

Association. This dish was actually an illustration for an article about special dishes in which you combined ingredients whose symbolic meanings went well together. This only confirms for me that the great kosher chefs all have their minds on something other than flavor.

THE MT VOID

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Well, there is more to the story. It has been some eight months since we got an issue and I had been looking forward to getting another issue as an excuse to go on a diet. Well, nothing came and after a while some inquiries were made. It seems that T_h_e_K_o_s_h_e_r_G_o_u_r_m_e_t has gone belly-up. Now it may be that the cover dishes nauseated so many people that the magazine did not sell. And it may be that the publisher ate the cover dish and suffered third-degree coronary artery blockage. But I have this fantasy that I enjoy every once in a while. I close my eyes and picture a mob of spouses of subscribers. (Okay, I picture husbands. Can I help it if the insides of my eyelids are sexist?) I picture this mob descending on an office printing T_h_e_K_o_s_h_e_r_G_o_u_r_m_e_t. In deference to the great mobs of the old Universal horror films, my mob descends on the printing presses with torches and shouts. The leader pulls the new issue hot off the presses. He reads the cover. "Haddock and lentil loaf ...!" he yells to the mob. And there is an angry rumble. "... with gefilte fish gel sauce!" he screams. This, of course, is the last straw. The shrieking mob is now more ravening beast than human. The rage and anguish is more than this many-headed beast can bear. First the plate glass window is smashed. Somebody finds a printing plate. "Glazed liver loaf," he screams, breaking it over his leg. Someone has set fire to a picture on the wall of "Vegetarian Shallot Stew," but the fire has freed itself and the yellow rim nibbles its way up the wallpaper.

Unknown to the mob--and it is just as well--just a few yards away, up the hill, the editor and publisher of K_o_s_h_e_r_G_o_u_r_m_e_t hide behind a bush. Sadly they watch as the printshop gives way to tongues of flame and to smoke. "Well, that's it, I guess," one says.

"Yeah, I guess it is."

"You hungry?"

"I guess so. Wanna go for pizza?"

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The fact that an opinion has been widely held is no evidence that it is not utterly absurd; indeed, in view of the silliness of the majority of mankind, a widespread belief is more often likely to be foolish than sensible.

-- Bertrand Russell, in "Marriage and Morals" (1929)

PATRIOT GAMES
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
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Capsule review: R_e_d_O_c_t_o_b_e_r fans may be a little disappointed at this surprisingly humdrum and downbeat political thriller. This is more like a watchable police procedural and generates just about as much excitement. This film does not generate the excitement of the previous Clancy film, but does generate at least a very low interest in what happens next. Rating: high +1.

A Tom Clancy novel lies somewhere between a James Bond thriller and a textbook on American defense and intelligence systems. Clancy gives a lot of technical details but makes it enjoyable by putting it into the context of a good spy story. Technophiles may be a bit disappointed by the technical content of the film P_a_t_r_i_o_t_G_a_m_e_s. We do see a bit of how the CIA operates, but it is much less the thrust of the film than it is in T_h_e_H_u_n_t_f_o_r_R_e_d_O_c_t_o_b_e_r. Harrison Ford

plays Jack Ryan as older, more bitter and introspective, and certainly less exuberant than Alec Baldwin played him in T_h_e_H_u_n_t_f_o_r_R_e_d_O_c_t_o_b_e_r.

The story--which curiously begins much slower in Peter Iliff and Donald Stewart's screenplay than it does in the original novel--starts with Jack Ryan foiling an attack by Irish terrorists in London. In the screenplay's one concrete improvement on the novel, the victim of the attack was only a distant member of the Royal Family and so spares us the indignity of having the Queen of England fawning all over Jack Ryan. In both stories, however, the terrorists decide they now have a vendetta against Ryan personally and are quite willing to punish the whole Ryan family. Jack uses the facilities of the CIA to protect his family and end the career of the particularly faction of Irish terrorists.

It is no secret at this point that Tom Clancy was less than totally pleased with the screen treatment of his novel. He legally had his name removed from the film, and only in the last week or so before the release agreed to have it put back. The advertising I saw does not mention his name at all and simply says "From the best-selling novel." In fact, as film adaptations go, the film is reasonably faithful to the novel, though some fair-sized liberties were taken. About midway into the film Ryan makes one of his famous deductions and concludes something that in the novel Ryan was told in a briefing very early. Worth noting is one interesting touch in the film--intentional or not. In British spy films the Americans are allies, of course, but very often characterized as boorish cowboys. In this film, the Americans are cleancut and bright, but

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interrogating the terrorists are two of the most greasy-looking, weasely Britons they could cast in the role. Touche'!

P_a_t_r_i_o_t_G_a_m_e_s is directed by Philip Noyce, who also directed an exceptionally good thriller, D_e_a_d_C_a_l_m. The music by James Horner is notable: he makes extensive use of two pieces of music by other composers. He uses the "Gayne Ballet Suite" by Khatchaturian, previously used in the jogging sequences of 2_0_0_1: A_S_p_a_c_e_O_d_y_s_s_e_y to give the emotion of the tedium of space flight. More interesting is that Horner used the end credit song from the film H_a_r_r_y'_s_G_a_m_e for

the end title music here. (And if you want to see a r_e_a_l_l_y good thriller about the tensions in Northern Ireland, see if you can find the rest of H_a_r_r_y'_s_G_a_m_e someplace.)

P_a_t_r_i_o_t_G_a_m_e_s caps off this Irish Spring, joining T_h_e_P_l_a_y_b_o_y_s and F_a_r_a_n_d_A_w_a_y. It is not the thriller Clancy fans wanted; it may not even be a good adaptation of the book. But there are moments when it does show some taste and style. I give it a high +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

PRAYERS TO BROKEN STONES by Dan Simmons
Bantam Spectra, 1992 (1990c), ISBN 0-553-29665-5, \$5.99.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
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In the last ten years, Dan Simmons has written eight novels (or seven, if you count H_y_p_e_r_i_o_n and T_h_e_F_a_l_l_o_f_H_y_p_e_r_i_o_n as the two halves of a single novel). These include fantasy (he won the World Fantasy Award for S_o_n_g_o_f_K_a_l_i), horror (he won the Bram Stoker Award for C_a_r_r_i_o_n_C_o_m_f_o_r_t), science fiction (he won the Hugo award for H_y_p_e_r_i_o_n), and even mainstream (P_h_a_s_e_s_o_f_G_r_a_v_i_t_y). This is his first collection, and shows that same range.

Unfortunately, Bantam has chosen to start this collection with an introduction by Harlan Ellison, in which he congratulates himself for having discovered Dan Simmons. But after describing this feat, he says Simmons can remember and tell it better. And sure enough, in the introduction to "The River Styx Runs Upstream," Simmons does. Interestingly, he remembers it differently. In Ellison's version, Ellison makes Simmons identify himself at a writers' workshop only when he wants to praise him; in Simmons's version, he is singled out and verbally abused before his story is even read. The two tellings provide, I suppose, further evidence that R_a_s_h_o_m_o_n shows us an accurate view of human memory. (By the way, be sure to read all of Simmons's introductions--they're as good as the stories.)

In any case, "The River Styx Runs Upstream" was Simmons's first published story and is a blend of the science fiction and horror genres. What if through scientific means we could bring the dead back to life? The horror is not the George Romero sort of horror, but a quieter horror that comes from knowing that something very important is missing from someone close to you.

If "The River Styx Runs Upstream" is about something missing, "Eyes I Dare Not Meet in Dreams" is a perfect counterpoint: a story in which there is more to some of the characters than one would think. The basic premise may seem familiar, but Simmons handles it with a skill that carries the reader along, and characters that the reader cares about.

The third story is a definite change of pace. "Vanni Fucci Is Alive and Well and Living in Hell" has that resident of the Seventh Bolgia of the Eighth Circle of Hell come on to Brother Freddy's Hallelujah Breakfast Club as a guest and explain how it r_e_a_l_l_y is. A knowledge of Dante is useful but certainly not necessary for the enjoyment of this tale of the true status of televangelists.

And in case the reader had any lingering doubts about Simmons's opinion of televangelists, "Vexed to Nightmare by a Rocking Cradle"

will set them to rest. (I'm not sure this seeming juxtaposing of stories is a good idea--they end up as halves of a pair rather than as individual entities. Given that the stories had no connection in their original appearances, connecting them here is probably an ill-conceived idea.) "Vexed to Nightmare by a Rocking Cradle" is a post-holocaust (one is tempted to say post-apocalyptic, but that would be misleading) look at the direction one particular brand of Christianity might take. Written as a Christmas story for a comics catalog, this story was n_o_t designed to brighten the reader's Christmas morning--though depending on the reader, it just might.

"Remembering Siri," set in the Hegemony universe of H_y_p_e_r_i_o_n and T_h_e_F_a_l_l_o_f_H_y_p_e_r_i_o_n, is perhaps the best piece in the book. But some of that may be that the universe is familiar; when the story was published in 1983, the reader had no well-developed background to place it against. Still, the characters and their situation are close enough that reading H_y_p_e_r_i_o_n or T_h_e_F_a_l_l_o_f_H_y_p_e_r_i_o_n is not a prerequisite for appreciating this story of a space traveler, the woman he loved, and the world he came to change but was instead changed by. (I realize my comments make it sound as though I am saying that the best stories are those in series; this is not my intention. It is more that Simmons can accomplish in a short story what might have required a longer length to do as effectively if there was no other information to draw upon.)

The next two stories are another pair, but here at least there is good reason for the pairing: "The Offering" is Simmons's screenplay of his story "Metastasis." I didn't see the show when it aired (on the syndicated television series "Monsters" in 1990, but the transition of an almost mystical story to a television play is instructive to see. Simmons's introduction to the script describes some of the changes--apparently they even wanted to change the basic premise of the "cancer vampires," but he drew the line at this.

These days it seems as though every writer is doing a Vietnam story, and so we have "E-Ticket to 'Namland," which extrapolates our preference for hyperreality over reality (which Umberto Eco elucidates in his T_r_a_v_e_l_s_i_n_H_y_p_e_r_r_e_a_l_i_t_y). In this case, of course, one might claim that 'Namland is preferable to 'Nam, but

then the boundaries starts to blur, much as camouflage makes the wearer blend into the background.

Now we move into horror stories of a more standard type. "Iverson's Pit" and "Shave and a Haircut, Two Bites" are straightforward horror stories--well-written, as all the stories are, but nothing ground-breaking. Then comes "The Death of the Centaur" about the power of story-telling, which failed to work for me for a couple of reasons. First, I never got involved with the story within the story--maybe I just have difficulty with a multi-layered story. Secondly, no matter how well done, a story written about the power of story-telling must appear somewhat self-serving.

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But it's not unreasonable to say that no story can ever be written about story-telling, so you may just want to write this off as one of my quirks.

"Two Minutes Forty-Five Seconds" is what Simmons (or perhaps Ellen Datlow should get the credit) calls "high-tech horror." It served its purpose as a short filler in O_ m_ n_ i, but doesn't really stand up.

P_ r_ a_ y_ e_ r_ s_ t_ o_ B_ r_ o_ k_ e_ n_ S_ t_ o_ n_ e_ s finishes with the short story "Carrion

Comfort" upon which the novel was based. The short story seems to be quite sufficient unto itself--one wonders why it needed to be expanded into a novel (and a half-million-word novel at that). This means, of course, that the reader is left, not desiring to run out and read Simmons's full-length novels, but asking why, if Simmons can tell a story in less than 20,000 words, he then expanded it to half a million. (Okay, I haven't read the novel, and it's possible that if I read it I would understand. But my f_ i_ r_ s_ t reaction is to ask "why bother?" rather than to read it immediately.)

Not every story in P_ r_ a_ y_ e_ r_ s_ t_ o_ B_ r_ o_ k_ e_ n_ S_ t_ o_ n_ e_ s is a gem. Not

every story is to everyone's taste. But the stories show Simmons's range and technique, so even if there are a couple not to your

liking, I think on the whole you will find P_ r_ a_ y_ e_ r_ s_ t_ o_ B_ r_ o_ k_ e_ n_ S_ t_ o_ n_ e_ s

a rewarding experience.

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