as your entry form.

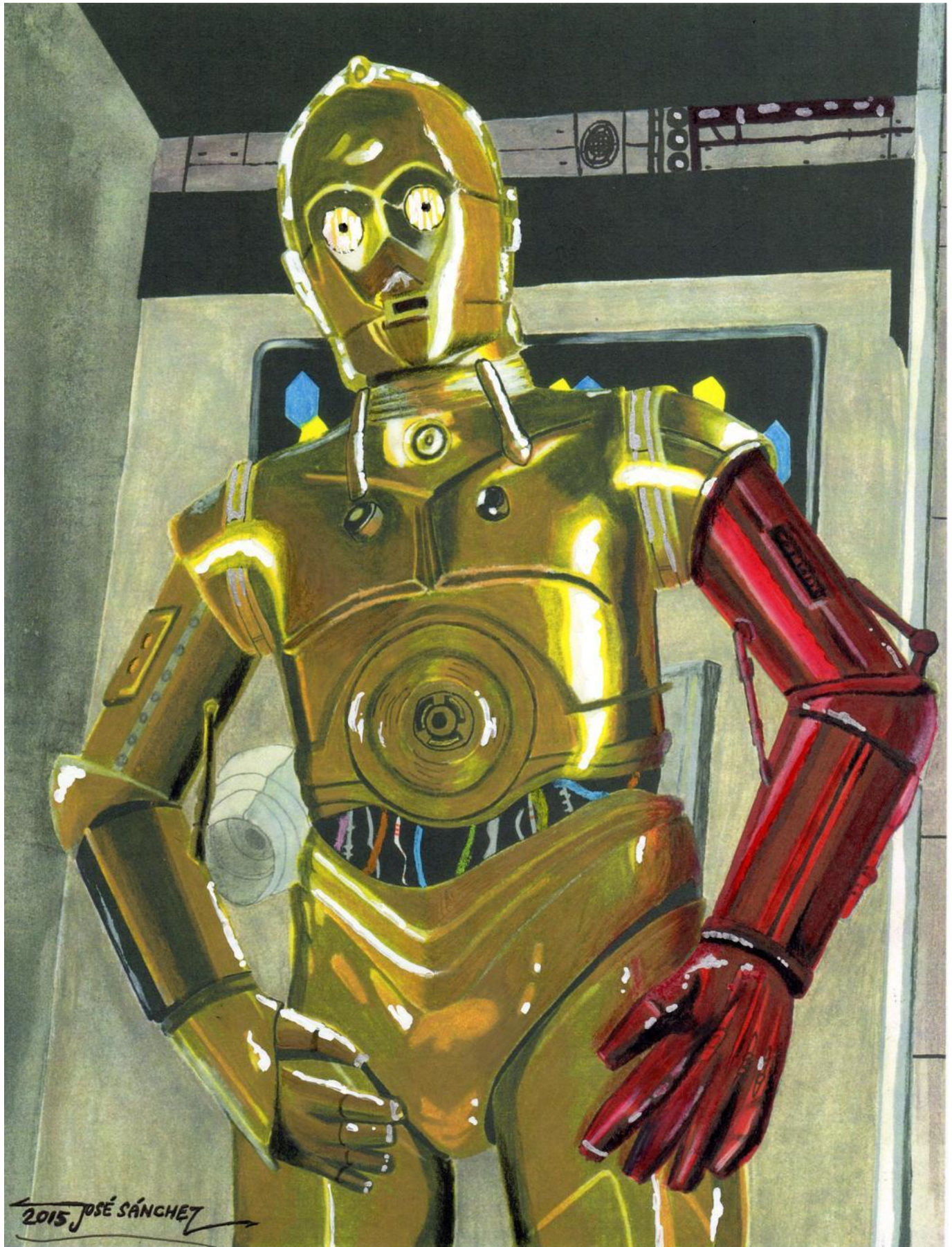
Title of story (for identification):

Author's name and address: **Author's email address:**

I have read the above rules for the 2022 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest, and I agree to them.

Signature/Date: _____

Mail to: Jefferson Swycaffer, P. O. Box 15373, San Diego, CA 92175-5373 ; or email abontides@gmail.com



3PO by José Sánchez