

half. Most of them share the same set of faults: slavish attention to Kirk, Spock, and McCoy while ignoring the rest of the crew, careless handling of the psychological interplay between those three characters, implausibly universe-shattering

antagonists wrapped in overblown prose, and cutesy references to events seen in original episodes. In short, these books have usually struck me as amateurish; I kept buying them to satisfy a craving for new ST material, hoping that someday someone would write a ST novel I could respect.

John M. Ford wrote that novel. *THE FINAL REFLECTION* is a well-crafted book that sparkles with imagination. For starters, the book is about Klingons, from the Klingon perspective. We see Klingon culture and come to understand the two-dimensional villains from the old episodes do not do justice to the rich, complex, and alien Klingon society. We watch the main character, Krenn, as he deals with an unknown ancestry, high-powered Imperial and Federation politics, the threat of traitors at every step, and his own ambitions in the Klingonese Fleet. These difficulties are not given superficial treatment; throughout the book Ford gives the reader a thoughtful and satisfying look into Krenn's head. By the end of the novel, you understand and respect the Klingon.

The book breaks other rules. Except for a minor prelude and epilogue, all the action occurs 40 years before the voyages of the *Enterprise*. Although a young Spock appears in one brief scene, and an infant McCoy is mentioned, the familiar world of the episodes is absent, just out of reach. The Federation of Planets is not yet stable, no Neutral Zones exist, StarFleet technology lags that of the Klingons -- even the ships are limited to Warp Factor 4. The main human character is a savvy

politician (likable nonetheless!) who has almost nothing in common with Kirk and Company.

The first half of the book sets the stage by teaching the reader to understand the Klingon perspective, while the second half deals with an ongoing diplomatic challenge for the Federation and the Klingons. To say more would detract from your appreciation of the skillful way Ford tells his story. THE FINAL REFLECTION is the only ST novel I've reread, and the pleasure was as great the second time around. To use the Klingon salute, "Kai Ford!"

2. Ever hear of a phooka? Well, technically speaking, it is an Irish goblin that appears in beast-like forms. Our next film festival will be on the day before St. Patrick's Day, so we will

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be showing films featuring phookas. On Thursday, March 16, at 7PM we will show two films (both rated 3-1/2 stars by Leonard Maltin):

Phooka Tales

DARBY O'GILL AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE (1959) dir. by Robert Stevenson
HARVEY (1950) dir. by Henry Koster

I know several people who have told me, unsolicited, that they have fond memories of "that Disney film with the leprechaun," and a couple have said they were even a little scared by the film. DARBY O'GILL AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE certainly was one of Disney's most imaginative special effects efforts. This is a juvenile, but a good one. For once, children are invited, though be warned: there is one shock scene that was pretty scary--at least for a 1950s children film. The film stars Albert Sharp, Janet Munro (of T_h_e D_a_y t_h_e E_a_r_t_h C_a_u_g_h_t F_i_r_e, and Sean Connery (dang! I'm sure I've seen him in something else before).

One of Jimmy Stewart's most popular roles is one in which he plays second fiddle to a character the audience never sees. Harvey is a six-foot-three-and-a-half-inch-tall invisible rabbit. HARVEY is an inspired piece of lunacy, warm and funny, championing the right to

be just a little crazy.

[The previously announced animation festival will be held at a later date--we wanted to run this for St. Patrick's Day.]

3. The follow-up meeting on space colonies in fact and fiction was held at a back table in the Middletown cafeteria (it was the only table left!). In addition to detailed discussions of the two ENDLESS FRONTIERS books by Jerry Pournelle and the WORLDS series by Joe Haldeman (described by Dale Skran as representing "Joe Haldeman's departure from the straitjacket of his former limited set of ideas"), various other works were mentioned: SCHISMATRIX by Bruce Sterling, VACUUM FLOWERS by Michael Swanwick, the "Cities in Flight" series by James Blish, and non-fiction works by Konstantin Tsilokovski and J. D. Bernal (THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL for the latter). Though the discussion often got sidetracked into such topics as science fiction S&M (SOMA by Charles Platt) and ritual mutilation (COURTSHIP RITE by Donald Kingsbury), the declared topic was covered fairly well. Again, the ENDLESS FRONTIERS books and the first WORLDS book is available from the Lincroft branch of the Science Fiction Club library.

4. All right, so I flubbed last week's MT VOID three different ways: it should have been Number 36, not Number 35; items 2 and 3 should *not* have been run together, and I should have mentioned that we will try to have a sign on the table for the MT cafeteria meetings. [-ecl]

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5. Reminder to members of Noreascon 3: Hugo nominations must be postmarked by March 15. If you were to nominate Mark for Best Fan Writer, I doubt that he'd object too strongly. :-) [-ecl]

Mark Leeper
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...mtgzz!leeper

Our species ... probably has not changed during the last 20,000 years... Here we stand in the middle of this new world with our primitive brain, attuned to the simple cave life, with terrific forces at our disposal, which we are clever enough to release, but whose consequences we cannot comprehend.

-- Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

HALBERD, DREAM WARRIOR by Lloyd St. Alcorn

Signet, 1988, ISBN ?, \$?

A book review by Frank R. Leisti

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Halberd is the seventh son of a seventh son in the old Viking age when Genghis Khan was still alive. Halberd, is the shaman of the village, denied any endowment from his father. His story begins with a dream where his older brother, Valdane is seen on Vinland calling out to him. In the dream he sees his brother's wife, Grettir raise a stone knife and stab Valdane through the back. Grettir calls out to him, recognizing that Halberd is present in this dream world. She cries out that she loves only him, yet he sees only hatred in her eyes. As the dream ends, Halberd realizes that his brother is dead and that he must avenge his brother's death. It is winter in the Viking land and Halberd seeks the counsel of his spirit friend who lives alone away from the village. On his cold journey, he recalls two events of significance in his life. The first was his journey to the shaman of the Short Ugly People Who Fornicate With Bears. During his exodus there, he encountered Fallat, the shaman who attempted to use him to enter the dream world. In fear and panic from the dream that he is forced to have, he awakes and chops off the Fallat's head. That threat abated, he used the head as protection from the Little People. From this encounter, he obtains a jewel of power - it signals when a dream that he has is true. On his journey back home, he allows the ravens of Odin to collect information from Fallat's head. The second event is his meeting with his brother-in-spirit, Usuthu, a warrior of the great army of Genghis Khan. Halberd meets him by locking into a timeless deadlock of strength when they first meet. The battle is so deadlocked, it continues during the night when Halberd has another vision. In this vision, he sees two different possibilities. Recovering from the vision he finds that he can speak the language of his newly found brother-in-spirit. The Vikings discover that the Mongols are amassed for an assault into Europe, yet word has just returned to this army that the Great Khan is dead. As the Vikings and the Mongols return to their homeland, Usuthu must be tied to the mast of the ship as he is terrified of the water. Obtaining counsel from Usuthu, Halberd calls for a council meeting in which he asks for assistance in building a boat and a crew to sail to Vinland in the winter to participate in revenge against Grettir, his witch sister in law. After the ship is built and provisions are made, the quest is begun. Over the ocean, they encounter fog, icy winds, attacks from Scottish highlanders as they pass along those lands. Casualties are encountered when both dream monsters and actual monsters of the sea attack. A short stop by Iceland allows the Vikings to bath in the warm waters. Finally they arrive in Vinland, where they encounter the Skraeling who have been warned about their coming. With a victorious battle, the Vikings advance to the stronghold of previous Viking settlement. They await the coming day to explain why no one seems to be at the settlement. Discovering the secret, they

prepare to clean the area of the decaying corpses as Halberd ventures to the beach to find Valdane's body. He sees the body just as in his dream and removes the stone knife from his brother's back. Halberd has an encounter with an emissary from Hel who is working for Grettir. Halberd thwarts the objective of the emissary who is to collect the soul for Hel and to return the stone knife to the witch. Needless to say, he has another encounter with this emissary that forces them to flee Vinland.

This is the first book in many (I don't know how many yet) and I would like to continue the saga of this Dream Warrior.

Overall, I enjoyed the story. It showed a time when men were pitted against the elements as well as themselves and that explanations were necessary for the strange things that occurred within their lives. The author has blended in the historical trappings of the Vikings and linked them to the age of Genghis Khan with their discovery of North America and the islands between here and there. I look forward to reading the next in this series.

THE REVENGE OF AL CAPONE
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
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Capsule review: Made-for-TV movie does a few things right but generally has more misinformation than fact.
Rating: 0.

As some of my readers probably expected, I am going to say a few words about the TV-movie T_h_e_R_e_v_e_n_g_e_o_f_A_l_C_a_p_o_n_e which NBC ran on Sunday, February 26. It has been my habit that whenever a new film is made about historical American crime, particularly organized crime from the '20s and '30s, I write about the film and in particular the historical accuracy. I cannot claim much knowledge on the subject, but as it happens my book collection includes some excellent references on the subject by Carl Sifakis and others by Jay Robert Nash that make checking accuracy both quick and quite enjoyable.

T_h_e_R_e_v_e_n_g_e_o_f_A_l_C_a_p_o_n_e is about the chaos that resulted from

Capone being put in jail, but in a position where it was unclear if he was really out of power or not. Without really spoiling anything, I can say the film takes the story from Capone's arrest to when Capone is moved to the newly refurbished Alcatraz. The film makes very clear why to end the story there. There has probably never been an American prison or perhaps a mass-containment prison anywhere in the world that

could beat the security of Alcatraz. It is unlikely that Harry Houdini could have given sufficient orders to run a candy store from imprisonment in Alcatraz--at least not without official sanction. When the government put Capone into Alcatraz, he was as effectively removed from power as if they had executed him. Not bad, considering that as vile as Capone was, his conviction was for only non-violent crimes.

The story is told in flashback after Capone's release, in a discussion between Capone and a supposed chief nemesis, Mike Roark. Ray Sharkey plays Capone at this point as goggle-eyed and a little incoherent. That is reasonably accurate, though I do not remember it actually being explained in the film. Capone was by that point suffering some of the worst ravages of syphilis and his sanity was not helped much by his solitary confinement. Aside from the fact that Sharkey is much too thin to play the heavy-set Capone (at least for most of Capone's career), his performance is reasonable. And the film gets accuracy points for being one film that does not say that Elliot Ness brought down Capone. Ness is in the story, all right, but he is an ineffective prima donna and a real headline hound. That is very much Sifakis's assessment of Elliot Ness. However, no source I can find has any reference to the too-perfect Mike Roark. He is almost certainly a complete fiction. In actual fact, probably no single lawman brought down Capone. The end of Capone's reign of power was the result of a lot of people working together. No one lawman is the hero that storytellers

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would like to have.

The basic story of the film (which agrees with most historians' belief) is that Chicago mayor Anton Cermak attempted to manipulate his own man into the seat of power that Capone had vacated. Cermak's man was Teddy Newberry. Cermak arranged to have the most likely heir to the throne, one Frank Nitti, arrested and killed while he was supposedly resisting arrest. As the film showed, this "accidental" killing was all arranged but Nitti did not cooperate. After the police had him helpless and pumped three bullets into his neck and back, Nitti had the audacity to recover. As the film showed, this not only put a crimp in Cermak's plans, it also started a rather nasty gang war. One of the first victims was Newberry.

Inexplicably, the film tried to bring the killing of Dutch Schultz

into the plot. It may have helped to extend the film, but it was way off base. Schultz was not killed until about two years later, after the events of the film, and for entirely different reasons. Schultz was a New York (not Chicago) gangster who wanted desperately to murder special prosecutor Thomas Dewey. Lucky Luciano was no friend of Dewey's, but he knew a really bad idea when he heard it and to prevent chaos had Schultz killed (in a restaurant, not a police department office!). But in any case, pulling Schultz into this story makes no sense at all.

Now _ T _ h _ e _ R _ e _ v _ e _ n _ g _ e _ o _ f _ A _ l _ C _ a _ p _ o _ n _ e goes in for pure speculation.

Capone's gang hires Joseph Zangara to kill Anton Cermak. That is unlikely. Most historians believe that Zangara was attempting to kill Franklin Roosevelt at a public gathering, but that he missed and killed Cermak instead. Zangara's own statement after the crime was that his target was FDR. The theory that Zangara was hire to kill Cermak is popular but not very likely. In any event, a great deal of license was taken with this sequence. The actor has the basic build of Joseph Zangara, but has a mustache and beard that Zangara did not. In the film, Cermak dies almost immediately and Zangara is stabbed to death by a Capone-gang assassin. Neither is true. Zangara lived to be tried and executed, all the while claiming his target was FDR. The shot was fatal to Cermak, but not until after three weeks of hospitalization.

Dramatically, the film was about what one expects from a made-for-TV movie. It was directed by one Michael Pressman. The only other film

I recognize by Pressman is _ T _ h _ e _ B _ a _ d _ N _ e _ w _ s _ B _ e _ a _ r _ s _ B _ r _ e _ a _ k _ T _ r _ a _ i _ n _ i _ n _ g. This is probably better. As a TV-movie, _ T _ h _ e _ R _ e _ v _ e _ n _ g _ e _ o _ f _ A _ l _ C _ a _ p _ o _ n _ e was okay, but nothing special. I would rate it a 0 on the -4 to +4 scale.