

Nice intro by Sam Schall. I'd like to see more of those done.

And Your Little Dog, Too. I love that phrase from "The Wizard of Oz," and use it frequently. However, in this story, it sort of applies. An aerospace engineering student with interest in flying saucers picks up an old hitchhiker and his dog on a lonely country road. Nobody gets slashed! However, the old hitchhiker has some interesting ideas about contacting aliens, and he is..strange, somehow. And his little dog, too.

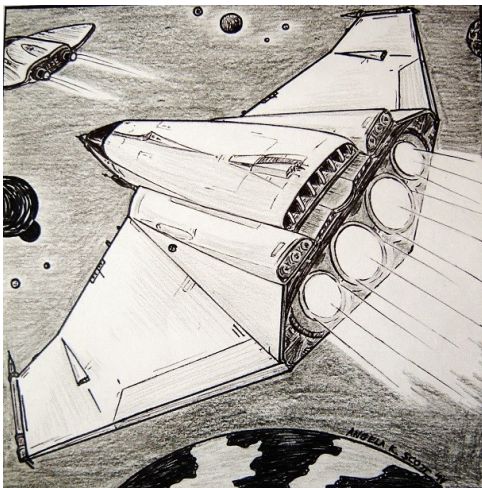
Who Goes Boing? Eccentric genius nerds with high technology at their fingertips and a commanding officer from 'the REAL Army' have to explore a new planet. Cartoons are funny, aren't they? Here, have a cigar. I'll light it for you.

A Cog In Time. Anytime you can hang out with David Drake is a good time. I was appalled when I realized I spent a year living in Chapel Hill and never crossed paths with him. He MAY have been involved with other things, at the time. Or maybe it was another time.

All Who Are Thirsty. Not nearly old enough to have been an authentic Hippie, but of that genre anyway, she really wanted to be an archaeologist and study ancient cultures. Until the aliens landed. And whereas all of the classics films had them giving us advanced technology, and sometimes eating us, NONE of these BEMs wanted anything except to discover God. They had never HEARD of such a concept until Earth entered their lives. But she's an atheist! Selling crap in a New Age bookstore!

Yearning To Breathe Free. Since it's pretty much determined that humans arose out of Africa, EVERYONE in the United States has ancestors who immigrated here from somewhere else, whether it was a land bridge from Siberia, on a boat or for a fortunate few, on a plane. You think we would have adapted to the problems of immigration by now. Evidently not. These undocumented aliens will get eaten if they are deported, though. Should that matter?

Calling The Mom Squad. Those of us who have actually had to shuttle kids to soccer practice, ballet, scouts, karate, and attend orchestra concerts on the same night we are at a cheerleading function know this: it ain't no picnic being a soccer mom. These particular moms also have to fight dragons, though. Yeah, I'd take the dragon fighting, too, except it's NOT "do this OR do that." It's "do this AND do that." And keep it a secret, too, okay?



Through Space
Angela K. Scott

On Edge. In what was SUPPOSED to be discovering new ways to deliver packages for Amazon, the geniuses discover how to open up doors to other times and other worlds. Here's a helpful hint for you, should you be working on the same thing: don't be the first guy through the door.

Some Other Pieta. Okay, here's a thought problem for you: what kind of child would a marriage between Adolf Hitler and Mother Teresa produce? That's not what happens in this story, but I would encourage you to consider the ramifications anyway. One other thing: the bad guys have six arms.

Leaving Home. All across America, you can find little ghost towns that faded away when the railroad came through in the 1880's, or

when the Interstate was built in the 1960's. What happens to the junction points in future travel, when you can cross light years in a moment? And then, something better comes along?

Flying. Earth is maybe an okay place to be for most people, but some folks must emigrate or they will die. However, the government controls the entire system of moving off-planet. If YOU were the head of government, would YOU let just anybody move into your bright and shiny new planets?

The Big Ship and The Wise Old Owl. I don't think Robert Heinlein invented the idea of the generation ship, but he sure did more to popularize it to my generation than anyone else has. I've read several stories using the idea of the generation ship as a basis, and most involve the idea that the people on the ship have forgotten what's really going on. In this variation, nursery rhymes have a special meaning, for those who are able to hear.

And Not To Yield. If you are already a fan of Sarah Hoyt, you know about her novels dealing with the society run by the Good Men, who are anything but. This is a story set in that universe. For the novice, this is a story about a revolution against tyranny, when the USA is only a distant memory, repressed by a few who hold ultimate power.

Trade Winds. I LOVE alternate history! In this story, Hannibal won against Rome, and Carthage became the primary cultural influence. Their society was founded on trade, rather than conquest, and civilization has advanced faster and farther. Even so, some people are still treacherous.

Motion Pictures

Captain Marvel Review by Cedar Sanderson

I took the kids to see a movie last night. Normally I take them, drop them off, and come back later to get them. But this time they really wanted me to go, too. It's a Marvel movie, which they know I appreciate, and as I told the Junior Mad Scientist later, the time approaches when one or more is moving out, and I don't think there will be many more opportunities to do this with them. So even though the initial takes on this movie varied from dubious to downright 'Oh, Marvel, no!' I wanted to be there for my kids. And a healthy serving of curiosity about the movie.

I feel like I should preface this review, before I get into the spoiler bits, with a comment on my film geekery. It is almost non-existent. I rarely if ever watch TV these days, and then when I do, it's not SF/F. It's either cooking shows, or it's mysteries (and specifically British mysteries). While I'm familiar with the tropes and culture surrounding, say, Star Trek, or Dr Who, I watched TOS, and that's about it. The Marvel movies have been a rare exception for me, and as with this last one, they were started with my kids. But something about the Avengers enchanted me, and the geek in me came home, wrote on the book of faces 'hey, where do I find the books behind this?'

That's the other thing. I was never a comic book fan. I learned to read early, and was a sophisticated reader almost from the beginning. I don't mean I had upper crust or literary tastes. Far from it. I read well, and I read a lot. I consumed books like water. Comic books were hard to



come by and short. It was impossible to get the whole story in one or two random issues I might be able to get my hands on. All this is pertinent to my movie review, I'm not just rambling, I promise! In my early reading I came across pulp action adventure stories, like E. R. Burroughs, E. E. 'Doc' Smith, and many others. The Avengers movies, when I encountered them as an adult, were throwbacks to that golden age of pulp fiction for me. And now we come to Captain Marvel.

I think in movies, as in books, you are coming into the experience with a lot of expectations, usually. And a certain amount of what you take away is part of what you brought into the movie theater with you. Unfortunately, there was a concerted effort before this movie's release to make it into something it wasn't. I expected one thing going in, because of the pre-release press. I walked out with a different impression, a sense of huge amusement at how that expectation had been subverted, and feeling very happy with the real takeaway in the story. I'm not a fan of message fiction. This is not message fiction, but like Captain America, there's a moral in the story. Unlike one of Aesop's fables, it's not spelled out for you, and it's not what you might think it's going to be. Go see Captain Marvel and watch for the trick near the end that turns it all on its ear...

And now, the spoilery part. Read no further if you want to be surprised.

I'm serious!

Despite all the chicks, this is not a chick flick. This is a Human Wave movie, as most of the Avenger's arc has been.

So what I walked in afraid of was that this was going to be a vehicle for third-wave feminism, which is a subversive movement that erodes the initial intent of feminists to establish women as equal to any other human beings. The main actress has certainly been running her mouth saying it is. The main actress, to be kind, couldn't find the point with both hands.

Early on in the film, it's obvious that the heroine has major issues. OK, the plot has major issues. Don't walk in expecting to be surprised by the big reveal at the end. I wasn't, and I doubt you will be either. And if that reveal hadn't happened, I would have been done, done, done with the Avengers. If I'm not a fan of 3WF (third wave feminists is too long to keep typing) I'm even less a fan of the current statist movement. I'm all about human rights, independence, and Liberty! or death. So far, the Avengers had satisfied this side of me with the wonderful Captain America arc. So when you see the Kree set up as this superhuman race of warrior heroes (that's actually a line in the movie) who are ruled utterly by the Supreme Intelligence AI, my first thought was 'they're really the bad guys' and they are. But you don't know that until much later in the film.

Continued in spoilery part:

CEDAR'S SPOILERY PART IS FOUND ON THE NEXT-TO-LAST PAGE

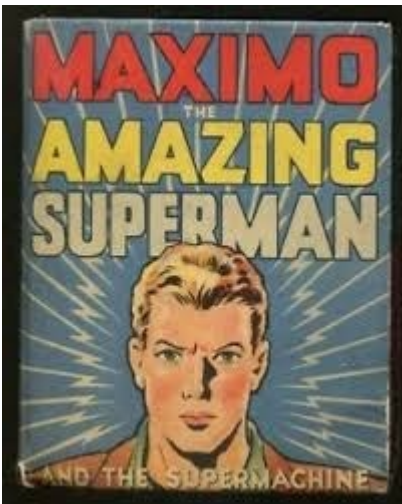
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The Maximo Big Little Books

by

Jon D. Swartz, Ph. D.

N3F Historian



The Maximo Big Little Books (BLBs) were Whitman's answer to Superman and the best-selling comic books in which he appeared. It has been claimed that Whitman tried to secure licensing rights to the Superman character – as it had with many other popular comic characters such as Dick Tracy, Mickey Mouse, and Little Orphan Annie. Failing in the attempt to acquire Superman, Whitman went to its in-house authors and artists to create a competing superhero for its BLB format. Author Russell R. Winterbotham, a science fiction (SF) writer and author of several BLBs, came through with his version of a comic book superhero: Maximo, The Amazing Superman. Three titles were published featuring this new character, all written by Winterbotham, with two of Whitman's most popular artists – Henry E. Vallely and Erwin L. Hess -- supplying the artwork.

I suppose this scenario is possible, since Superman burst onto the comic book scene in June, 1938 (in Action Comics) and had his own magazine by the next year; and the first Maximo BLB did not appear until 1940. Unfortunately for Whitman, however, Maximo did not even come close to competing with DC's Superman.

Maximo the Amazing Superman (#1436)

by

R. R. Winterbotham

(Illustrated by Henry E. Vallely)

Whitman Publishing Company, 1940

This BLB introduced Maximo, the amazing superman, with a two-page preface titled “What Is A Superman?” In it Winterbotham told of some “supermen” of fact and fiction and then explained that Maximo Miller was a new kind of superman, not a physical superman but one gifted with a super brain.

In the story Maximo is out for a walk, dressed in his hiking togs, and sees an automobile about to be hit by an onrushing train. Maximo steels himself for the impending crash, his mind straining to stop the car by willpower alone. “Suddenly, within the young man's head, there was a crack. It seemed as if a barrier in his brain had broken with the strain of what he saw. Some powerful, new force surged through his muscles, seeming to leap from his body toward the speeding motor car.” Maximo looks up and sees the train is passing. The car is hanging suspended in the air about three feet above the ground, its wheels spinning and smoke pouring from its exhaust. Then a feeling of relaxation comes over Maximo and the car settles to the ground. When the car's tires touch the ground, it lurches forward. The driver, a young woman, brings it to a halt as Maximo runs over to her. This is Maximo's first experience with his unique

brain powers.

Maximo then meets a Professor Arvid of Curfman College, the father of the young woman he so miraculously saved. Arvid encourages Maximo to try his newfound power until he has it under complete control. The villain of the story, a petty tyrant named Watts Garvin, yearns to become an overlord of organized crime and hears of Maximo's power. The rest of the book involves Garvin's attempts to capture Maximo, with the attempts resulting in several cliffhanging situations before Maximo eventually triumphs.

Maximo the Amazing Superman and the Supermachine (#1445)

by

R. R. Winterbotham

(Illustrated by Erwin L. Hess)

Whitman Publishing Company, 1941

This was the first Maximo book with the “See 'em Move” feature that appeared in many of the Whitman Better Little Books (the series that followed their Big Little Books series). This feature had small drawings in the upper right hand corner of each illustrated page that, when the pages of the book were flipped, produced a brief visual story. In the See 'em Move presented here Maximo demonstrated some of his mental powers. The “What Is A Superman” preface from the first Maximo book was repeated here.

In the book's story a dam collapses because of the neglect of its builder, Thaddeus Steinwick, who is a brilliant engineer and a mechanical genius, but warped. Maximo uses his mental powers to save a threatened town from the flooding waters by diverting them into a nearby valley. Steinwick observes this feat, and subsequently dopes and kidnaps Maximo. He is then able to record Maximo's electrical brain power and “translate” it by means of recording instruments into a mechanical device he has built. Steinwick plans to use this supermachine to send out a death ray unless surrounding communities pay him an exorbitant tribute. A struggle between Maximo and the supermachine takes up the rest of the book, with Maximo forced to use his super brain to its limit in the struggle. Eventually, the supermachine is destroyed and Steinwick and his henchmen are captured and turned over to the authorities.

Maximo the Amazing Superman and the Crystals of Doom (#1444)

by

R. R. Winterbotham

(Illustrated by Henry E. Vallely)

Whitman Publishing Company, 1941

The third, and last, Maximo BLB also had the “See 'em Move” feature (“Maximo Makes a Daring Escape!”), but the “What Is A Superman” preface from the first two books was not included here.

In this book's story Professor Arvid seeks the secret of the mysterious and lifeless Death's Head Mountain to the west of Ancel City. Maximo's powers are stretched to their limits by strange crystal spheres there that can force humans to do their bidding. The man controlling the radioactive ice crystals, a crooked land developer named Belhampton Donner, must be brought to justice along with his henchman Fately, who had murdered Donner's former partner on Donner's orders. Maximo is able to do all this and, in doing so, the limitations of his superhuman

mental powers are explored and explained. The reader learns that Maximo, although possessed of a super brain, is neither invincible nor invulnerable.

Russell R. Winterbotham (1904-1971)

Winterbotham began his professional writing career in the 1920s by writing Little Blue Book pamphlets for Haldeman-Julius Publications, then went on to write stories for Astounding and other SF prozines. He also wrote newspaper comic strips, juvenile novels, adult SF novels, and some sixty BLBs -- many of them with SF content.

Henry E. Vallely (1886-1950)

Vallely was best known for the chiaroscuro technique he used in illustrating many BLBs. He also produced a large amount of fashion illustrations for women's magazines and illustrations for food periodicals, magazine covers, and children's books. His art was distinctive. Some of the BLBs he illustrated featured the exploits of radio personalities Edgar Bergen & Charlie McCarthy, Eddie Cantor, Jack Armstrong, The Lone Ranger, Green Hornet, Gene Autry, and Tom Mix.

Erwin L. Hess (1913-1999)

Hess was an artist for Dell publications from 1939 through the 1940s. During this period he also illustrated juvenile novels (including *Joyce of the Secret Squadron* – using the pseudonym of Erwin Darwin) and was also the artist for the *Captain Midnight* newspaper comic strip (1941-1945). He began a cartoon series, “The Good Old Days,” in 1947 and continued it until 1981. In the 1950s he illustrated Dell's Gene Autry comic book. His BLBs included comic book and radio personalities such as Autry, *Captain Midnight*, and *The Shadow*.

Conclusions

What can be concluded about the Maximo BLBs? The artwork was by two of the most talented artists to work in the field, and Winterbotham was a competent SF writer. One critic, in fact, wrote: “Maximo was a very original effort and the writing of R. R. Winterbotham was truly inspired.” In short, these books were on a par with most of the other BLBs published at the time; on the other hand, they were never serious competition for the superhero comic books.

The original Superman finally did appear in the Whitman BLB format. In 1980 a soft cover book 256 pages in length, *Superman and the Phantom Zone Connection* (#5780-2), was published -- one of the last Whitman BLBs. The story was written by E. Nelson Bridwell (1931-1987), a DC editor and author of many of the “Superman family” comic book stories. The artwork was not credited but resembled the art in the Superman comic books of the period. This Superman title was in a Whitman series that also featured such comic book heroes as Batman, The Incredible Hulk, and Spider-Man. By 1980, however, BLBs offered almost no competition to comic books.

Today, the Maximo BLBs -- when available and depending upon condition -- sell in the \$25.00 to \$100.00 range. The later Superman BLB is much less expensive, usually selling in the \$5.00 to \$20.00 range.

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 Price Guide To Big Little Books. Gas City, IN: L-W Book Sales, 1995.

The Genre Tales of Hugh B. Cave
 by
Jon D. Swartz, Ph. D.
 N3F Historian

Hugh Barnett Cave was born in 1910 in Chester, England, and moved during his childhood with his family to Boston, Massachusetts, following the outbreak of World War I. His first name was in honor of Hugh Walpole, a favorite author of his mother, a nurse, who had once been friends with Rudyard Kipling.

Cave attended Brookline High School. After graduating, he enrolled at Boston University on a scholarship but had to leave when his father was severely injured. Cave worked initially for a vanity press, the only regular job he would ever have. He quit this position at the age of twenty to write for a living.

Cave corresponded extensively with fellow pulp writer Carl Jacobi, from 1932 until Jacobi's death in 1997. Selections of this correspondence can be found in Cave's memoir *Magazines I Remember*. Relations with his fellow pulp writers, however, were not always so cordial. In the 1930s, Cave lived in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, but he never met H. P. Lovecraft, who lived in nearby Providence. The two engaged in a heated exchange of correspondence, however, regarding the ethics and aesthetics of writing for the pulps. At least two of Cave's stories are loosely attached to Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos: "The Isle of Dark Magic" and "The Death Watch."

During World War II, Cave traveled as a reporter in Southeast Asia. Following the war he moved to the Caribbean, spending five years in Haiti, after which he rebuilt and managed a successful coffee plantation in Jamaica. He returned to the United States in the early 1970s, after the Jamaican government had confiscated his plantation.

Hugh Cave married two times -- first to Margaret Long in a union that produced two sons before the couple began living apart -- and then to Peggy (aka Peggie) Thompson, who died in 2001. Cave was 93 when he died in Vero Beach, Florida, in 2004. His remains were cremated. During his writing career he used many pen names, including Allen Beck, Carey Barnett, Justin Case, J. C. Cole, Jack D'Arcy, William Decatur, Paul Hanna, Rupert Knowles, R. T. Maynard, Max Neilson, Maxwell Smith, Geoffrey Vace, and John Wayne! His publications were many and varied.

One of his most remembered statements regarding writing: "Many of today's writers seem to think that obscurity is a virtue and have apparently decided that a reader who can't understand them will think them artistic. . . The great writers of the past would not be remembered today had they fallen into this subtle trap."

Novels

Fishermen Four; an Outdoor Adventure Story (1942)
 The Cross on the Drum (1955)
 Drums of Revolt (1957)
 Black Sun (1960)
 The Mission (1960)
 Run, Shadow, Run (1968)
 Larks Will Sing (1969)
 Legion of the Dead (1979)
 The Nebulon Horror (1980)
 The Evil (1981)
 Shades of Evil (1982)
 Disciples of Dread (1988)
 Uncharted Voyage (1989)
 The Lower Deep (1990)
 Lucifer's Eye (1991)
 Isle of the Whisperers (1999)
 The Dawning (2000)
 The Evil Returns (2001)
 The Restless Dead (2002)
 The Mountains of Madness (2004)

Short Fiction Collections

The Witching Lands; Tales of the West Indies (1962)
 Murgunstrumm and Others (1977)
 The Corpse Maker (1988) (with Sheldon Jaffery)
 Death Stalks the Night (1995)
 Bitter/Sweet (1996)
 Escapades of the Eel (1997) (as by Justin Case)
 The Lady Wore Black, and Other Weird Cat Tails (2000)
 Long Live the Dead; Tales from Black Mask (2000)
 Officer Coffey Stories (2000)
 Come Into My Parlor; Tales from Detective Fiction Weekly (2002)

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"The Watcher In The Green Room." *Terror By Night*. Selwyn Blount, England. (1930s)
 "The Cult Of The White Ape." *Keep On the Light*. Selwyn Blount, England. (1930s)
 "Steve Takes A Hand." *Second Mystery Companion*. Gold Label Books. 1944
 "Beyond Price." *Short Stories of Our Times*. Houghton Mifflin. 1950
 "Treasure Deep." *Finders Keepers*. Morrow. 1969
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 "Ladies in Waiting." *Whispers I*. Doubleday. 1977
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 "What Say the Frogs Now, Jenny?" *Whispers IV*. Doubleday. 1983

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- “Death Tolls The Bell.” Selected Tales of Grim & Grue. Bowling Green Popular Press. 1987
- “Brotherhood of Blood.” Weird Tales. Doubleday Book Club. 1988
- “A Place of No Return.” Best Horror from Fantasy Tales. Robinson, England; Carroll & Graff, U.S. 1988-90
- “Appointment with Yesterday.” Tales from Alfred Hitchcock. Wm Morrow. 1988
- “Ladies In Waiting.” I Shudder at Your Touch. ROC. 1990
- “In the Dragon's Lair.” It's Raining Corpses in Chinatown. Starmont. 1991
- “Spawn of Inferno.” Weird Tales Anthology. Japan. 1984
- “After the Funeral.” Masters of Darkness III. Tor. 1991
- “After the Funeral.” Complete Masters of Darkness. Underwood Miller. 1991
- “Imp of Satan.” Rivals of Weird Tales. Bonanza Books. 1990
- “Murgunstrumm.” Mammoth Book of Terror. Robinson (England) and Carroll & Graf (U.S.). 1991
- “Another Kind of Enchanted Cottage.” Journeys to the Twilight Zone. Daw Books. 1993
- “Stragella.” Mammoth Book of Vampires. Robinson (England) and Carroll & Graf U.S.). 1992
- “Mountains of Time.” Ghosttide. Revenant Books. 1992
- “Murgunstrumm.” A Taste for Blood. Dorset. 1992
- “Stragella.” Weird Vampire Tales. Gramercy. 1992
- “The Watcher in the Green Room.” Nightmare. Marboro Books. 1991
- “Vanishing Point.” Northern Frights #2. Mosaic Press, Canada. 1993
- “A Place of No Return.” Horrors By Lamplight. Chancellor Press, England. 1993
- “Gordie's Pets.” Return to the Twilight Zone. Daw. 1994
- “Mission to Margal.” Mammoth Book of Zombies. Robinson, England. 1993
- “The Lady Wore Black.” Mystery Cats. Germany. 1994
- “Derelict.” Sea Cursed. Barnes & Noble. 1994
- “The Death Watch.” Cthulhu's Heirs. Chaosium. 1994
- “Take Me For Instance.” “Ladies in Waiting.” Both stories in 100 Creepy Little Creature Stories. Barnes & Noble. 1994
- “The Whisperers.” Mammoth Book of Werewolves. Robinson, England & Carroll & Graff (U.S.) 1994
- “Stragella.” Mammoth Book of Vampires. Magic Books, England (Robinson). 1994
- “Murgunstrumm.” The Anthology of Horror Stories. Tiger Books International. 1994
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- “The Door Below.” Lighthouse Horrors. Down East Books. 1995
- “What Say the Frogs Now, Jenny?” More Dixie Ghosts. Barnes & Noble. 1995
- “Just the Two of Us.” 100 Wicked Little Witch Stories. Barnes & Noble. 1995
- “The Skeptic.” 100 Tiny Tales of Terror. 1996
- “Five to Get Ready, Two to Go.” The Best of Cemetery Dance. 1996
- “Ladies in Waiting.” A Century of Horror: 1970-1979. MJF Books, N.Y. 1996
- “The Brotherhood of Blood.” Blood Lines: Vampire Stories from New England, 1997
- “Ladies In Waiting.” Haunted Houses: The Great Stories. MJF Books. 1997
- “The Back of the Mirror.” “Tomorrow Is Forever.” Both stories in 100 Fiendish Little Frightmares. 1997
- “The Room Above the Top.” 100 Twisted Tales of Torment. 1998
- “Purr Of A Cat.” Fields of Blood: Vampires of the Heartland. 1998
- “Stragella.” Vampire Slayers. Cumberland House Publishing. 1999 ?
- “Affair Of The Clutching Hand.” Phantom Perfumes & Other Shades. 2000
- “Forgetful Charlie.” 100 Hilarious Little Howlers. 1999

Conclusions

Cave wrote two stories for *Astounding*: “The Corpse on the Grating” (February, 1930 issue) and “The Murder Machine” (September, 1930). From the titles, it appears that -- even when writing science fiction -- he wrote melodramatic rather than “sense of wonder” tales.

Popular culture critic/historian Lee Server wrote that Cave was “a valued contributor to the two most honored magazines of the pulp era, *Weird Tales* and *Black Mask* (a distinction in itself, as most noted contributors to those two magazines wrote only for one or the other).”

Among the awards Cave received during his lifetime were the World Fantasy Best Collection Award in 1978 (for *Murgunstrumm and Others*), the Phoenix Award in 1986 (with Orson Scott Card), the Bram Stoker Lifetime Achievement Award in 1990, the International Horror Guild “Living Legend” Award in 1997, and the World Fantasy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1999. He was also a nominee in 1996 for the World Fantasy Best Collection Award (for *Death Stalks the Night*).

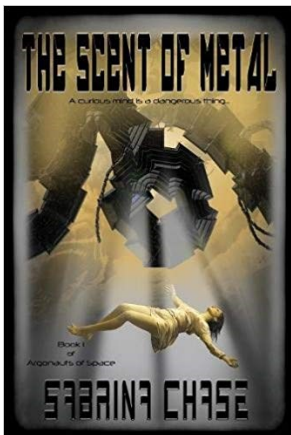
When he received the World Fantasy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1999, he remarked that he had received it only because everyone else was dead.

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Food

Food of Famous Authors: Sabrina Chase Book and Recipe from Cedar Sanderson



When I asked Sabrina Chase for a dish to cook and a book, she had an instant answer. It seems that there is a recurring mention of cornbread in her book, *The Scent of Metal*. Perfect! And it’s such a versatile side-dish, too. We eat it often here, although our recipe is a bit different. But trying new things is what this series is about. New books, new authors, new food. It’s a delicious combination. Go ahead and pick up a copy of the book, but make sure you set a timer, because you don’t want to get lost in her world and burn your cornbread!

You could easily make this into cornbread muffins just by putting muffin cup liners into muffin tins, or greasing the tin liberally. Change the bake-time to 12-15 minutes, though, and check for doneness with a toothpick. When the (wood!) toothpick comes



Buttermilk Cornbread

Ingredients

2 cups cornmeal
 1 cup flour
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon baking soda

2 cups buttermilk
 2 eggs
 1 tablespoon bacon fat or butter

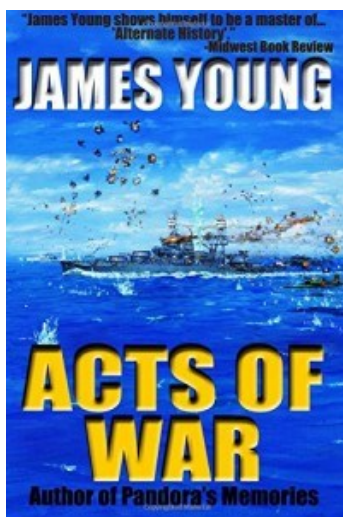
Instructions

Preheat the oven to 400 deg F. Mix the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Pour in the buttermilk and beat in the eggs. Melt the fat in a cast iron skillet. Pour fat in the batter and bake in the skillet for 20 to 25 minutes, until risen and browned.

You could easily make this into cornbread muffins just by putting muffin cup liners into muffin tins, or greasing the tin liberally. Change the bake-time to 12-15 minutes, though, and check for doneness with a toothpick. When the (wood!) toothpick comes out clean, they are done.



Food of Famous Authors: James Young Book and Recipe from Cedar Sanderson



As my readers likely realize, I know most of the authors in this series to one extent or another. That is, after all, how I get the chutzpah to ask them for a moment of their busy time to talk to a nutty lady about food and cooking. James Young is no exception. I met him and his lovely wife Anita at Libertycon a while back, and wound up working with James on some of his early book covers, including *An Unproven Concept*, which had the loveliest art to work with. But I'm drifting off topic. James is, unlike most writers, an extrovert. The man is a marketing machine. He's also funny, and a damn good writer.

Which means I can recommend one of his latest books, *Acts of War*, without reservation even though I haven't read it yet (I'll make time! Really!). James is, among other things, a professional historian, which translates into writing rollicking good alternative historicals. Pick up the book, and let's get started on his recipe.

Growing up, my grandmother would make Corn & Oyster Pudding for Christmas dinner. This; is not that.

James told me, "Not exactly how my Mom makes it (I think she adds cinnamon and uses the

oven), but close enough. Let your slow cooker be your helper with this family-favorite corn pudding—a great side dish for holiday meals or parties.”



Corn Pudding in a cup: I will admit that smaller ramekins would have been better. I must get some.

Corn Pudding

Ingredients

- 1 can (14.75 oz) Green Giant™ cream style sweet corn
- 1 can (15.25 oz) Green Giant™ whole kernel sweet corn, drained
- 1 pouch Betty Crocker™ cornbread & muffin mix
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 1 egg
- 1 cup shredded Colby-Monterey Jack cheese blend (4 oz)

Instructions

Spray 3-4 1/2 quart slow cooker with cooking spray.

In a medium bowl, mix all ingredients.

Pour into slow cooker.

Cover, cook on High setting for 2 1/2 to 3 hours, or until mixture is set and knife inserted in center comes out clean.

Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

I wound up doing mine in the oven, like his mother does, and in large ramekins (soup mugs, if you want). I baked them at 350 deg for 25 minutes.

The corn pudding is not as sweet as I was afraid it would be. Like most commercial cornbread mixes, sugar and corn syrup rank high on the Betty Crocker ingredient list. You know me, if you read this blog much, and it's not a health thing (all things in moderation). It is, on the other hand, a cornbread-isn't-sweet! thing. The First Reader, southern boy that he is, was a bit cautious about this recipe at first. He was reassured by the cheese, though. After he'd eaten his, he leaned back and relaxed, telling me it was comfort food.

It's very good. Rich and heavy, you don't want a lot of it at a time, but it makes a fine side-dish. It complements ham very well, the slight sweetness with the salty smokiness is perfect.

Yellow cornmeal

A minor snag we ran into while whipping up this quick and easy meal was that I didn't have cornmeal in the house. I have self-rising cornbread mix (NOT jiffy mix, which is terribly sweet) and grits, but no meal. The First Reader ran out and got me some nice yellow cornmeal, eagerly anticipating the dinnertime treat. I always know cornbread will go over well with him. This recipe makes a great, moist, rich cornbread that stands up well to butter. I like it with honey, too. You could embellish this recipe to your heart's content. I've added cheese, salsa, more corn (frozen kernels work great), diced jalapenos, handfuls of crumbled bacon... you could put anything in there. But the First Reader loves it straight up.

Discussion

17 Apr 2019

Hi George;

I haven't finished reading the new issue of Eldritch Science yet, but I thot I would shoot off some random thots. My first thot is not random, it is a repeat of a previous complaint.

I am deeply concerned that the N3F club zines, and the other fanzines sent out as part of the free zine distribution, are still being emailed out in fragments. I am glad you sent me the latest issue all in one lump, because I'm not sure I would have had the patience to download and fit together five separate sections.

This is ridiculous. For well over a year now (or has it been more than TWO years?) you have been saying somebody is working on this problem to get it resolved. I don't know what this individual has been doing, because nothing has changed. In fact, the situation may even be getting worse.

As I have mentioned before, I myself have no problem sending files of any size to any number of people using AOL. I don't know why the N3F can't do the same. If sending out two hundred forty+ emails all at one time is not allowed (altho, why not?), then break the mailing down and send the zines out to forty or fifty people at a time. I am sure some easy program could be devised to feed forty email addresses into the Send To line, press send, and repeat the process until the entire membership gets the fanzines all in one lump instead of in aggravating fragments.

The club zines are the primary activity that most of the members are making use of. For some, it is the only club activity they are making use of. It behooves the survival of the club if those fanzines can be delivered in the simplest, and easiest to access possible way. I cannot understand why this problem has not been taken care of yet, but I really urge you to get it resolved, before the club starts shedding members because they don't want to go thru the hassle of downloading and fitting fragmentary club zines together.

I thot I had a bunch of comments about the last Tightbeam, but it turns out that I only have a few.

I do have a bone to pick with Jon Swartz's write-up about the Fawcett Dime Action big little books. He states that the books were all original adventures, but in fact all of them were adaptations of already published comic book stories. The original artwork was chopped up to provide the art, with some additional material being drawn as needed. Primarily the new art consisted of an opening panel(s) at the beginning of each book's story, probably because the original comic story splash panels were too large or too difficult to reformat to the square BLB size page, but perhaps to fool young readers who might be flipping thru the title and might otherwise recognize the story from a comic they had recently read.

The Dime Action books are very difficult to find, and I personally believe this is because the original distribution was not good. BLBs were sold in dime stores, variety stores and the like.

Fawcett was primarily a magazine publisher with little experience putting books into places like Woolworth's, Newbury's, Kreskie's, or Grant's. Those were the places that sold the bulk of the BLB style volumes, and without good placement sales would not have met expectations.

I also think Jon overthot the situation with Nathaniel Hawthorne's stories. Most of his fantastic fiction clearly falls into the fantasy category. I don't think he was necessarily anti-science, so much as using his fiction to show the foibles and failures of the human animal.

"Dr. Heidegger's Experiment", for example, is not about the dangers of science in modern society. His experiment(s) including this one are clearly shown to be mostly vested in the realm of ancient black magic. When he gives the elixir of life to his aged friends, what happens is a demonstration of the folly and shallowness of the human spirit. Despite having presumably learned wisdom and maturity from their long years of experience, when his friends revert to youthful bodies, they begin to repeat the same mistakes and errors of judgment that they did before, despite knowing that these actions are foolish and dangerous. The story speaks to the failure of human beings to learn from their mistakes, or to change their basic nature, and has nothing to do with science at all.

If Jon can make any sense out of "The Minister's Black Veil" he is doing better than me, or most people I know who have read that story. I'm sure there is a moral there, or a plot, or something that makes sense, but the ending is so frustrating that it invalidates all the interesting writing that came before.

I think Hawthorne was interested in exploring human character under unusual conditions, and he created unusual situations in both his short stories and his novels to demonstrate how the basic character of an individual does not necessarily change even given a unique opportunity to reformulate itself. I don't think he was a universal pessimist, but it is hard to read a book like "House of Seven Gables" and accept that he thot the best of humanity either.

I will fully support Pat Patterson's "Thiotimeline Award" the minute he (or some other interested fan) can produce a time machine so we can check the results of all those future-perfect awards. I think there are way too many awards in this hobby already. We are beginning to look like an echo of the movie and TV entertainment biz, where egos are so fragile that a hundred and fifty-five awards have been created so that nobody will feel left out. SF fandom hasn't got that many award slates---yet, but we are moving in that direction. I am certainly in favor of Chattanooga's LibertyCon hosting this prestigious ceremony, providing they can successfully predict what the room rates and the price of southern style pork barbeque sandwiches will be five years in the future. Oh hell, why be picky. Let me know the true & exact price of a non-subscription newsstand issue of F&SF the year after next and I'm willing to support the con and the Thermopile, eh, 'Thiotimeline' Awards whole heartedly.

As always the recipes this issue look delicious, but they also look complicated to make. Also, what is it with Ms Sanderson and noodles? How many issues/recipes does this make where she creates something scrumptious, and then tells us to dump it all on a pile of soggy, wet noodles? Does she own shares in a noodle factory or something? I personally think noodles are among the blandest and most uninteresting foods on the planet. I would never defuse the flavors of good cooking by allowing a pile of limp noodles to corrupt the creation.

That's it for some short thots. I will try to get another email out to you when I finish reading

the Eldritch Science issue.

---Bob Jennings

“The greatest of pleasures in this life is saying what you think, and your friends have to be people who can at least give decent consideration to your ideas.”

---Upton Sinclair (1878-1968)

Captain Marvel Spoiler

And here's where the feminism thing came in. We get to see Vers (later, Captain Marvel) conflicted over memories, or whatever they are, in which she is knocked down, belittled, and told she's a girl, a failure, and so on. We're supposed to feel badly that men were awful to her. Um. I can see where the actress was all 'look, men are awful but the girlz rule!'

Except that's not what the ending does to those 'memories.' During the fight scene with the Supreme Intelligence, it's revealed that the memories were selected and used to control the woman who could become Captain Marvel. Her focus on how she'd been beaten down, scolded, and so forth... was a tool the AI was using in part to keep control over her. When she stopped focusing on the feminism 'done me wrong' mantra, and instead remembered how she had gotten up, tried again, been given second chances, been given the opportunity to fly experimental jets, had proved her humanity by being resilient and DOING not just lying down and whining about how men wouldn't let her get up... that's when she was able to tap into her true power and win the fight. Captain Marvel isn't about girl power. It's about humans. It's specifically and blatantly about humanity and how we don't give up. We dust ourselves off, wipe the blood out of our eye, square our shoulders, and walk right back into the affray, only this time to win.

So yes, in spite of the silly special effects, the over-the-top comic book tropes, the media portrayal of 'girlz rule!' I really enjoyed this movie, and I can recommend it if you enjoy that sort of thing. Human wave, baby. Ride it to the stars!

(oh, and the cat. You really, really want to watch it for the cat. I promise you, it will not disappoint).



Bats! — Jose Sanchez