

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 10/01/86 -- Vol. 5, No. 12

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.

LZ meetings are in LZ 3A-206; MT meetings are in MT 4A-235.

\_D\_A\_T\_E                    \_T\_O\_P\_I\_C

- 10/08 LZ: BLOOD MUSIC by Greg Bear (Genetics)
- 10/15 MT: (Re)organizational Meeting for MT discussion (Rm 4A-235)
- 10/29 LZ: MALLWORLD by Somtow Sucharitkul (Commerce)
- 11/19 LZ: THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS by Ursula K. LeGuin (Sexual Identity)
- 12/10 LZ: NEUROMANCER by William Gibson (Consciousness)

HO Chair is John Jetzt, HO 4F-528A (834-1563). LZ Chair is Rob Mitchell, LZ 1B-306 (576-6106). MT Chair is Mark Leeper, MT 3E-433 (957-5619). HO Librarian is Tim Schroeder, HO 2G-427A (949-5866). LZ Librarian is Lance Larsen, LZ 3C-219 (576-2668). MT Librarian is Bruce Szablak, MT 4C-418 (957-5868). Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, MT 1F-329 (957-2070). All material copyright by author unless otherwise noted.

1. BLOOD MUSIC, by Greg Bear, should have won this year's Hugo for Best Novel. A genetic engineer takes a little too much initiative, and Life as we know it is imperiled. Is this therefore a disaster novel? No, although I've not yet decided if it's a happy ending. Is it a two-dimensional book, with cliché characters and sloopy science? Not at all; I found the characters quite "authentic" and the science plausible to my college-freshman knowledge of biology. In short, BLOOD MUSIC did well every thing that Frank Herbert's THE WHITE PLAGUE did wrong.

On Wednesday, October 8th, the Lincroft chapter will be discussing BLOOD MUSIC and "Genetics in SF" in general. People from Holmdel and Middletown flock to our meetings, so even if you haven't read the book you'd be in good company, and welcome. [-jrrt]

- 2. The Club has received a copy of the "TSR Mail Order Hobby Shop Catalog." It is in the Lincroft branch if you want to borrow it.
- 3. The Club has also received some donations to its Middletown branch which will be listed as soon as they are catalogued.

Mark Leeper  
MT 3E-433 957-5619  
...mtgzz!leeper

## FLESH AND BLOOD

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Cable offers a powerful film for those strong enough to watch it. This picture of life in 1501 is truly a harrowing experience. Anyone who complains about how bad society is today should be forced to see what it was like in other ages.

The cable listing said that it was a medieval adventure starring Rutger Hauer. I had visions of another L\_a\_d\_y\_h\_a\_w\_k\_e. Not exactly. Hey, you want to see a really memorable historical film? It's a quality film with high production values and I can guarantee that you won't forget it really soon. I know I've tried to forget F\_l\_e\_s\_h\_a\_n\_d\_B\_l\_o\_o\_d and I keep seeing images from the film. This polyglot co-production grabs you in the first half-hour with interesting characters and authentic historical detail. The problem is the aura of authenticity. They could have called this film 8\_5\_S\_u\_r\_p\_r\_i\_s\_i\_n\_g\_l\_y\_G\_o\_o\_d\_R\_e\_a\_s\_o\_n\_s\_f\_o\_r\_N\_o\_t\_L\_i\_v\_i\_n\_g\_i\_n\_t\_h\_e\_M\_i\_d\_d\_l\_e\_A\_g\_e\_s. The film feels believable, but at the same time horrifying and disturbing in ways T\_e\_x\_a\_s\_C\_h\_a\_i\_n\_s\_a\_w\_M\_a\_s\_s\_a\_c\_r\_e\_o\_r\_D\_a\_w\_n\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_D\_e\_a\_d cannot even approach.

The plot concerns a band of mercenary soldiers betrayed by their commander and by the man who had hired them. This leads to vicious attacks and counter-attacks until it becomes clear that these are all people that the world would be better off without. It is 1501 and the world is full of plague and panic and religious zealots. The Middle Ages have been portrayed in film with varying degrees of repulsiveness from the almost benign view of B\_r\_o\_t\_h\_e\_r\_S\_u\_n,S\_i\_s\_t\_e\_r\_M\_o\_o\_n to Ken Russell's bitter and violent T\_h\_e\_D\_e\_v\_i\_l\_s, but no other film I can remember seeing has so disturbingly portrayed the crudeness and painfulness of that

period. I rarely am affected strongly by a fictional story on the screen, but the thought of much of what goes on in F\_l\_e\_s\_h\_a\_n\_d\_B\_l\_o\_o\_d still nauseates me long after the film is over.

The film--apparently a German, Spanish, and who-can-tell-what-else co-production--is more historical perspective than most people want to know about. This is not an enjoyable film, but it is a good one and it is one worth see if you are strong enough of stomach. Rate it a high +1 on the -4 to +4 scale. Warning: this film has nudity, rape, violence, adult situations, and situations that any adult would avoid like the plague. Oh, and it has the plague.

1986 TV Season Anthologies  
Comments by Evelyn C. Leeper

Well, I've watched the three shows that are still running and have started their seasons: A\_m\_a\_z\_i\_n\_g\_S\_t\_o\_r\_i\_e\_s, T\_a\_l\_e\_s\_f\_r\_o\_m\_t\_h\_e\_D\_a\_r\_k\_s\_i\_d\_e, and T\_w\_i\_l\_i\_g\_h\_t\_Z\_o\_n\_e. A\_l\_f\_r\_e\_d\_H\_i\_t\_c\_h\_c\_o\_c\_k\_P\_r\_e\_s\_e\_n\_t\_s is supposed to return to the USA Network but I haven't been able to locate it yet. H\_i\_t\_c\_h\_h\_i\_k\_e\_r--HBO's entry in the anthology sweepstakes--hasn't started its new season yet.

A\_m\_a\_z\_i\_n\_g\_S\_t\_o\_r\_i\_e\_s started off this season much better than they did last year's, but then given the amazingly b\_a\_d episode they started with last year, that wouldn't be difficult. This year's premiere, "The Wedding Ring," was a touching tale of two down-and-outers in Atlantic City who get involved with a wedding ring stolen from a murderess. Danny DeVito and Rhea Pearlman both do excellent jobs. My only objection is to the "parental warning" at the beginning that "some material may not be suitable for children." This seems to be there only to bring in more viewers hoping for the titillating. They will be disappointed. Rate it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

Tales\_from\_the\_Darkside presented "The Circus," a fairly predictable story about a weird circus. You know the kind--Ray Bradbury, Charles Finney, and Tom Reamy are the best-known of the authors who have taken a swing at this. This teleplay (by George A. Romero) was based on a story by Sydney J. Bounds. Though predictable, it was well-acted, especially by William Hickey, the actor who played the "godfather" in Prizzi's\_Honor. Rate it a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale. (If anyone cares, they've also changed the logo style.)

Twilight\_Zone had two episodes this time: "Once and Future King" and "A Saucer of Loneliness." "Once and Future King," about an Elvis Presley impersonator who goes back in time and meets "The King" was incredibly predictable and, in addition, suffered from the fact that neither the impersonator nor the actor playing Presley looked at all like Elvis Presley. The ending was obvious almost from the beginning. George R. R. Martin did what he could in his teleplay from the story (by an author whose name escapes me), but there wasn't enough new to work with. This gets a -1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

"A Saucer of Loneliness" was based on the Theodore Sturgeon story of the same name and starred Shelley Duvall. It was acceptable, I suppose, but lacked whatever the special touch was that made the story so memorable. Although some short stories have translated well to Twilight\_Zone episodes, others haven't. My feeling is that comedy translates to the small screen where emotion doesn't. Maybe someone could make Sturgeon's emotion transfer well, but David Gerrold, who wrote this teleplay, is not that person. That's not to say Gerrold is a bad scriptwriter, but this sort of script is not his forte'. This gets a 0 on the -4 to +4 scale. (And the credits still go by too fast for anyone not a graduate of the Evelyn Woods school.)

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So there you have it. Rumor has it that Spielberg is asking for more scripts for Amazing\_Stories than he can film, so that he can throw out the bad ones. He may even manage to get the series renewed (he's guaranteed by contract to last the season). Twilight\_Zone, according to reports at ConFederation, will be further eviscerated (or, some might say, emasculated) by the network and may not last the season. Tales\_from\_the\_Darkside will continue to turn out stylish shows on its miniscule budget (when you have no money, "style" is often the best way to go). And I'll keep watching.

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THE QUALLSFORD INHERITANCE by Lloyd Biggle, Jr.  
St. Martin's Press, 1986, \$15.95.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

This addition to the Holmes mythos is written (Biggle claims) by Edward Porter Jones, a Baker Street Irregular who eventually rose to become Sherlock Holmes's apprentice. Watson's failure to mention him he attributes to jealousy, though such jealousy, he quickly adds, was never overtly shown.

The mystery starts when one of the later Irregulars come to Holmes to tell him about an old woman in the market who kept asking for "pitahaygas." This is pushed aside when Emmeline Quallsford comes to ask Holmes's aid in investigating the death of her brother. But the two chains join up in a typical Holmesian story.

Biggle writes a good mystery, though I think the denouement a trifle obvious. His portrayal of Holmes is well done and he has a feel for the period. However, I am a strict traditionalist. As such, I feel that the technique of having an apprentice who can see most of what Holmes can (though not all) and who can tell us what Holmes is doing w\_h\_i\_l\_e\_h\_e\_i\_s\_d\_o\_i\_n\_g\_i\_t detracts from the air of mystery that always surrounded Holmes in Doyle's stories. (Doyle's one attempt to tell a story for Holmes's point of view--"The Case of the Blanched Soldier"--was one of the weakest stories for this very reason, as Holmes himself says in the story!)

On the other hand, this is one of the best Sherlockian stories that I have discovered recently and I would recommend it. By the way, Holmes fans, take heart--on the way to the airport after ConFederation I heard Marvin Kaye saying that in honor of the Holmes Centennial next year Doyle's estate was going to be authorizing a series of n\_e\_w Holmes stories. And Renegade Comics' third issue of "The Cases of Sherlock Holmes" is supposed to be a new story--which if I can get my hands on, I will review here.

\_N\_O\_T\_E\_S\_ \_F\_R\_O\_M\_ T\_H\_E\_ N\_E\_T

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Subject: Foundation and Earth  
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!qantel!hplabs!hpcea!hpccc!dlow  
Date: Mon, 22-Sep-86 18:48:23 EST

This book along with Foundation's Edge and Robots of Dawn connect Asimov's Robot and Foundation Universes together. The good news is that this is the final book. Everything is explained, all the loose ends are tied up, including what happened to the Solarians. The bad news is that the ending is a hook for a sequel.

I have one complaint about the book and the trilogy. First, Asimov writes the book as a mystery when it is really a treasure hunt story. The conventions for the two types of stories are different. One result is a lot of extraneous dialogue as Asimov throws out red herrings by the barrel.

Second, Robots of dawn is not the book Asimov would have written originally. Given the direction of the first two robot novels, the third novel should have shown a perfect robot/human society where robots and humans work together to form a better society than the human society of Earth and the robot society of Solaria.

Danny Low Hewlett-Packard

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Subject: notes on The Boy Who Could Fly  
Path: caip!ll-xn!cit-vax!elroy!smeagol!usc-oberon!sdcrcf!ism780c!ism780!steven  
Date: Mon, 15-Sep-86 18:33:00 EST

A fine movie, but one which probably won't make any money.

When 14 year old Milly and her family move into their new house, they find that they have an odd neighbor: Eric, a boy who acts like he's autistic. Eric thinks he's an airplane; always has since his parents died in a plane crash when he was 5. And Eric's oft-sloshed Uncle Hugo claims the boy actually CAN fly.

It's sometimes corny, sometimes sentimental and sugary, but essentially a very warm-hearted movie about needing something to believe in. Sorry if that sounds like a Harlequin Junior romance novel, but for what "The Boy Who Could Fly" is, the movie is handled with restraint and believability. Pretty good, considering director/writer Nick Castle also has on his rap sheet playing the murderer in good buddy John Carpenter's "Halloween."

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A fine performance by newcomer Lucy Deakins adds immeasurably to the credibility of the story.

Three stars out of four.

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Subject: notes on Blue Velvet  
Path: ihnp4!sdcrcf!ism780c!ism780!steven  
Date: Tue, 23-Sep-86 18:30:00 EST

For a Hollywood-type movie, it's a memorably bizaare treatment of somewhat offputting subject matter. For writer-director David Lynch, it's just another ho-hum confrontation between good and evil.

Jeffrey Beaumont (Kyle MacLachlan, who starred in Lynch's earlier effort "Dune") is walking through a grassy field in his "so normal it's weird" hometown of Lumberton, when he comes across a severed human ear. Murder? Foul play? Jeffrey's inquisitions into the crime lead him into a violent, sadomasochistic netherworld that can and maybe does flourish nightly behind your neighbor's closed door. One point the film makes, I think, is that you never know just what's going on underneath surface textures.

You gotta say this about David Lynch, he's one of a kind. Here, Lynch mixes up his moderately straightforward mystery story with a lot of different techniques including overtly symbolic shots, the exotic sound design of Alan Splet and some self-consciously flat dialogue readings to permeate things with an off-kilter air. It may take a while to sort out, but I think a lot of Lynch's work is meant to be subliminally absorbed rather than psycho-analyzed. Dern's speech about the birds, for example, I think is supposed to be taken for its emotional effect on you rather than being provided for your ratiocination.

One of the movie's chief virtues is that for all its mannered design, it still contains images and scenes that have a lot of dramatic intensity. Lynch makes us feel a lot of the psychic pain experienced by Dorothy Vallens (Isabella Rossellini), and I think it's felt from the character's viewpoint, not just with voyeuristic vulgarity. Rossellini

gives a disconcertingly deglamorizing character the full range of her physical and emotional resources and turns in a remarkably brave performance, I think.

Old pros Dennis Hopper and Dean Stockwell make spooky bad guys, of course, but McLachlan and Laura Dern are just as convincing as gosh n' golly innocents sucked into a face to face confrontation with evil.

Three and a half stars out of four.