

# MT VOID 05/05/23 -- Vol. 41, No. 45, Whole Number 2274

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### Mini Reviews, Part 21 (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper):

This is the twenty-first batch of mini-reviews, including an older film:

THE BURNING SEA (2022): Every year seems to bring a Scandinavian film about some sort of disaster or danger at sea or from the sea or underground (e.g., THE WAVE, THE QUAKE, A HIJACKING) and every one of them has been fairly realistic and fairly enjoyable, so I was looking forward to seeing THE BURNING SEA this year. But while the script has some new ideas I have not seen in disaster films before it does have a familiar plot. Part of an oil platform sinks and is flooded, and a robot is sent in to search for survivors. Then the rest of the platform explodes. It takes a quite a while before we find out what the actual disaster is that is causing this, and it turns out to be bigger than we thought. [-mrl/ecl]

Released theatrically 22 February 2022. Rating: high +2 (-4 to +4) or 8/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt12753120/reference>

What others are saying: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the\\_burning\\_sea](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_burning_sea)

SPIN ME ROUND (2022): In SPIN ME ROUND, several managers (a half dozen women and two men) of "Tuscan Grove" restaurants win a trip to Italy to the headquarters of their chain. (If "Tuscan Grove" reminds you of "Olive Garden", it is no coincidence.) Somehow it seems too good to be true. (NO SPOILER: And it is. An early example is when they are driven past the villa where they had been told they would be staying, to a motel only slightly above a Motel 6 level.) The managers start getting on each other's nerves, and the assistants of the chain's owner are equally annoying. This has all the elements of a romantic comedy: a visit to a market, a yacht trip, a fancy party, ... But SPIN ME ROUND put these elements together in an offbeat--and sinister--way. The managers are forbidden to leave the grounds, the totally banal cooking lessons end and the training sessions consist of watching movies such as LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL, and women keep disappearing.

SPIN ME ROUND would go well visually with Stanley Tucci's "Italy" series, especially the episode in Liguria, but there is really very little about authentic Italian food. Hey, it's about Olive Garden, right? [-ecl]

Released theatrically and on various streaming services 19 August 2022. Rating: +1 (-4 to +4) or 6/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14596320/reference>

What others are saying: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/spin\\_me\\_round](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/spin_me_round)

THE ROMAN SPRING OF MRS. STONE (1961): I'm a sucker for Tennessee Williams films, radio drama, etc. Williams's work seems to fall into two classes: the total over-the-top plays (CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF, A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER, THE GLASS MENAGERIE), and the more restrained works (SWEET BIRD OF YOUTH, THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA, and this one).

In this Vivien Leigh plays a character with some resemblance to Blanche from A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, and some to herself. All are women who are getting older, and must change to accept this. Leigh herself does by taking this part, acknowledging that she is no longer the beautiful Scarlett O'Hara, attracting all the men to her. Mrs. Stone only accepts her age and her inability to play a twenty-something from Shakespeare when she overhears audience members comment on it. And Blanche never accepts it.

This was Leigh's penultimate movie, but it is also Warren Beatty's second movie (he had done some television work before), Lotte Lenya's second movie (her first was thirty years earlier; her next was FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE), and Ernest Thesiger's last movie. So it is basically book-ending several careers. [-ecl]

Released theatrically 28 December 1961. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4) or 7/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0055382/reference>

What others are saying: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/tennessee\\_williams\\_the\\_roman\\_spring\\_of\\_mrs\\_stone](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/tennessee_williams_the_roman_spring_of_mrs_stone)

**The Vodka Is Good, But the Meat Is Rotten** (comment by Colin Harris):

Colin Harris reports on another mailing list:

I see that this text comes up on the Hugo nominating page as part of the Intro.

"You already have the nomination qualifications for the 2023 Chengdu World Science Fiction Convention Hugo Awards. Please nominate the 17 categories of Hugo Awards as well as the 'North Star Award' and 'Amazing Award', a total of 19 categories of awards, and click 'Submit' at the bottom of the page after nomination 'Nominate' button...."

North Star should obviously be Lodestar and Amazing Award should be Astounding Award ... which presumably results from the Chinese website contractor retranslating the Chinese version back into English rather than using the English original. Particularly unfortunate perhaps given that these two names were both the subject of a lot of debate in recent years! [-ch]

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

Announcing Version 2.0 of my "Annotations to MOBY-DICK"!

From my Introduction to the new edition:

After I produced the first version of these annotations in 2018, I was listening to the audiobook of MOBY-DICK and heard a paragraph that I was 1) sure I would have annotated it, and 2) sure I had not annotated it. It turns out that the edition I had been using (Penguin Popular Classics, ISBN 978-0-140-62062-7), supplemented with the Project Gutenberg version (mostly for cutting and pasted long quotations), did not include all of "Melville's notes". These \*are\* included in the Norton Critical Edition (ISBN 0-393-09670-X)--or at least more are--but it is not clear whether these were included in some published edition of MOBY-DICK, or whether they were extracted from other separate articles, letters, etc. The polished language of the notes indicates (to me, anyway) that they were not mere marginalia on some earlier draft. The Penguin edition does not label them as Melville's notes, because unlike the Norton Critical Edition, it does not any of its own notes.

I have added all the notes (labeled as such), even if I have no additional annotation, since it is possible that they should be considered part of the text (as indeed they were in the audio version).

In retrospect, it would probably have been better using the Norton Critical Edition rather than the Penguin Popular Classics edition, but I did not have the Norton Critical Edition at the time. The first few essays in the Norton Critical Edition discuss the variations in the text between the first American and the first English editions. However, I don't think these variations would have affected my comments in any but very minor ways. (Although the absence of the Epilogue in the first English edition explains why several contemporary reviewers seemed not to have read it, and I have now so noted this.) A totally different reason is that the Norton Critical Edition is bound better; my copy of the Penguin Popular Classics now has the last two dozen pages or so detached.

While I was discovering all this about the Norton Critical Edition, I also found this in the Foreword to that edition:

"We have annotated the text sparingly, most often when a passage presents a problem of identification or recognition which a reader cannot solve without the aid of a desk dictionary, or when a reader might not become aware that there is a problem, and so might miss the point of a passage. ... The allusions in the book come thick and fast, but they normally reveal their relevant denotative and connotative meanings by their contexts. For example, what is important about Cato in the first paragraph of Chapter 1 is not his birth date and death date, but the philosophical flourish with which he commits suicide, and the contrast of Ishmael's less desperate substitute. Footnotes to such limited allusions are irrelevant, and sometimes defeat Melville's (or Ishmael's) purposes. Footnotes which identify all of the allusions in "The Whiteness of the Whale" do more than destroy the sense of Ishmael as the storyteller--they frustrate his appeal to the reader to follow him \*imaginatively\*: "But in a matter like this, subtlety appeals to subtlety, and without imagination no man can follow another into these halls."

Well, Norton has its philosophy, and I have mine (possibly enhanced by some level of OCD). If you agree with Norton, you can chuck these annotations out the window (or whatever the electronic equivalent is). Otherwise--enjoy!

The new edition is available at [http://leepers.us/evelyn/Moby-Dick\\_Annotations.htm](http://leepers.us/evelyn/Moby-Dick_Annotations.htm). (Don't try to print it out--it's 155 pages long in PDF format.) [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

Some editors are failed writers, but so are most writers.  
--T. S. Eliot

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