

## Films Fantastic

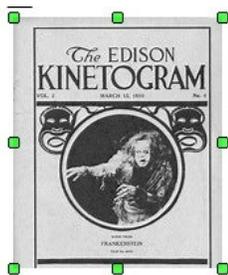
### The Publication of the NFFF Film Bureau

#### Vol 1, No 2

In the United States the pioneer of the film industry (as opposed to film) was Thomas A. Edison. The story of his attempts to monopolize the industry makes for interesting reading, but not here. While Edison concentrated on the business side, he left film production to assistants such as William Kennedy Dickson and Edwin A. Porter (director of *THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY* in 1903).

In 1910 J. Searle Dawley wrote and directed the first film adaptation of Mary Shelly's novel *FRANKENSTEIN*. Cast members were Augustus Phillips as Victor Frankenstein, Mary Fuller as Elizabeth, and Charles Ogle as the monster. Filmed in one reel, approximately ten to twelve minutes running time, the production shows Frankenstein going to college, creating his "perfect" human and then fleeing, and the Monster following Frankenstein to his home. The special effects are impressive for the time, especially the creation of the Monster. The story is simple, given the running time, but takes a somewhat psychological approach to things, especially the ending.

Fortunately this movie still exists and a recently restored print is available for viewing on YouTube on the Library of Congress channel. Other Edison films will also be found here, giving a look at the earliest days of film in America.



### UNDER THE SEA

The year was 1914. Woodrow Wilson was President of the United States. George V sat on the throne of Great Britain; Franz Joseph was the Emperor of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; Wilhelm II was the Kaiser of Germany; and Nicholas II was the Czar of Russia. It was the end of an age and by 1918-1919 Franz Joseph, Welhelm, and Nicholas would be gone. The government of France was too much of a confused mess to bother with here.

The modern age was in the process of sweeping away the old. In the world of entertainment feature films were becoming popular as audiences warmed up to the longer films. Universal Picture Corp. jumped onto the bandwagon with several productions. Among these was a film of Jules Verne's novel *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. This is possibly the first Science



Fiction feature film, although the term was not yet been in general use. The generally accepted term was "Scientific Romance" with romance meaning "a novel or other prose narrative depicting heroic or marvelous deeds, pageantry, romantic exploits, etc., usually in a historical or imaginary setting".

The powers that be realized that much of this film would have to be filmed underwater, something that had not been done before. So, in their wisdom, they hired John Ernest Williamson and George Williamson, experts in underwater salvage. Ernest's father Charles had invented a device called the "Williamson Tube" for use in salvage operations. Ernest added a chamber at the bottom which was used to take the first photographs under water. Ernest later wrote a book about their experiences called *20 Years Under the Sea* (1936), sadly long out of print. In addition to being the first person to take a photograph under water, Williamson became the first person to make a motion picture there. (I first encountered the book in the sixties, finding it on the shelf at Farragut High School library. I finally tracked down my own copy from a used book dealer a few years ago.)

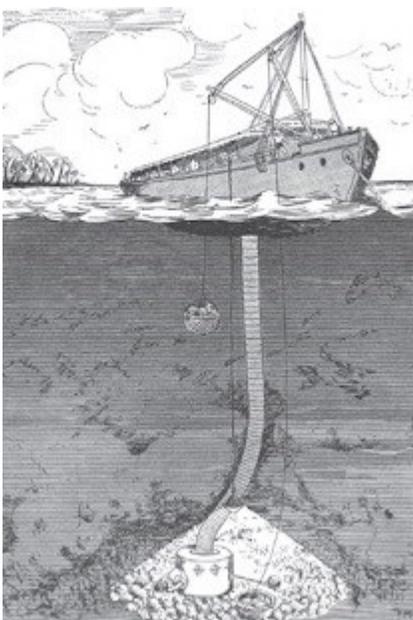
The adventures and misadventures during the film's production are too numerous to detail here, but a few shall be mentioned. The production started filming in 1915, a few months after the Great War erupted across Europe. That scuttled plans to borrow an obsolete submarine from the U. S. Navy which immediately put all into service. So Williamson built a 100' long submarine that could be operated by one person for the film. A model was also used.

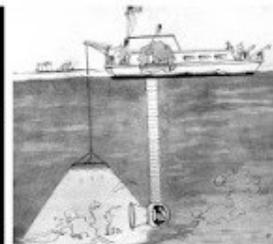
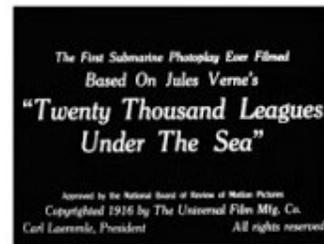
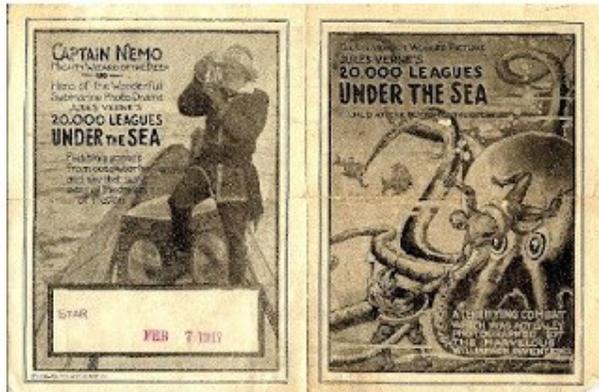
They were able to rent some diving suits from the Navy. These were primitive units that used chemicals to recycle the air, giving the divers one hour of underwater time. However, the chemicals were also very dangerous, causing the brain to react as if it were on alcohol. Also, the divers could be burned if the chemicals came into contact with water. Being a pioneer had its risks.

The production relocated to the Bahamas, where Walt Disney would film his own production of Verne's story in 1954. The clear waters were perfect for filming underwater and the Williamson brothers obtained some spectacular footage.

Stuart Paton directed the main story which also incorporated elements of *Mysterious Island*, and, as usual in Hollywood, material never before dreamed of. Among these is a Child of Nature (Jane Gail) who literally trips her way through the jungle. Captain Nemo is played by Allen Holubar, who acted in and directed a number of films for Universal before leaving to form his own company in 1917. He died in 1923 of complications following what would be simple surgery today.

The original film ran 105 minutes, but the surviving print runs only 84. A pity, because the missing footage would probably help clear up some plot holes. While the film lacks a bit as a motion picture, the making of the production in itself could be classified as a Scientific Romance. It definitely went where no motion picture had gone before,





and we are fortunate it still exists, even if in an abbreviated form.

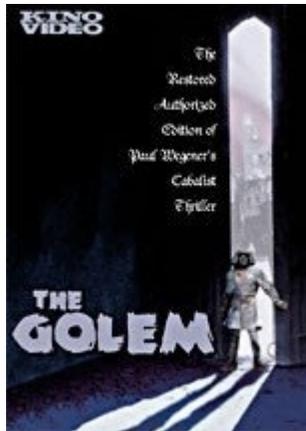
The concept of artificial life has existed for hundreds of years, such as the myth of Pygmalion and Galeta. The most famous story is Mary Shelly's Frankenstein. But before that there was the tale of the Golem; a man of clay brought to life.

The Jews of the Prague ghetto were to be forced out on orders of the emperor. Rabbi Loew, using mystic arts, created the Golem as the protector of the Jews. But the Golem soon rebelled and threatened everyone.

German director Paul Wegener filmed the story three times, in 1915, 1917 and 1920. Only the third film, *The Golem and How He Came Into the World*, remains and it is well worth seeing. Kino offers a restored print that is quite lovely. Rabbi Low (Albert Steinruck), aided by his servant (Ernst Deutsch), in an impressive scene, summon a demon who gives them the word needed to bring the inanimate statue to life. The Golem saves the Emperor from death and the grateful ruler rescinds his order of expulsion. But the Golem enjoys life and refuses to allow anyone to remove the amulet containing a piece of paper with the sacred word.

The Golem goes on a rampage, killing a German knight who has fallen in love with the Rabbi's daughter and then goes on a rampage, destroying the Rabbi's house and threatening the rest of the ghetto. The Golem breaks out of the ghetto where he finds children playing with flowers. All run, except for one small girl who offer the Golem a flower. The creature picks up the girl who innocently removes the amulet, and the Golem falls





lifeless.

The 1931 Frankenstein certainly resembles this film from 16 years earlier. One of the Cinematographers on this production was Karl Freund, noted for *The Mummy* and other Universal films of the 1930s. Edgar G. Ulmer, who gained a cult following for his unusual low budget features in America was the set designer. Some reports stated that the first makeup design for the Frankenstein monster resembled the Golem.

The Golem certainly fits in with the post World War I expressionistic films in Germany, such as *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* and *Nosferatu*. The set designs are certainly unreal, but they fit the world of the story. Performances are good for the most part, especially the director Wegener who also portrays the Golem. His wife, Lyda Salmonova, portrays

the Rabbi's daughter. The portrayal of the Jews is very sympathetic and avoids the usual anti-Semitic stereotypes of the time.

The Kino DVD features a careful restoration, properly tinted and featuring an original score. The story certainly benefits from the treatment and this is one film that definitely deserves to be called a classic. Extras include a clip from the 1936 French production of the story, photo gallery, and a scene from Murnau's *Faust* production that compares with the scene in which the demon is summoned by the Rabbi.

Recommended without reservations.

This concludes the second mailing for the NFFF Film Bureau, 2018. So far we have concentrated on the earliest days of fantastic films. I would like to hear from anyone who might be reading this. What would you like to see discussed here? Questions? Comments? Requests? Please drop me an email (address below).

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## India's Science Fiction Film 2.0 A Report by Jeffrey Redmond

American audiences are basically used to Hollywood movies made for them. But India actually produces more films, and often for International consumption. Studios in and around Bombay (Mumbai) are called "Bollywood" to reflect this. A new and exciting trend in Indian cinema are science fiction action adventures. Indian theater has been in effect for thousands of years, and modern special effects in movies are now appearing too.

The new movie 2.0, produced by Chennai film production house Lyca Productions, is the country's most expensive film to date. Made at a cost of US \$79 million, it's a special effects filled, 3D science fiction movie with the tag line "The world isn't only for humans." It was released in the Indian languages of Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi across 17,600 screens on November 29th. There is also a British English dubbed version.

While it still does not match Hollywood production budgets, it's a testament to how Indian film production costs have been rising steadily. The most expensive movie worldwide was the fourth installment of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise, with an estimated production cost of \$400 million.

In comparison, the high end Bollywood films with mega stars typically cost about US \$20 million. And the grandiose movies with extravagant visuals tend to cost even more. For instance, the *Bahubali* film franchise with two films was made at a cost of US \$70 million. In India, the recently released *Thugs of Hindostan* was made at a cost of US \$36 million, though it

did poorly at the box office.

2.0 has gotten a much bigger start, making US \$71 million over the first week according to Lyca, which is closer to the production cost. Lyca has already sold the digital and satellite rights for 2.0 in different territories, but has not disclosed the actual numbers.

The ticket booking site BookMyShow said that in just the first two days of its release the movie had sold three million tickets, making it one of the quickest films to reach that level. The movie's official trailer in Hindi is garnering millions of views on YouTube.

Lyca is also planning the widest 3D release for any foreign film by opening across 10,000 theaters in China, encompassing 56,000 screens in May 2019. This would include 47,000 3D screens. The company is partnering with Chinese production and distribution company HY Media for the release.

Meanwhile, back home, the Hindi version of the south Indian movie had already crossed the US \$14 million mark in just the first few days, according to trade analysts.

"For a film from South India to earn that much in its Hindi version is phenomenal," says Komal Nahta, editor of Mumbai trade publication Film Information. "The theme and the concept take it to a completely different level."

The Hindi version is being distributed by Bollywood filmmaker Karan Johar's Dharma Productions. While there are mixed reviews about the movie, viewers and reviewers say the special effects add to the value of the movie, which has been shot entirely in 3D.

"It's a wide screen and a large screen experience," says Gautam Dutta, CEO of PVR Cinemas, which is showing 2.0 in more than 500 of its 741 screens across India. "It's been made with such technical finesse. It clearly shows up on the larger screen."

2.0 is a sequel to the 2010 Tamil movie Enthiran that was produced by Chennai's Sun Pictures. The film features two popular stars of Indian cinema. Rajinikanth, who is often referred to as "Superstar" and "Thalaiva" (leader in Tamil) plays the role of the protagonist. Famous Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar is the villain. Rajinikanth, a mega star from the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, has a fanatical fan base with more than five million followers on Twitter.

Kumar, who is also known for his appearances in movies like Gold and Toilet Ek Prem Katha, was on the Forbes list of the world's highest paid entertainers in July. He had earnings of US \$40.5 million over the prior year. He was tied at No. 76 with Hollywood star Scarlett Johansson. Kumar was on the list in 2017 as well.

Both Akshay Kumar, 51, and Rajinikanth, 67, also made it to the Forbes India Celebrity 100 list for 2018. Akshay Kumar was ranked No. 3 with earnings of \$26 million, while Rajinikanth was ranked No. 14 with earnings of US \$7 million.

2.0 features Rajinikanth in the lead role as Dr. Vaseegaran and robot Chitti. Akshay Kumar plays the villain Pakshi Raja/Bird Man. It's directed by veteran S.Shankar and has music by Oscar award winning composer A.R. Rahman. The cast includes British actress Amy Jackson.

Lyca is also keen on attracting global Tamil audiences. It's targeting the Tamil diaspora in Singapore and Malaysia, having been released on 450 screens across those two countries.

Meanwhile, the producers appear to have addressed a complaint raised by the Cellular Operators Association of India. The trade group had complained to the Central Board of Film Certification that "the movie, including its teasers, trailers and other promotional videos, had depicted mobile phones and mobile towers in a defamatory manner."

It charged that the film's promotional material showed that electromagnetic field emissions from mobile phones and towers were harmful to humans and birds. Lyca has since added a disclaimer saying that the movie is a work of fiction/art and COAI has not pursued its complaint any further since then.

India is an epic country with five thousand years of culture. And it will continue on for thousands of years more.

## SerCon

## “The Fantastic Fiction of Robert G. Nathan”

by

Jon D. Swartz, Ph. D.

N3F Historian

Born in New York City on January 2, 1894, into a fairly wealthy family, Robert Gruntal Nathan attended Harvard University, although he never graduated. While enrolled there he began writing short stories and poetry, publishing some of his work in the *Harvard Monthly*, which he edited. During his junior year he married his first wife, dropped out of Harvard, and took a job in advertising to support his family. Later he taught at New York University's School of Journalism.

In 1919 he wrote his first novel, *Peter Kindred*, which was semi-autobiographical in nature but didn't impress the critics. During the 1920s, however, Nathan wrote seven more novels – including his very successful *The Bishop's Wife* in 1928. Through his continuing output of well-received novels and anthologies of poetry, he became a highly respected writer during the 1930s and 1940s. During his career he used at least two pseudonyms: Nicholas Conde and Robert St. Louis.

Nathan is probably best known for his book *Portrait of Jennie*, a romantic fantasy which was made into a 1948 movie produced by David O. Selznick. Selznick became so obsessed with the story that he spent several years and millions of dollars on its production, casting his lover (and later wife) Jennifer Jones in the leading role. The setting for the book is 1930s New York City, where a talented but starving artist falls in love with a young woman who seems to come from another time. This movie has developed a cult following over the years, is in demand to this day, and is frequently shown on television. The plot of this book epitomized much of Nathan's writing: a gentle fantasy delving into the mysteries of time. An editor at Penguin Books called it “the most successful treatment in fiction of J. W. Dunne's Experiment.” [See Note below]

Several other novels by Robert Nathan were made into films, including *The Clock* (1945) -- starring Judy Garland and Robert Walker -- and *The Bishop's Wife* (1947) -- starring Cary Grant, Loretta Young, and David Niven (and remade again more recently as *The Preacher's Wife*, starring Denzel Washington). *The Clock* made an entertaining film, filled with suspense and romance. *The Bishop's Wife* has been a perennial favorite during the Christmas season. *One More Spring* (1933) focused on the lives of a group of displaced people living in Central Park during the Great Depression and how they helped each other cope with their bleak lives. It was made into a film directed by Henry King, starring Janet Gaynor and Warner Baxter, and released in 1935. *The Enchanted Voyage* (1936), a story about the search for a missing soldier, was filmed as *Wake Up and Dream* in 1947 and starred John Payne and June Haver.

Nathan wrote prolifically, producing forty novels, two children's books, three plays, two non-fiction books, and ten books of poetry in his lifetime. He also wrote screenplays while working in Hollywood for MGM (1943 - 1950), including *The White Cliffs of Dover* (1943), *Pagan Love Song* (1950), and the movie adaptation of his own novel, *The Clock*, in 1945.

Nathan also had a musical side. He composed a violin sonata and music for the works of Walt Whitman and A. E. Housman, which were performed in New York City. His own poems were set to music by leading composers of that era.

Married seven times, Nathan's first five marriages ended in divorce. His sixth wife died and, in 1970, at the age of 76 he married British actress Anna Lee. The marriage was a happy one for both of them and endured until the end of his life (at age 91, in 1985). There are several photos on the Internet of Nathan and Lee together.

#### SF/Fantasy Novels

*The Puppet Master*, 1923 [fantasy about a puppet maker and his animated dolls]

*The Woodcutter's House*, 1927 [fantasy about a country musician]

*The Bishop's Wife*, 1928 [angel sent to help a bishop raise money falls for the bishop's wife]

*The Enchanted Voyage*, 1936 [a modern fairy tale about the search for a missing soldier].

*Journey of Tapiola*, 1939 [story from a dog's viewpoint]

*Portrait of Jennie*, 1940 [a novel based on J. W. Dunne's theory of time/see Note]

*Tapiola's Brave Regiment*, 1941 [sequel to *Journey of Tapiola*]

*But Gently Day*, 1943 [a dead soldier returns to his family's Civil War past]

*Mr. Whittle and the Morning Star* (1947) [a professor's mystical view of the world's ending]

*So Love Returns*, 1958 [a female "being" is sent to a writer to replace his wife]

*Digging the Weans*, 1960 [a future archaeological report on a lost civilization in North American]

*The Wilderness-Stone*, 1961 [a semi-biographical tale of time travel]

*The Devil With Love*, 1963 [an arch-demon from Hell comes in quest of a human heart]

*The Fair*, 1964 [a light fantasy set in the time of King Arthur]

*The Mallot Diaries*, 1965 [Neanderthals in present-day Arizona]

*Stonecliff*, 1967 [an allegory of the creative process]

*Mia*, 1970 [protagonist exists simultaneously as a mature woman and a young girl]

*The Elixir*, 1971 [a professor meets a girl who has lived since the time of Merlin]

*The Summer Meadows*, 1973 [an author and his wife are visited by a dead friend]

*Heaven and Hell and the Megas Factor*, 1975 [both heaven and hell send emissaries to earth in an effort to solve the human condition]

#### Stories Reprinted in Genre Anthologies

"A Pride of Carrots" in *Science Fiction Oddities* (Gnome Press, 1955, edited by Groff Conklin)

"Digging the Weans" in *SF: 57* (Gnome Press, 1957, edited by Judith Merrill)

"Encounter in the Past" in *The Best from Fantasy & Science Fiction 17* Doubleday, 1968, edited by E. L. Ferman)

"The Weans" in *Neutron Stars* (Fawcett, 1977, edited by Gregory FitzGerald)

#### Stories Reprinted in Genre Magazines

"A Pride of Carrots" (*F&SF*, December 1959)

"Encounter in the Past" (*F&SF*, July 1967)

#### Plays

*Jezebel's Husband* (1953)

*The Sleeping Beauty* (1953)

*Juliet in Mantus* (1966)

#### Non-Fiction

*The Concert*, 1940

*Journal for Josephine*, 1943

Poetry*Youth Grows Old*, 1922*A Cedar Box*, 1929*Selected Poems*, 1935*A Winter Tide: Sonnets and Poems*, 1940*Dunkirk: A Ballad*, 1942*Morning in Iowa*, 1944*The Darkening Meadow*, 1945*The Green Leaf*, 1950*The Married Man*, 1962*Evening Song: Selected Poems 1950-1973*, 1973Some Conclusions

In *The Continuum Encyclopedia of American Literature* critic Edward Wagenknecht wrote: “Nathan was, next to James Branch Cabell, the major American fantasist of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.” In their *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* Clute and Grant state that the stories for which Nathan will be remembered, at least by SF/fantasy fans, are “his several love stories in timeslip or alternate world frames.”

Novelist, poet, playwright, musical composer, painter, screenwriter: Robert Nathan was all of these. He once stated that most of the novels he wrote were either science fiction or fantasy and that his only real interest in life was in staying alive. One of his most quoted statements was “There is no distance on this earth as far away as yesterday.” Another quote, one that seems to sum up much of his fiction: “It seems to me that I have always wanted to say the same things in my books: that life is one, that mystery is all around us, that yesterday, today and tomorrow are all spread out in the pattern of eternity together, and that although love may wear many faces in the incomprehensible panorama of time, in the heart that loves it is always the same.”

Note: Dunne's theory of time, elaborated from “experiments into precognitive dreams and induced precognitive states,” is that in reality all time is eternally present; that is, that past, present and future are all happening together in some way. Human consciousness, however, experiences this simultaneity in linear form. Dunne posits that in the dreaming state this way of interpreting time ceases to be as concrete as when we're awake. Thus, we are capable of having what we call precognitive dreams as consciousness roams across past, present, and future. From this Dunne posited that we exist on two levels ourselves, both inside and outside time.

References

Bleiler, Everett F. (ed.). *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature*. Chicago, IL: Shasta, 1948.

Clute, John & John Grant (eds.). *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*. NY: St. Martin's Press, 1997.

Reginald, R. *Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature, Volumes 1-2*. Detroit, MI: Gale, 1979.

Tuck, Donald H. *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy, Vol. 2: Who's Who, M-Z*. Chicago, IL: Advent, 1978.

## Character Redesigns By George Phillis



You may remember these two characters from the cover, two issues back, courtesy of the brilliant Sarah Leuver.

So let us imagine a redesign of someone who is certainly not Supergirl. We used no schemes borrowed from DC, though UltraGirl has a stack of standard superhero powers, like flying, super-strength, indestructibility, limited telepathy, that sort of thing.

From the start, she is an actor, not a passenger.

The planet Deathwish circles a blue giant star that is preparing to turn into a supernova. Blue giant stars actually do this. In contrast, in our universe, planets are not wired with plastic explosive, and do not blow up. The religious powers that be, because this is a very conservative society, though not a puritanical society, conclude that God will save everyone but only if everyone comes home, so more or less all Deathwish folks come home. The heroine is a spunky tomboy who looks at the star, sees it preparing to go kerblammo, and realizes she has to make her escape. Perhaps on Deathwish she is already an orphan, so she is not impossibly distressed about leaving her parents. Perhaps she has tried to talk some sense into her parents, and

failed.

There are opportunities for some modest violence, skullduggery, skulking about, cleverness, and perhaps if need be a little brute force. Fortunately the educational super science of Deathwish means she knows a whole lot more than an American twelve-year-old would. She manages to steal a small starship, this being a vessel the size of a large cabin cruiser, and makes her escape, headed for the far side of the galaxy where her pursuers are unlikely to find her and where, freed of her home planet's radiation, her powers will activate. Indeed, she manages to find Earth, a planet with no spaceships, no space travel, and no other superheroes. At this point we have several alternatives.

She lands in Japan and becomes a student at, for example, "Ninja High School". That's the high school shaped like a pentacle built on top of the main exit from Hell. The students are in charge of keeping the door closed. The line to remember from that anime is the observation that the heroine has a sword that makes her invincible in battle. Unfortunately, the sword's name is Friendslayer, and is meant literally. As a novel artistic image, the Japanese students are all drawn in best kawaii heroine style, and she is drawn as though depicted by an American comic book artist.

She lands on earth in the 1930s. She becomes a daredevil stunt pilot, assisted by the technical detail that if her airplane can't actually do what she wants it to she can fly and make it do it anyhow. Then she gets involved in various Doc Savage, Fu Manchu, millionaire plutocrat, and other wonderful 1930s conspiracy plots. Perhaps the Martians or the Invincible Empire of the Airlords attacks. Readers who can't make up their own conspiracy plots should consult the pages of Nick Carter, consulting detective, a truly fine series of dime novels, for more ideas.

She lands in anime medieval Japan. Perhaps she dedicates herself for a while to art, heat vision, super speed and strength, and reference works on metallurgy meaning that she makes beautiful swords, not to mention artistic steel objects for women. Perhaps she becomes a



samuree, the temptation to ridicule her being tempered by duels in which she cuts her opponent in half with one blow, including their sword and armor.

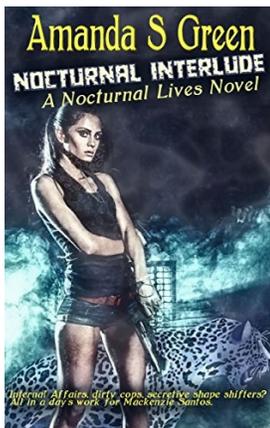
She lands on earth in the late nineteenth century, and offers herself as a technical assistant to Thomas Alva Edison. Edison has certain doubts about this, at least until she starts producing clever technical solutions from thin air. Converting the Edison effect into the Fleming triode is something that Edison would very well have understood, and generating a pentode tube to amplify long-distance phone calls would have made Edison an even wealthier man.

She lands on earth more or less now. For whatever reason, she has the not-bright idea that pretending to be a human and having a secret identity as a human would work. Identity checks on this earth are way less serious than on our Earth's. Her spaceship has the technical gadgets needed to teach her English and human cultural behavior, which it scoops from various probes, in a whole hurry. She makes occasional mistakes, but they aren't really disastrous.

Those are all character redesigns: We gain a new character, new costume, and new environment.

## Read This While You Eat That

### Making Stock of Things By Cedar Sanderson



I'm going to blog a little differently today, as I am looking outside at 4-5 fresh fallen inches of snow, and more coming down on that. In addition to the 'you are staying home today' message this sends, I have had a very busy week in which I did not cook. Well, yes, there was cooking. But nothing I'd show off.

So I will begin with the creation of stock, as today's Eat This While you Read That post is slow food.

Very slow food. The sort that cooks all day, but really doesn't need much help from me while it is happening. I'm making Chicken and Dumplings from Amanda S Green's recipe, and it begins with making the chicken stock from scratch. If you've never made stock from scratch before, I highly recommend it. It's easy, so tasty, and worth the wait.

While you wait, you can start on reading a whole trilogy of fun urban fantasy books she wrote – and there are more coming.

### Chicken Stock

Making it is fairly simple, and you can introduce many variations:

2 lbs chicken, bone-in. I'm using leg quarters today, because they were on super-cheap sale.

8 cups of water

1 tsp of salt

ground pepper to taste

bay leaf

1 large onion, chopped.

Place in pot together and allow to come to boil, reduce to simmer for at least one hour, but it will be better if you let it go longer. Today I plan to put it in the slow cooker and let it go for 3-4 hours. When you removed from heat, remove chicken with



slotted spoon or a spider and allow the chicken to cool before removing the bones. You'll be doing this with your fingers – messy fun! – so you want it down to room temperature or close. Allow the stock to cool as well so you can remove most of the fat from the surface.

While the stock is cooking, relax with a book, and I'll be back later with the rest of the recipe!

### Chicken and Dumplings for Dinner

Finally, after a day of cooking, I can present the post and pictures! I started out this morning by making the stock for the chicken and dumplings, which recipe you can find [here](#). Amanda S Green, one of my favorite authors, who also writes as Sam Schall if you like space opera, was good enough to supply me with her recipe.

After removing the skin, bones, and some of the fat from the stock, I returned the chicken meat to the stock, and added:

The slow cooker (it's also a rice cooker) with stock, and removed chicken bits. Removing the chicken with a spider, a slotted spoon would work, but take longer.

- 3 carrots, sliced
- 3 stalks of celery, sliced
- 3 cloves of garlic, chopped finely
- the other half of the onion I'd used in the stock, chopped

I set the slow cooker back on, for 2 hours, while I was working on other things. You could relax with one of Amanda's books while this is going on! After that, I transferred it to a stock pot on the stovetop (note: had I been willing to wait, this step could have been done in the slowcooker, it just takes an hour rather than 20 minutes) and brought it back to a boil. While it was heating, I blended:

- 2 tbsp chilled lard into
- 1 c flour with
- 1/4 tsp salt and
- 1 1/2 tsp baking powder
- then add:
- 1/2 c milk

Lower heat to medium, and scoop the resulting dough in spoonfuls into the soup. Let cook for ten minutes, then cover and cook for another 10-15 minutes. Remove from heat. Serve.

Dinner and dessert!

*Cedar notes:*

The dumplings came out overly firm for me. I think I'd just do my usual of whipping up a batch of bisquick if I do it again. I associate chicken and dumplings with a thicker 'soup' base. This was very tasty, but if you want to thicken it, you could always do that with a roux. The flavor was terrific, though. We're looking forward to the leftovers tomorrow – this made a lot, and Amanda said it is better the second day. I managed to skip adding new red potatoes, which Amanda says make it heartier, so I'd try those another time.

Dessert: Oatmeal Cookies and Coconut Meringue Pie.

