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What Are Your Passenger Rights in Space:

Summary quote: "Space tourism experts say passenger rights are anything but standard. No federal agency appears to be in charge of regulating customer service issues for space travel. Delays, cancellations and refunds are left to the space travel companies to determine. But change is coming."

Full article at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2022/11/16/space-flight-passenger-refunds-cancellations-delays/>

Mini Reviews, Part 5 (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper):

This is the fifth batch of mini-reviews, all documentaries.

GOOD NIGHT OPPY: GOOD NIGHT OPPY is a documentary about the Martian rover Opportunity, from the original concept through its landing on Mars on January 25, 2004, its activities on Mars, an up to its final shut-down (or death, as many of the support team thought of it) on June 10, 2018, 5111 sols later. (A sol is a Martian day, and is 24 Earth-hours, 25 Earth-days, 29 Earth-seconds long. Opportunity's planned mission was 90 sols, or 92.5 Earth-days.)

At first it seems like just an exercise for computer special effects, since there are no actual pictures of Opportunity and its sister rover Spirit. (Well, there is a final selfie of Opportunity.)

Just when you thought that after all the documentaries that have been made of our space program, there was little new that would be created, and that space documentaries could be very similar, GOOD NIGHT OPPY proves you wrong.

This is a very different style of documentary than the documentaries made by NASA (though it uses archival footage from NASA and

JPL). It helps that the project team chooses humanized names for the project landers rather than just letters and numbers, which makes their purpose more clear for the terrestrial observers, and It does help to make the story more exciting and entertaining.

(However, picking the song "You Are Not There" is the opposite of the image they probably wanted to project.)

Released theatrically 4 November 2022, and on Amazon Prime 23 November 2022. Rating: high +2 (-4 to +4) or 8/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14179942/reference>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/good_night_oppo

HOLD YOUR FIRE: HOLD YOUR FIRE is a documentary about a 1973 robbery/hostage situation in Brooklyn that began the process of using "hostage negotiation" rather than brute force to resolve these sorts of incidents. In addition to having people describe the process used, the filmmakers also interviewed some of the police officers involved (both directly and indirectly), hostages (or their families), lawyers, and so on. What results is, among other things, a totally contradictory account of what happened, what was said, what attitudes there were at the time, and so on. (For example, one policeman said there was no racism in the NYPD at the time, while one of the robbers said the police were always harassing African-Americans.

Released theatrically 20 May 2022; available on various streaming services. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4) or 7/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt15196796/reference>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/hold_your_fire_2021

COW: COW is a cinema verite documentary that follows the life of a dairy cow in England. From the first scene, where we welcome a calf to a life of pain, and watch the calf taking in information about its strange new world, director Andrea Arnold gives us almost entirely close-ups and handheld camerawork. (The calf is not the title character; its mother is.) The film has no real dialogue; it is strictly in terms of what a cow would hear, as the herders talk to the occasional vet or give brief commands to the cows. The young calves show some vitality and life while the older cows and bull stand around and look stolid.

We do not really learn much from the film. It took scientists a while to realize that cows make friends with other in much the same way that humans do, and that does not come out at all. We see a lot of unexplained operations, e.g., putting blue liquid on a cow's head, planing off the bottoms of its hooves, etc. (It turns out the blue liquid was part of a de-horning process, at least according to one review.)

This is the bovine version of **THE TRUMAN SHOW**, though the environment is real rather than artificially created. The handheld camera work has been ((accurately) described as "nausea-inducing", and the overwhelming impression the viewer is left with is just that cows lead boring lives.

(Arnold has said this was not intended as a pro-animal-rights film, though many people see it that way.)

Released theatrically 8 April 2022; available on various streaming services. Rating: +1 (-4 to +4) or 6/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt11548822/reference>

What others are saying: <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/cow>

[-mrl/ecl]

MEMORY'S LEGION: THE COMPLETE EXPANSE STORY COLLECTION by **James S.A. Corey** (copyright 2022, Orbit, \$28, Hardcover, 418pp, ISBN 978-0-316-66919-1; 16 hours, 22 minutes, ASIN B09Q81W6Z, narrated by Jefferson Mays, Daniel Abraham, and Ty Franck) (audio book review by Joe Karpierz):

James S.A. Corey's "The Expanse" novels and stories (and, to be honest, the television series as well) are arguably one of the best things that have happened to science fiction in the last decade. From 2011's **LEVIATHAN WAKES** (nominated for the Hugo Award for Best Novel in 2012) through 2021's **LEVIATHAN FALLS**, the novels of The Expanse have told a story of adventure, political intrigue, and humanity's drive to explore via excellent writing and story telling with believable and well thought out characters. But while Corey (the pseudonym of the writing team of Daniel Abraham and Ty Franck) was writing the novels (and eventually working on the Hugo-award-winning television show), he found time to write short fiction set in The Expanse Universe, stories that filled in the gaps for some characters, that were off the path of the main narrative of the novel series (which did win the Hugo Award for Best Series in 2020), or in the case of "The Sins of Our Fathers", shed some light on a what happened to a character after the events of **LEVIATHAN FALLS**. All of these stories are collected in "Memory's Legion: The Complete Expanse Story Collection". While I'd read a few of these stories over the years, I hadn't read them all in any kind of order, so for me "Memory's Legion" was a welcome addition to and completion of The Expanse story.

Three of the stories take place before the main novel series begin. "The Drive", the first chronological story (but not the first published), relates the creation of the Epstein Drive by Solomon Epstein. He didn't know that's what he was doing, but it was fairly evident that he wasn't going to survive to see what resulted from his invention. I'd read this in its initial appearance in Jonathan Strahan's "Edge of Infinity" anthology back when that anthology was published. The next story is "The Churn", which on the surface provides the backstory for Amos, but it is a lot more than that, as most of these stories are. It is a very dark and difficult story to read (or in my case, listen to), and there are many twisted things going on here. Some events from this story are referred to in the Season 5

episode of the TV show, "Churn". The third story to take place before the novels begin is "The Butcher of Anderson Station". Fred Johnson was a UN Marine colonel who killed an entire station of protesting miners at the direction of his bosses, no matter that they were attempting to surrender. It's the story of the killing of the miners, of course, but it's more than that, telling of Johnson's remorse and feelings of guilt for something he really didn't want to do.

Perhaps my favorite story in the collection is "The Vital Abyss", told from the point of view of Dr. Paolo Cortazar. It is once again a very complex, dark, and disturbing story, wherein we learn about the experiments that led to the releasing of the Protomolecule early in the book series. As with all the other stories in the collection, there is more to it than that, but it's fascinating to me to discover not only how and why the protomolecule got released, but also to learn about the people involved in that project.

"Gods of Risk" is an interesting character study (well, kind of--it does have a plot) of David Draper, a gifted chemistry student who gets involved in some drug running when try to rescue a young friend of his. There is much to be learned from this story about societal pressures on youth, education pressures to get into the best program at university, and social pressures of caring for someone who in the end really doesn't care for him. Complicating David's life is his aunt Bobbie--yes, THAT Bobbie Draper--who is dealing with her own difficult circumstances at the time. This story is touched upon from a different view in the Season 4 episode "Jetsam".

"Strange Dogs" is the most recognizable story from the television series, as it made up a more than passing portion of each episode of Season 6. The titular creatures are able to "fix" things that are broken, including a bird, a drone and, eventually a young boy named Xan, who dies in an accident. Xan's sister Cara, the one to discover the Strange Dogs, asks them to fix him, and they do, but then everything has changed. It is a story of gain and loss, trust, and discovery of the unknown. Once again Dr. Cortazar makes an appearance, as does Admiral Duarte. Cortazar, Duarte, Cara, and Xan play important parts in the final three Expanse novels.

Auberon is the tale of a Laconian citizen appointed to be the governor of the planet of Auberon, and strategic planet as it is one of the first of the new worlds on the other side of the ring gate. Governor Rittenaar has come to the planet with his wife Mona to bring order to the planet. But the society that is already established there has other ideas. The Auberon underworld--for lack of a better term--is led by Erich, whom we first met way back in "The Churn". It's a story of a proud man who must compromise his values so that he can bring order to the new world.

The final story takes place after the end of LEVIATHAN FALLS, the final Expanse novel. "The Sins of Our Fathers" tells the story of Filip Nagata--or as readers know him, Filip Inaros--as he tries to live a new life on Jannah, one of the planets isolated after the ring gates shut down during the events of LEVIATHAN FALLS. Filip tries to distance himself from his past with the name change, of course, but that past keeps coming back to haunt him. The sins of the father is a biblical reference to the sins of one generation passing to another, and Filip really can't avoid those sins in the end. A fascinating tale of one of the more than one thousand inhabitable worlds on the other side of the ring gate that were cut off from each other and have to survive on their own.

Abraham and Franck have written author's notes for each story. Each of the notes relates some fascinating pieces of information about the stories. My favorite anecdote comes from the author's note for "The Churn". The character of Timmy--who we eventually learn will become the character Amos--has the potential to be severely damaged psychologically by some of the events in the story. Wes Chatham, who played Amos on the television series, took the story to a psychotherapist to discuss what kinds of things could happen to a kid being brought up in this environment.

Finally, what more can be said about narrator Jefferson Mays? His narration has been awesome from beginning to end, and his reading of these stories is nothing short of magnificent. Abraham and Franck alternate their readings of the author's notes, but it is Mays who leaves his mark on The Expanse. To me, he was as important to The Expanse as any of the characters were, maybe even more so, since he made them all come alive.

I'm going to miss The Expanse, whether it be the novels or the short stories, and I'm sure going to miss Jefferson Mays. "Memory's Legion" makes a fitting conclusion to the series. It is terrific, and no fan of The Expanse should miss it. [-jak]

Vampires (letter of comment by John Sloan):

In response to [the comments on vampires](#) in the 11/25/22 issue of the MT VOID, John Sloan writes:

Peter Watts' novel BLINDSIGHT [Tor, 2006] has, as a background detail, vampires as an apex predator species that went extinct before human recorded history. They were resurrected through genetic engineering (in a kind of nod to JURASSIC PARK) because of their ability to survive suspended animation for long space flights. Watts' vampires were kept from wiping out early humans completely due to a cognitive "glitch" that causes them to have grand-mal seizures when they see right angles (which tend to not occur in nature). Watts' space traveling vampires depend on anti-Euclidian drugs to suppress the glitch. (One imagines that as humans began to build habitats, predation became harder and harder for vampires until they eventually starved to death.) [-jls]

This Week's Reading (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

Our book-and-film discussion group chose THE QUATERMASS CONCLUSION (a.k.a. QUATERMASS) for December, just barely making it into Nigel Kneale's centenary year.

The television play QUATERMASS AND THE PIT, the third Quatermass story, was shown on the BBC in 1958 and to nearly nobody's surprise it was greatly admired for the sophisticated ideas it contained and presented. In the late 70's Nigel Kneale was convinced to do one final Quatermass TV play and did THE QUATERMASS CONCLUSION (about 3-1/2 hours long), this time for ITV. This time it was not separately adapted into a film, but was edited into a feature-length story of the same name (90 minutes long when shown in Britain, but variously described as 100 or 105 minutes in the United States).

Sadly, THE QUATERMASS CONCLUSION borrowed from the previous story and even managed to be a bit distasteful. London has collapsed into a battlefield for gang wars. Quatermass has come looking for his missing granddaughter, who may have joined the cult of the Planet People, who seem to be similar to the Heaven's Gate cult (founded in 1974, and possibly an inspiration for Kneale's cult).

Kneale wrote both scripts (the four-part serial and the feature-length film), as well as the novelization. There are a few plot differences between the two visual versions besides the obvious cuts, but Kneale said the novelization was his preferred version. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

The word 'aerobics' came about when the gym instructors
got together and said: If we're going to charge \$10
an hour, we can't call it jumping up and down.
--Rita Rudner

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