

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

Edited and
Published by
ROBERT W. FRANSON

JANUARY 6, 1964

NUMBER 10

MY FAVORITE SO FAR by Poul Anderson

There is no quicker way for a writer to make a fool of himself than to start bragging about how great his own work is. So let me admit immediately that any choice of "my best" is subjective. I have to pick on the basis of what a story tried to do, not what it succeeded in doing. The reality never measures up to the vision anyway.

My first thought on being asked was, then, the novel "We Have Fed Our Sea" (book title: THE ENEMY STARS). Certainly this was my most ambitious project in the science fiction field, attempting to say much about love and death as well as about planets and spaceships. A number of scenes still look pretty effective to me. But on the whole—well, probably those commentators were right who found a certain lack of unity in it. Besides, almost no sense of fun was conveyed. I think one of the most important statements you can make about life is that most of the time it is, or can be, joyous.

So I'll pick the book version of THREE HEARTS AND THREE LIONS. Enthusiastic reviews by people like Boucher, Miller, and Sturgeon give me some outside support for what I frankly believe myself: that this is a book well done, with every part running smoothly. The world of

medieval legend has long felt very real to me; it was easy, and a pleasure, to describe that world for others. The people there seem equally real. They are, no doubt, not very profoundly characterized; but then I never have been much interested in staring into the dingy depths of neurosis. As the writing progressed, Holger, Alianora, and the others became friends of mine. The story of their adventures is (to me, anyhow) a good, fast-moving one, with a lot of comedy as well as action.

Of course, the book tries to be more than just a story. Its premise, that there is such a thing as absolute evil, is one I happen to take very seriously. Holger's enemies are not supposed to be mere Bad Guys, they are that which must be fought, cost what it may. In telling about the conflict, I found myself telling the ancient truth that—beneath and beyond all the fun and games—life is tragic and man's highest destiny is to accept this and yet not lose heart. One way of losing heart is to get too deadly solemn about it all!

However, this book never set out to preach this or any other kind of sermon. It practically wrote itself, with me meanwhile having a ball. Whatever symbolism and philosophy is there was not put in to impress anyone but is, quite simply, part of the

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SFR STORY RATINGS

Story category	NOVELLAS	NOVELETS ...	SHORT STORIES
Length in words	(19-39,000) ...	(10-18,000) ..	(up to 9,000)
Worth buying magazine for .	I-IV	A-C	a-b
Worth reading	V-VI	D-E	c-d
Read at your own risk ...	VII-IX	F-H	e-g

NOVELS

(40,000+ words)

Worth buying	1-5
Marginal	6-7
Buy at your own risk .	8-10

The ratings designate how well we liked the story. We do not rate collections or anthologies. Two stories "worth reading" usually make an issue worth buying.

REACH FOR TOMORROW, by Arthur C. Clarke. Ballantine, N.Y. U2110, 1963. 166 pp. 50¢

This is a superb collection consisting mostly of short stories, by a master of science fiction. A few especially good ones are: "Technical Error" (b), "A Walk in the Dark" (c), and "The Fires Within" (b). "Jupiter Five" (B) and "Rescue Party" (A) are the two novelets.

This collection should not be read all at one sitting, as all the stories have surprise endings, which become slightly tedious in quick succession. Rather, they should be read one or two at a time, so as to not detract from their quality.

—Bill Pond

RAIDERS FROM THE RINGS, by Alan E. Nourse. Pyramid, N.Y. F-933, 1963. 160 pp. 40¢

Originally published by McKay in 1962, the plot concerns a war between the Spacers and the Earthmen. The Spacers are exiles from Earth who use an asteroid as base, and periodically raid Earth for supplies. Due to a genetic flaw caused by lengthy residence in space, the Spacers are unable to reproduce girls. Ben Trefon, a Spacer, has the sole responsibility of uniting these feuding factions so that Man's future in the universe is not endangered.

NOVEL - 4
—Gene Rider

MAN OF TWO WORLDS, by Raymond F. Jones. Pyramid, N.Y. F-941, 1963. 268 pp. 40¢

This long novel originally appeared as an ASF serial, Aug-Nov, 1944, and was published in hard covers by Gnome in 1951 (both as RENAISSANCE).

The main character is Ketan, a technician of a computer called the Karildex. A strange recurring dream and an urge to learn lead him on a quest to find his origin.

It is an adventuresome and fast moving story, well worth reading.

NOVEL - 5
—Lawrence Beckwith III

PILGRIMAGE: THE BOOK OF THE PEOPLE, by Zenna Henderson. Avon, N.Y. G-1185, 1963. 250 pp. 50¢

This book is a collection of Zenna Henderson's "People" series that has been correlated into a single novel.

The "People" series is about a group of shipwrecked people from a destroyed planet who possess strange and almost magical psionic powers. The composite story of their struggles on Earth is told in installments by different people.

In reading the novel it is often difficult to distinguish between science fiction and fantasy, but in all, I believe that there is more of the science fiction aspect.

NOVEL - 5
—Robert Merryman

MAGAZINE REVIEWS by Dean M. Sandin

Serials are not rated until the review of the final installment.

Fantastic, January, 1964. 130 pp.
50¢ (3/6)

"The Lords of Quarmall," a two-part serial by Fritz Leiber and Harry Fischer, begins here. The two main characters are Leiber's famous pair, the Gray Mouser and Fahrd, of Lankhmar. They are unwittingly pitted against one another in the underground kingdom of Quarmall.

"The Last Order," by Gordon Walters, is set in a future when spacesuits are sentient and thus serve men better. In this story, a spacesuit goes berserk on an asteroid when its master is killed. (F)

Fantasy and Science Fiction, January, 1964. 130 pp. 40¢ (2/6)

Damon Knight's two-part serial, "The Tree of Time," (a current Science Fiction Book Club selection under the title of BEYOND THE BARRIER) concludes here. In the first installment, Gordon Naismith, a college professor, was kidnapped into a future world which has been destroyed by nuclear war. In the last half, he escapes his captors and is recaptured by another group, which has plans for him. There are hints that Naismith is not who he thinks he is and that something is happening to him mentally as a prelude to an event. Although confusing in many places, this novel saves itself by its ending. (6)

"Pacifist," by Mack Reynolds, should be read for its political and ideological point. (e)

Analog, January, 1964. 96 pp.
50¢, 5/-

"Dune World," by Frank Herbert, second of three parts. The House of Atreides has been forced to move from its rich planet to a world covered by desert. The story tells of the House, ruled by Duke Leto, as it attempts to successfully establish itself on Arrakis. This is difficult because the previous rulers of Arrakis are deadly enemies of the Atreides, and are planning against it. Don't miss this very good novel.

Randall Garrett's "The Eyes Have It" is a murder-mystery set on a probability world in which a different type of science has developed: what we call magic.

NOVELET - D

Amazing, January, 1964. 130 pp.
50¢ (3/6)

In "Speed-up!" Christopher Anvil deals with the question "What is an experiment?" and the effects of science on Man and his society. In the story, the Security League is an anti-science group against further scientific experimentation. The author argues, however, that we can't just stop progressing; that we have a tiger by the tail and must master it. By means of characters who work in a research company, Anvil develops a solution to the problem, and answers his question.

NOVELET - D

The Classic Reprint is "Skeleton Men of Jupiter" (don't let the contents page fool you), by Edgar Rice Burroughs. It's a John Carter of Mars novella of 1943 vintage.

Subscription rates: 10 issues for \$1.00, 22 issues for \$2.00, 45 issues for \$4.00. Advertisements are five cents per word, minimum remittance \$1.00.

PUBLISHER:

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW
Box 1568
San Diego, California 92112
U.S.A.

OVERSEAS AGENTS:

Kenneth F. Slater
75 Norfolk Street
Wisbech, Cambs.
England

Graham Stone
Box 185, P.O.
Manuka, A.C.T.
Australia

MY FAVORITE SO FAR
(continued from page one)

vision.

If you don't like it, that's entirely okay. Your opinion may even be correct. I've only been telling you what it felt like from the inside.

—Poul Anderson

JUDGMENT ON JANUS, by Andre Norton. Harcourt, Brace & World, N.Y., 1963. 220 pp. \$3.50

This novel contains more of the elements of fantasy than most of Miss Norton's other books. The hero signs up as an indentured worker and is shipped to Janus, a pioneer planet settled sparsely by Terrans. He finds a "treasure," an artifact left by a vanished race. Through this he contracts the "Green Sick" and is metamorphized into the form of an alien, one of the long-extinct Iftcan. The novel has some of the mood of Tolkien's works, but lacks the length to give the ideas proper scope. Hopefully, the story will be further developed in a sequel.

NOVEL - 5
—The Editor

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FEATURE SELECTION

THE PUPPET MASTERS, by Robert A. Heinlein. Signet, N.Y. D2366, 1963. 175 pp. 50¢

The first appearance of this novel was as a serial in Galaxy for Sept-Oct-Nov, 1951. It is set in the near future, but doesn't have the mundane air so common to novels of this type. The hero is an agent for a private intelligence service, which is the only group in the world that is aware that parasitic mind-controlling aliens are trying to take over the world.

This is the standard plot of science fiction to those who don't read science fiction. If more non-fans read this book, they would think more of the genre. The author's usual masterful handling is evident, turning what would otherwise be a poor novel into an excellent one.

NOVEL - 3
—The Editor

LORD OF THUNDER, by Andre Norton. Ace, N.Y. F-243, 1963. 174 pp. 40¢

LORD OF THUNDER is a sequel to Miss Norton's earlier novel, THE BEAST MASTER (5). It was originally published by Harcourt, Brace & World in 1962. The first story told how Hosteen Storm found a home on the planet Arzor. In LORD OF THUNDER, the tribes of Arzor's humanoid natives, the Norbies, are being mysteriously summoned into the Blue, a wild mountainous region forbidden by the natives to the humans. Using the search for a crashed lifeboat as an excuse, Storm goes into the Blue to investigate the puzzle. He finds the Sealed Caves, left inside the mountains by ancient aliens. If you missed its prequel, you still should buy this well done and suspenseful book. NOVEL - 4
—Dean M. Sandin