

Tightbeam 351

December 2023



Alien Landing by
Jose Sanchez

Tightbeam 351

December 2023

What is Tightbeam? We are the N3F literary fanzine, not the novel and anthology fanzine, but the fanzine that tries to cover all tastes in fandom, such as anime, comics, cosplay, films, novels, biographies, poetry, music, short stories, food, ...

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Public (non-voting) memberships are free. Send payments to Kevin Trainor, PO Box 143, Tonopah NV 89049 . Pay online at N3F.org. PayPal contact is treasurer@n3f.org.

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Letter of Comment

Dear George and Jon:

Many thanks for Tightbeam 350, and congrats to you and the club for 350 issues. There aren't many fanzines with that kind of number on them.

My loc...preparations for the 2024 NASFiC, the 2024 World Fantasy Convention, and Loscon 50 continue onwards. Right now, we need memberships and booked rooms, plus we need to do some budgeting to ensure we can afford all of this. I do remember meeting Chan Davis once, and it may have been in passing. Thank you for listing the day Chan died, for I knew that it wasn't that long ago.

For those who enjoy Star Trek: Discovery, I have found out that the fifth and final season will appear on various channels and streaming services in April of 2024. Some special ideas may appear in what will be the final season, so I am looking forward to it. With Astronomicon now just a memory, we did vend at a couple of places, but except for some Christmas shopping, I think we're done travel for the year.

I wish I had more to talk about here, but I think I am done. Thanks for this issue, and I expect you will start the first of the next 350 issues very soon. Looking forward to it, and see you then.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Anime

Magical Circle Guru Guru/Mahoujin Guru Guru Review by Jesse Silver

The seal that confined the evil monster Guruguru for hundreds of years has worn off. A young boy named Nike is chosen (against his will) as the hero. He sets off with Kukuri, a girl who is the lone survivor of a tribe that uses black magic for good, to save the world, RPG style. – ANN

Episode 1 Summary: After 300 years, the seal on Demon King Giri has worn off, and it's time for a new hero to go on a journey to defeat him. As a kid, Nike might seem like the least likely choice to deal Giri a smack down, but his parents have been raising him to take up the mantle of



hero for his entire life. Despite Nike's protests, he's sent off to Magic Granny's house to obtain a traveling companion. There he meets Kukuri, the last of her line of magic users, and a start-struck 12-year-old to boot. She considers her meeting with Nike her destiny as a magic user, and the two journey to the Ancient Castle to meet with the king. Though there are hundreds of other hero-wannabes already there, Nike demonstrates some elusive inner potential and is sent on



his way (along with a modest monetary payment to purchase supplies). They meet their first monster on the road, but due to its bad case of monologuing and Kukuri's innate talent (luck?) with magic, they're able to defeat it.

Impressions: *Magical Circle Guru Guru* is a surprise in both tone and style; in an age when anime (even humorous anime) takes itself very seriously, this show seems to hearken back to a simpler time of rapid-fire gags and outright parody, and is ultimately stronger for it. Nike doesn't want to be the hero.

The anime reveals itself as a parody of 8-bit style RPG's right from the get-go with its use of pixel art and dialog boxes straight out of classics like *Dragon Quest* or the original *Final Fantasy*. As Nike is thrust into the role of protagonist, the show wastes no time in pointing out the inherent ridiculousness of so many video games in establishing the hero's role and purpose. Who in their right mind would assume that a tween kid still living with his parents



would make a suitable hero. Of course he holds some mysterious unnamed power – all the tropes say that he has to! The way in which the show employs each and every one of those time-worn cliches belies the fact that the creators of the story truly have a lot of love for these kinds of scenarios. Many of us geeks of a certain age have a shared experience in playing these types of games, so while we might not know exactly what's "supposed" to happen, seeing it unfold gives us

a chuckle and a warm case of the nostalgia fuzzies.

Another nostalgic aspect of the episode is evident right from the get-go; the show channels other classics like *Kodomo no Omocha* in its way of presenting the story through non-stop visual gags and hyperactive dialog. This barely gives the viewer a chance to take a breath and regroup before tackling the next item on the story agenda, but this is definitely where familiarity with the structure and pacing serves another purpose; when you already know what's supposed to happen and have already accepted that it will do so without question, it leaves enough time for your brain to latch onto the fact that one of Kukuri's magic circles is the "laughing man" symbol, or that the home-cooked meal made by Nike's mother is the perfect visual representation of an RPG world map. It's a bit like the way in



which moé characterization can, in some cases, serve to provide a good character baseline so that additional character development can occur within the relatively protracted time period allowed for in most TV anime these days. It definitely doesn't occur that way successfully in all cases, but when done right it can help make the most of limited resources.

Don't draw your magic circle incorrectly!

Speaking of characterization, though, I feel like that might be one area where this episode happens to fall short. It can be easy to underestimate the importance of character development in a

comedic setting, especially with a gag-comedy focus. In the end, the most important thing is that most if not all of the jokes were successful in entertaining the audience. I've found that a lot of viewers (and some creators) tend to underestimate the potential value added when competent comedy is coupled with sympathetic characters with whom the viewer can form a connection. Jokes that harp on one person's primary defining trait often grow tiresome, but jokes that escalate as we learn more and more about a character's inner self make for some of the most transcendent, memorable laughs in anime (one series that does this surprisingly well is *Nichijou*, which is a must-watch as far as I'm concerned).

My main complaint with this episode in this regard isn't as much with Nike, who is kind of your crabby "every kid" hero and seems fairly self-aware, but with Kukuri who stands out to me as being more ill-defined. She's introduced as a character whose cute but ineffectual but for



her streak of dumb luck. She's worshipful of Nike, her "hero" who serves some sort of important role in her life as an ideal rather than a friend or equal; it's this piece of it that grates on me a little bit. Kukuri toes the line between someone who could eventually become aware of her own potential and someone who's purpose in the narrative is to provide Nike more obstacles to overcome due to her clumsiness and lack of awareness. For now their dynamic is kind of funny, but it's something to keep my

eye on.

The characters travel in 8-bit mode.



I briefly mentioned above how the show utilizes visual parody in addition to other forms of humor, and this is probably one of the more entertaining aspects of the episode. There are several 8-bit overhead view interludes (in 4:3 aspect ratio, no less) that occur when characters travel, or something is occurring that seems particularly ripped-off from any of several classic RPG video games. This breaks up the episode nicely

and the technique isn't overused which lets it keep being funny rather than repetitive and tiresome. There's also a similarly funny effect that occurs in some instances during character close-ups, where they'll be portrayed as they are in the anime, but highly pixelated in close-up. It's difficult to describe why it's so amusing to me; I tend to think that extreme close-up shots of people's faces are inherently pretty funny for whatever reason, especially if the zoom slowly increases in intensity. The added effect of the pixels only enhances that. Overall these cute additions really serve to emphasize the tie that the show has to a particular era of video-gaming; while I believe that the show is made for younger viewers, this aspect makes it entertaining for those of us who played the first *Dragon Quest* on cartridge, too.

I have to say, this show really came out of nowhere for me. As a re-make of an older series, it definitely looks pretty unassuming. There wasn't a lot of energy put into making it flashier for a new generation of viewers, and I think that was the correct decision. Considering that anime



comedies tend to be mostly-miss for me, I really didn't have a lot of reason to pay attention as this was coming down the pipeline. After finding myself highly amused by episode 1, I feel like I might have to add it to my queue. At the very least, it seems like it might be a fun distraction.

Pros: The visual and parody humor work well together. There is judicious use of visual gags like 8-bit style and pixilation.

Cons: The characterization is a bit lacking so far.

Grade: B

First Impressions — 18If Review by Jesse Silver



One day, Haruto wakes up on a round bed in a strange room, with the only familiar things around being his smartphone and headphones. After encountering a strange girl in white named Lily who claims to be his sister and a man who looks like a cat, Haruto learns that he is in a dream belonging to Yuko, a girl stricken with Sleeping Beauty Syndrome. Yuko is the Witch of Thunder, an all-powerful woman who makes the dream world bow before her to ensure she's known the strongest, the best, and the most fun

person around. Haruto's sister tells him that he must wake Yuko up by killing her in the dream in order to break the "spell" she's under, but Haruto's got some other ideas about what might be keeping Yuko asleep. – ANN

Episode 1 Summary: The Witch of Thunder rules her dream world with an iron fist, turning its denizens into avatars of cuteness and destroying anything that she doesn't like. Enter Haruto, a sullen teenage guy who seems unaffected by the inherent strangeness of the dreamscape around him. He's the only person who can see the elusive "Lily," a legend of the dream world and a white whale of sorts to Professor Kanzaki, a researcher who appears in dreams as an anthropomorphic cat. As the two chase after this mysterious girl in white, the Witch of Thunder clues into their location and begins the process of bending the two interlopers to her will. Kanzaki is quickly dispatched, but Haruto refuses to see what is happening as anything other than a strange dream. It's through this skepticism that he's able to distinguish the Witch for who she is – the dream persona of a girl named Yuko, whose feelings were hurt by a group of bullies. Haruto releases Yuko, who then awakes again in the real world. But Haruto's job seems far from over as he awakens and finds himself still within a surreal setting.

Impressions: Having been an anime fan for so many years, it's difficult to avoid comparing a current anime to ones with similar ideas, especially if the earlier examples were executed more

successfully. At first glance, 18if seems to be about a mysterious young man who encounters women with problems, and due to some inherent talent on his end is able to heal these women and release them from their suffering. Another anime that immediately came to mind was one of my favorites, the horror drama Mononoke. For those who are unfamiliar, Mononoke follows a character known as the Medicine Seller, who identifies and exorcises malevolent spirits. The show is fairly episodic, but one common thread between all the stories is that they shine a light on the injustices done to women throughout history (mostly Japanese history, but with some minor variations I think many of the experiences could be interpreted as fairly universal); the titular mononoke are based around various Japanese yokai and spirits, but are colored by how they originate from things like forced abortion, abusive relationships, and workplace sexism.



I've seen some reviews that interpret the show as being terrible for women, in that the stories are built entirely around women's suffering. For me, however, I found a lot of personal meaning in how the stories were presented – each story arc revolves around uncovering the truth, specifically the truth of the life lived by women and how their poor treatment represents an illness within society.

The Witch of Thunder surveys her dream kingdom.

Having seen one of the very best representations of this kind of storytelling, it's difficult to overlook a situation in which the structure of the show seems similar but the execution feels lacking in depth and nuance. Whereas the Medicine Seller's otherworldly presence in Mononoke and his ability to uncover subtleties and details allows the truth of each situation to be exposed on its own (usually out of the mouths of the people who caused the problem in the first place), Haruto's sarcastic disinterest and unaffected nature runs contrary to the fact that he seems to be naturally able to navigate and control aspects of the dream environment. He seems more alarmed by the fact that Lily, a girl only he seems able to see, calls him her brother than the fact that he's about to be squashed by giant teddy bears or hacked-up by a vengeful witch. None of his actions seem purposeful, and while this might be typical for an anime hero getting oriented to a new and strange environment, the lack of any consequences for the character and his lack of focus, direction, or even personality leads directly to a lack of tension throughout the episode.

The episode itself attempts to bank on its presentation of the dream environment as disorienting and weird. Much of the first half of the episode is short on dialog and seems more focused around the various environments that Haruto encounters as he wakes up multiple times from within some sort of dream-ception. One thing that I love about animation is that it can be utilized fairly readily to create settings that cannot exist as easily when portrayed in live-action film. In this case, though, a problem arises from the fact that dreams, while often strange, still often have some element of reality to them. One of the most affecting things about the animated movie Paprika was that Satoshi Kon was able to capture both the reality and the strangeness of dreaming so completely. The dream settings were often mundane, or drawn from film imagery that wasn't especially extraordinary; when pieced together with representations of the dream-specific feeling of being unable to run quickly or seeing faceless background "characters" however, the experience felt very genuine. 18if represents dreams as wacky abstract environments and characters that seem visually complete but purposely out-of-place, which definitely pro-



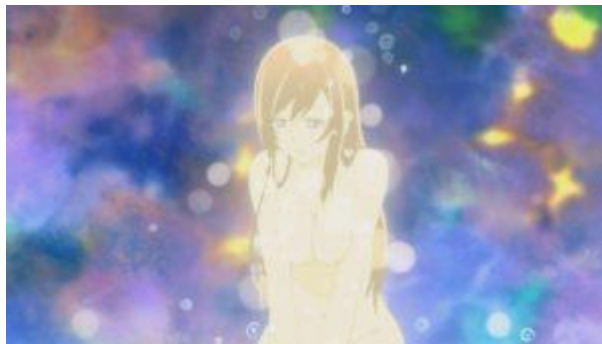
vides for something zany, but doesn't give the same unsettling impression of a genuine human dream.

This, I think, is where the concept falls apart. Ultimately we learn that the dream world is something of a witch's labyrinth a-la Madoka Magica; Yuko falls asleep in the real world as the result of some cruel bullying from her classmates, and a malignant dream in which she has sovereignty and has the luxury of being pampered and given total attention is the result. That

it's okay because it's just a dream.

set up seems fine except for the fact that there are literally zero visual connections between that reality and Yuko's dream prison, and the attempt to connect the two conceptually through her need for control is pretty pasted-on. Add to that the fact that there's the potential for some garbage gender dynamics between the "hero" – a typical teenage anime guy – and a bunch of girls (?)* with problems, and I'm very hesitant about where this show is going.

As much as the first episode attempts to present a visually engaging setting, there's a major setback in the fact that the animation is merely functional rather than striking. Not every anime series enjoys the benefits of a lot of lead time and great planning; I have no idea what the turnaround time on this show was and so it's difficult for me to be too judgmental, especially when



anime, despite being a visual medium, is almost always more about the story and characters for me. Sadly, though, it's difficult to ignore the fact that the character animation in this first episode is kind of shoddy and underwhelming for a first episode and I'm concerned that, if it looks like this now, it will probably look even worse later on.

Because nudity = vulnerability. Really!

Having been an anime fan through Gonzo's heyday with properties like Gankutsuou, I always kind of hope that they might somehow end up involved with another artful classic close to that level. While this show seems to want to make an attempt at visual uniqueness and the cultivation of intrigue via the route of confusing and disorienting the viewer, it falls short in establishing a story (or protagonist) that feels genuine, and that's really a shame. Yes, things might get better later on and yes, all the sexist undertones may at some point be subverted in favor of something better, but I don't have a lot of faith.

*I'm just speculating due to the use of the term "witch" which normally suggests some kind of malignant, aggressive, or otherwise contrary femininity, unfortunately.

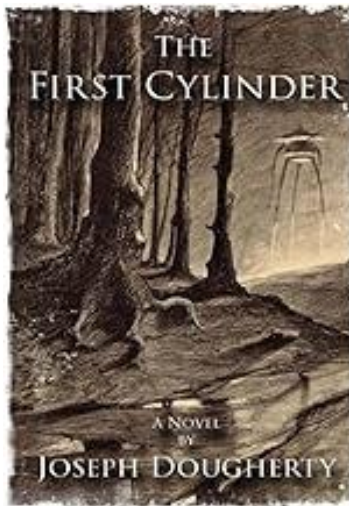
Pros: Gonzo, you tried?

Cons: Visually disjointed. I interpret the set up as having some sexist undertones.

Grade: C-

Book

The First Cylinder A Novel by Joseph Dougherty Review by George Phillis



We have here something unusual, namely a retelling of Wells' *The War Of The Worlds* from the perspective of a Martian. The tale is set in the same world, with very different perspectives on what the Martians might have been like. The volume is presented as though it had been published at the turn of the last century, meaning that the reader has to receive an explanation of how it is possible for the author to have known what the Martians were thinking. The answer is that literary device, the thanatosphere, a zone of the far upper atmosphere in which the dead reside. For Victorian, accustomed to scientific studies of fairies and communication with the dead, the existence of the thanatosphere should not be surprising, especially when the author provides the details as to how the dead Martian was reached in the next plane of existence, namely this sphere exists directly above the other layers of the atmosphere.

A particularly magnificent bit is the publishers introduction from Wickwire and Pendergast, publishers, Limited of New York. The publisher discusses how the volume manuscript came into the hands of his company but does not hesitate to note the many fine books of practical hospitality science, published by his company books such as "Practical Sanitary And Economic Cooking Adopted To Persons Of Moderate And Small Means" by Claudine Marie Sperling. The narrator is a Martian, one Vvv, who was in fact a conscript.

The invasion goes wrong from the beginning, starting with the death during launch of the cardos, the apparently unintelligent humanoid beings of silicacious skeletons described briefly by Wells.

As the book advances, almost everything goes wrong with for the Martians. Their war machines are actually a sort of agricultural device of limited military effectiveness. The people running the invasion turned out to be corrupt, so some number of late cylinders arrive and are found to be totally empty, because more money could be gifted if nothing was put inside. At some point the narrator encounters the other intelligent species in the solar system, vaguely described as a humanoid with golden hair, who among other things explains to the Martian narrator that the Martians have adopted an evolutionary dead end, namely that reproduction by binary fission does not advance evolution very well. The Martian's morale is, to put it mildly, poor, even though he took such defensive acts is killing at least one other member of the crew of his cylinder. The encounter with the Thunder Child is described in terms not sympathetic to Martian military training, assuming they ever had any.

If you are fond of pastiche you may well enjoy this volume.

Movie Reviews

The Communion Girl Review by Heath Row

Seen in his zine *Telegraphs & Tar Pits*

This was one of two Spanish films I watched while flying from Los Angeles to Madrid via Iberia Airways. Originally titled *La Niña de la Comunión*, this is a horror movie released in 2022; I watched it with English subtitles.

Reminding me of Conjurverse movies such as *The Conjuring* and the *Annabelle* series—as well as perhaps *Insidious: The Red Door* and *Talk to Me*—the movie focuses on several young adults who become determined to figure out the occasional appearance of a little girl’s ghostly form, the discovery of an antique communion doll, and the disappearance of a young girl several years ago.

The communion doll seems to possess a corrupting influence that leads to increasingly mottled or bruised skin, as well as misleading visions and violence—toward yourself and others (shades of *Talk to Me*). In the end, it seems that there’s also a malevolent presence beyond the doll itself, perhaps using the doll as a lure.

Set in the late 1980s, the movie isn’t a strong period piece, despite the potentially innovative use of a video game arcade in one series of scenes. Given the setting’s relatively small community, it’s also a story about cultural isolation and yearning for more stimuli as one matures. The scarcity of transportation and dancing amongst the young also plays a noteworthy role in the movie. I found the combination of rural and religious ruins—and the dreamlike state into which characters fall when overcome by the doll—to be particularly effective. The way the characters determine what was happening—and why—was convincing and compelling, even with the twist at the end. While I don’t think this movie needs to be recast or remade in English, I think it could bear a wider release with subtitles. Luckily, it’s streaming on Paramount+ and is otherwise available on Apple TV and Google Play.

Tobacco Barns Review by Heath Row

Seen in his zine *Telegraphs & Tar Pits*

This 2022 Spanish movie also titled *Secaderos* is a wonderfully gentle fantasy that reminded me of *Princess Mononoke* by way of the 2009 *Where the Wild Things Are*. Most of the movie is a musing on the impact of the encroachment of civilization on traditionally rural agricultural areas devoted to tobacco production. Two families are affected. One is unable to continue supporting his family by growing tobacco—after a buyer falls through—and is forced to find another source of income. And an elderly couple decides to sell their tobacco barn, like other neighbors have before them, negatively affecting their younger relatives.

Meanwhile, a young woman is torn between her family’s rural home and labor—and the appeal of the youth culture of her friends, occasional drinking and drugs, and outdoor dance parties. As the narrative unfolds, the viewer encounters what seems to be a tobacco spirit that is ailing be-

cause of the diminishing land devoted to agriculture. At first, a young girl and her friends are the only people able to see it, but when the young woman takes acid one evening, she, too, is able to see the creature.

The tobacco spirit or fantastic creature seems to be a metaphor for the community's and families' connections to the land. Other than the creature's presence, interactions with sympathetic characters, and apparent relationship with the health of the land, there is no conflict per se involving the creature. No unsympathetic people witness or encounter it, and its presence is gently consistent, as though it had always been there, though unseen.

An interesting movie given its themes of urbanism and agricultural economics. The practical effects portraying the nature spirit are excellent, and the fantastic aspect of the movie is intriguingly muted.

SerCon

The Last Jedi Problem Analysis by Chris Nuttall

I was going to write this as part of a bigger essay, but it probably does better as a singleton. Normal commenting rules apply.

The Last Jedi proved to be a highly controversial movie when it came out and several years (and a pair of underperforming follow-ups) have done nothing to redeem it. The movie is both objectively and subjectively terrible, with widespread character assassination, shrilling and – bluntly – a complete disregard for the factors that made Star Wars popular in the first place. However, that alone is not enough to seriously damage a franchise. The far more dangerous aspect, and the one that did serious damage, was the response to criticism.

There were essentially two groups that criticised The Last Jedi. One group felt that it was a poorly conceived, poorly written and poorly directed movie that laughed in the face of previous canon (and expanded universe/legends canon). They had legitimate complaints. The other group was composed of misogynists and racists. Their complaints were not legitimate. The response from the film's producers and supporters, however, was to smear the first group with the second. The bad apples in fandom were used to attack the rest of fandom.



This is a cunning tactic, in the short term. If you regard your critics as misogynists and racists (and homophobes, transphobes, xenophobes (etc, etc)), and insist this is true regardless of all evidence of the contrary, you can delegitimize their complaints. This absolves you of the responsibility to listen to their complaints, let alone act on them. Who wants to give even the slightest hint of legitimacy to misogynists and racists (etc, etc)? No one.

It's easy to see why someone would feel that this is a reasonable tac-

tic. The Last Jedi was not cheap. Disney invested a hell of a lot of money in the franchise. Delegitimizing the critics, at least in theory, saved the producers from having to admit they'd made a serious mistake. In practice, it undermined the franchise by making it clear that the producers simply weren't interested in listening to criticism, let alone improving upon their work. It's possible to argue that The Last Jedi, Solo and The Rise of Skywalker made money and therefore the producers weren't too far wrong. However, the franchise significantly underperformed after The Last Jedi. Given the sheer magnitude of the fanbase, this should worry anyone with an eye to the bottom line.

The producers and their supporters argued that the fans were over-entitled. There's some truth to this. However, it is also true that vast numbers of fans kept the faith from the moment Return of the Jedi rolled the last credits until Disney produced The Last Jedi. Those fans purchased books, computer games, toys, endured the prequel trilogy ... in short, they were emotionally invested in the franchise. It is not unreasonable to feel that one has a right to expect a reward for such investment, even though – objectively speaking – the fan has no claim on the producers. Nor is it unreasonable to feel personally insulted if you've been called a misogynist, a racist or one of a dozen other things you know you're not.

This touches on something I've mentioned before. A good-faith attempt to address the complaint, by accepting it is valid or explaining why it is not, would have gone a long way towards solving the problem before it got out of hand. It might not have satisfied the critics, but it would have convinced outside observers that the producers were taking the complaints seriously enough to write a refutation. Bad faith responses – calling someone a racist, for example – simply undermine credibility. It suggests, very strongly, that there is no good answer to the complaints. And once you start insulting people, any hope of a peaceful solution goes straight out the window (not least because it's impossible to prove a negative.)

The Last Jedi is just a movie. Fundamentally, it doesn't matter what happens to Star Wars. But what happens when this approach is taken to ... well, everything? Over the last few years, we have found out. It isn't pretty.

It is not easy to see things from someone else's point of view. A very rich and powerful person, with all the trapping of his wealth and rank, simply cannot grasp how carefully a poor person must manage money. He can very easily push for supermarkets to stock only expensive foodstuffs because, to him, they are not expensive at all. He cannot understand that he's just made life harder for the poor person, who now has to somehow find the money to pay for food or starve. Said rich and powerful person might push for criminal justice reform without thinking through the consequences, because – at base – he does not have to face the consequences. The man who lives in a gated community, with a private security force, doesn't have to deal with criminals on the streets. He cannot understand why the poorer people would sooner lock the criminals up and throw away the key.

And because he doesn't understand that, he doesn't understand why the poor hate him.

People are not generally selfish. But they are motivated by self-interest. If you fail to take someone's self-interest into account, and to accept that their feelings are valid, you should not be surprised when they come to hate you. If you delegitimize their feelings, and effectively delegitimize them, they come in turn to delegitimize you. And then they don't pay any attention to you. Why should they?

Going back to *The Last Jedi*, the producers were attempting the impossible. They wanted a movie that would both appeal to the fans and the general public. To do the former, they would have had to assess what made *Star Wars* popular in the first place and do more of it (the thinking that led to the Thrawn trilogy). To do the latter, they would have had to streamline the plot as much as possible. Instead, they ended up with what was once called – quite aptly – a beautiful disaster.

This could have been avoided. A clear-sighted assessment of what viewers – both fans and the general public – wanted could have been done. (As Marvel did when it started creating the MCU.) It would have required, however, an understanding of their fanbase – and what the fans wanted – and this was verboten. Instead, they drove away their fanbase without bringing in replacements. They chose to attack their fans instead of accepting they'd made a mistake and trying to fix it.

But, in this day and age, admitting a mistake can be fatal.

Tom Godwin Bio-Bibliography

by

Jon D. Swartz, Ph.D.

N3F Historian



Thomas William Godwin (June 6, 1915 – August 31, 1980) was an American science fiction (SF) author, active from the 1950s to the 1970s. In his career, Godwin published three novels and approximately thirty short stories. He is best known for his short story, “The Cold Equations.” Published in 1954, this short story was Godwin’s fourth work to be published and was one whose dark ending helped redefine the SF genre.

Early Life and Education

Godwin was born in Maryland in 1915. He had a rough childhood that was marked by loss and suffering. At the age of five, his younger sister died as a result of an accidental shooting that occurred after he had been “playing with the gun that killed her.” After his mother's death, he was raised by his father, with whom he did not have a good relationship. He withdrew from school after the third grade, but then went on to teach himself to both expand his knowledge and help with his writing.

Physical Handicap

Godwin had a spinal disorder, kyphosis, which results in a curvature of the spine, making him appear to be hunchbacked. He spent a few months in the Army before he was discharged due to his spinal condition worsening.

Later Life

In the early 1960s, Godwin was living in a remote area of northwestern Arizona with his father writing and making drywashers to sell. A drywasher is a mechanical apparatus used for separating free particles of placer gold from dry sediments.

It was in the summer of 1961 that Godwin met his future wife, Laureola, and her then 12-year-old daughter, whom he later adopted, Diane Godwin Sullivan. He went on to base two of the main characters in his second novel, *The Space Barbarians*, after them.

He worked for the forest service in Washington state for a short period of time. His wife died from a heart attack in the early 1970s, and this affected him for the rest of his life. After living for a time with his adopted daughter and her family in Texas, he moved by himself to Nevada.

Novels

The Survivors, 1958 (aka *Space Prison*, 1960); *The Space Barbarians*, (1964) [two novels known as the Ragnarok Series]

Beyond Another Sun (1971)

Short Stories

“The Gulf Between” in *Astounding*, October 1953

“Mother of Invention” in *Astounding*, December 1953



“The Greater Thing” in *Astounding*, February 1954

“The Cold Equations” in *Astounding*, August 1954

“No Species Alone” in *Universe*, November 1954

“You Created Us” in *Fantastic Universe*, October 1955

“The Barbarians” in *If*, December 1955

“Operation Opera” in *F&SF*, April 1956

“Brain Teaser” in *If*, October 1956

“Too Soon to Die” (basis for his novel *The Survivors*) in *Venture*, March 1957

“The Harvest” in *Venture*, July 1957

“The Last Victory” in *If*, August 1957

“The Nothing Equation” in *Amazing*, December 1957

“The Wild Ones” in *Science Fiction Stories*, January 1958

“My Brother - The Ape” in *Amazing*, January 1958

“Cry From a Far Planet” in *Amazing*, September 1958

“A Place Beyond the Stars” in *Super Science Fiction*, February 1959

“Empathy” in *Fantastic*, October 1959

“The Helpful Hand of God” in *Analog*, December 1961

“. . . and Devious the Line of Duty” in *Analog*, December 1962

“Desert Execution” in *The Man from U.N.C.L.E Magazine*, July 1967

“The Gentle Captive” in the anthology *Signs and Wonders* (1972)

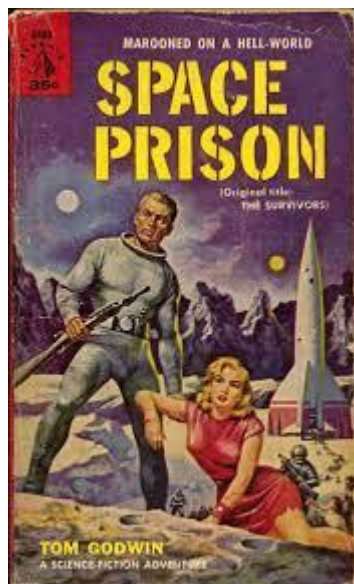
“She Was a Child” in the *Mike Shayne Mystery Magazine*, April 1973

“We'll Walk Again in the Moonlight” in the anthology *Crisis* (1974)

“Backfire” in *Ed McBain's 87th Precinct Mystery Magazine*, April 1975

“The Steel Guardian” in *Antaeus*, Spring/Summer 1977



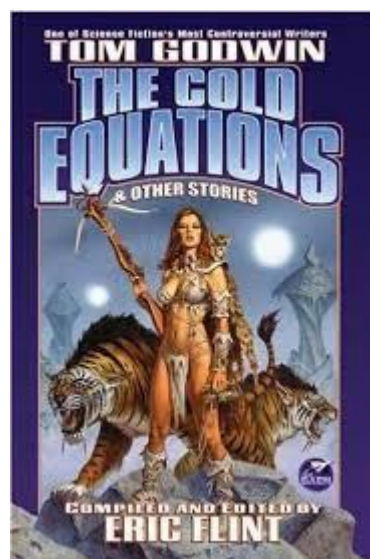


“Social Blunder” in *Amazing*, July 1977
 “Before Willows Ever Walked” in *F&SF*, March 1980

Collection

The following stories are collected in the book, *The Cold Equations & Other Stories* (2004):

“The Survivors”
 “The Harvest”
 “Brain Teaser”
 “Mother of Invention”
 “. . . and Devious the Line of Duty”
 “Empathy”
 “No Species Alone”
 “The Gulf Between”
 “The Cold Equations”



Radio Adaptation

His story, “The Cold Equations,” was adapted for presentation on radio and heard on *X Minus One* on August 25, 1955. Cast members for the program included Bob Hastings, Walter Kinsella, Court Benson, and Jay Meredith.

Death

Throughout his life, Godwin battled alcohol abuse with varying degrees of success in being able to control it. Apparently, it was his wife's death that led him to drink more and this, in turn, led to his several new health problems.

Godwin died in a Las Vegas hospital in the summer of 1980. He did not have any identification on him, so his body was held at a funeral home until a friend of his learned of his death and contacted his daughter.

Sources

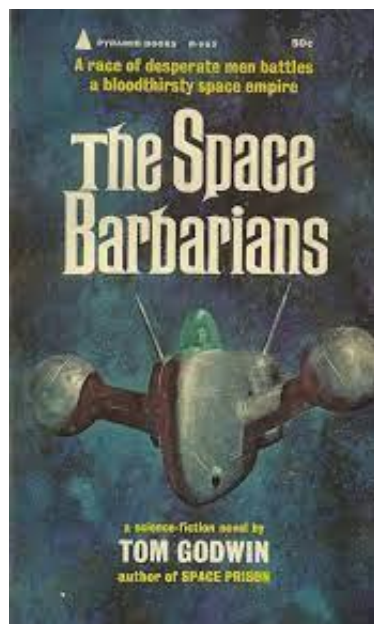
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Hawk, Pat. *Hawk's Author's Pseudonyms II*, 1995.

Metcalf, Norm. *The Index of Science Fiction Magazines, 1951 – 1965, 1968*.

Reginald, R. (ed.). *Contemporary Science Fiction Authors*, 1975.

Tuck, Donald H. *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy, Volume 1: Who's Who, A – L*, 1974.

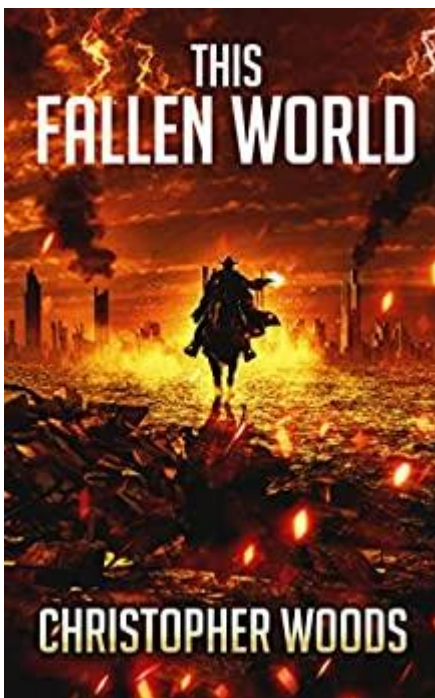


Note: In addition to the above, several Internet sites were consulted, including Fancyclopedia 3, ISFDB, and Wikipedia.

Food of Famous Authors

Christopher Woods' Fish Tacos Cooking by Cedar Sanderson

Chris is an awesome human being, second only to his lovely wife (sorry, Chris!) so I was very happy that he was willing to let me do a recipe for one of his books. I was downright giddy when he picked one of my favorite meals as his choice. The only problem was that the First Reader does not eat fish...



More for me!

Before you start on this meal, which can be dead simple, or complex depending on your approach (I've chosen simple), you'll want to grab a copy of Chris's latest, This Fallen World. "Matthew Kade was a corporate assassin—one of the best agents Obsidian Corporation had. But then the bombs began falling, and the old world ended. Now he must navigate the new world he finds himself in, a world where the strongest survive, and the weaker do their bidding...or die."

Postapocalyptic seems so appropriate in this time. Fortunately, this is Chris. Things will work out in the end, he's not a writer of nihilism. Grab the book, and then set it aside. You'll want it for later, but cooking this meal won't leave you with much reading time until it's time to sit and eat. Ebooks are nice to read with messy meals – you can wipe off the screen like you can't with paper!

Christopher Wood's Fish Tacos

Fish tacos are one of those things that I've learned to be wary about when ordering at a restaurant. They are a good bellwether for finding a good Mexican joint, though, so I will do it from time to time. But I love to make them – they are so easy!

I prefer to use a nice firm white fish for them, but I will readily admit that when the kids were small and I was in a hurry, I've made them up with fish sticks (not the cheap crappy ones). The kids liked them that way. But for this meal, I chose cod. Tilapia will work fine on a budget. And I suppose in the postapocalyptic landscape, whatever you can catch is going to be a great option at the time.

Prep step: thinly shred or julienne some napa cabbage leaves. Slice a roma tomato (or a few)



lengthwise into narrow wedges. Section a couple of limes. Make or buy guacamole, or simply an avocado. And have a little sour cream on hand if you like.

First things first: Make your tacos. Or buy them. For fish tacos I am firmly in the camp of soft corn tortillas. My kids have unanimously decided they do not care for the texture, and the First Reader wasn't joining me in the meal, so I scaled the recipe on the Masa bag way back. Too far back, as you'll see from that lone tortilla that isn't like the others. But if you are making them for the family you'll just need a couple of things. One is a tortilla press...

Seriously, these will work on store bought tortillas, but if you have access to some ladies who make tortillas, buy those. And if you don't, make your own. They are so, so good when compared to the pale flabby things in the supermarket.

2 c masa (regular cornmeal will not work. Masa is treated corn, it's been slaked with lye, which releases a lot of the nutrients, but also allows the meal to bind)

1 c water (more or less. Here's where it gets tricky)

Mix the masa and water together in a bowl, adding the water in slowly. When the texture reaches that of playdough – springy, not too soft, but not crumbly, either – you've got it. This will make about 16 tortillas, but it may take some time and practice to learn how much to pinch off and roll into a ball. Think slightly smaller than a ping-pong ball.

Heat a pan – flat griddle will do nicely – to medium high. You can brush it with butter or lard just before the first tortilla goes on, and in between each one.

I use a liner on my tortilla press. Mine is simply a quart ziploc bag that has been cut at the side seams and the zipper removed. Open that up, and place the ball of dough closer to the hinges of the press than the handle (the press pushes toward the handle, so you get a more round tortilla this way). Press gently, and not all the way down, with the handle. You'll learn after a few tries where the sweet spot is on your press – they vary according to the looseness of the hinges.

Lift up the top of the press, and lift out the tortilla on the liner plastic. You should be able to easily peel this back, put a flat hand on the tortilla, and then flip the tortilla on the pan as you pull off the other side of the liner. With practice this gets to be a graceful routine. But don't be surprised if it takes a few! Imperfect tortillas taste yummy too. If the dough is too wet, it will stick. Knead a little more masa into your dough if this happens.

Cook your tortillas for about 30 seconds to a minute on each side – they will be a little 'dry' looking at the edge when ready to flip. Slide them into a tortilla warmer or a covered plate until they are all done.

Heat a second pan, or simply use the same griddle, for the fish.

You neither need nor want large fillets – pieces the size of two fingers will work nicely. On a well greased griddle over med-high heat, lay the fish down. Allow to cook for 2 minutes

(more if a very thick cut) then flip, and sprinkle liberally with Tajin (this is a chili pepper and lime seasoning, if you can't find it you can season with chili powder, garlic powder, and salt, then squeeze lime juice over when serving). The fish is done when it is firm to the touch and opaque through the center.

Put your fish on your tortillas, adding shredded cabbage, guac, tomato, and sour cream as desired. Eat! It's best hot off the griddle!

Yum. So yum. Curl up with these, the sun warm on your back, and a book. The red seasoning is such a nice color pop, too. Eat with your eyes, yes?



Rocketship by Cedar Sanderson



Lizard Man
by Tiffanię Gray