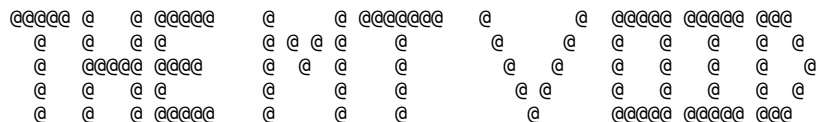


# MT VOID 11/18/22 -- Vol. 41, No. 21, Whole Number 2250



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## Table of Contents

- [Mini Reviews, Part 4](#) (BLOOD RELATIVES, NOPE, and VESPER) (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper)
- [Firemen](#) (letter of comment by Sam Long)
- [NOSFERATU](#) (letters of comment by Gary McGath and Kevin R)
- [This Week's Reading](#) (THE SCIENCE OF MURDER) (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper)
- [Quote of the Week](#)

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### Mini Reviews, Part 4 (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper):

This is the fourth batch of mini-reviews, all films of the fantastic.

**BLOOD RELATIVES:** BLOOD RELATIVES is described as having a "Yiddish vampire", but this is a bit of an inaccuracy. Yiddish is a language, not an ethnicity. What it has is a Jewish vampire, with roots in Europe, who sprinkles his speech with Yiddish words (and hip dialogue). This is underlined by a klezmer soundtrack. The film is a comedy-drama--there is plenty of humor, but some underlying dark elements. (One bit of humorous reference is naming a minor character Quincy Morris.) The vampire is not the evil monster of traditional vampire films, on a constant killing spree, but someone trying to stay under the radar, trying to sustain himself with as little killing as possible. When his daughter shows up (another change from the standard vampire story--most vampires do not have biological children), she has very different ideas, or at least is still trying to figure out her place in the world. BLOOD RELATIVES is definitely a new take on the vampire mythos.

Released 22 November 2022. Rating: low +2 (-4 to +4) or 7/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt21818188/reference>>

What others are saying: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/blood\\_relatives\\_2022](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/blood_relatives_2022)

**NOPE:** NOPE is the third (and latest) film from director Jordan Peele, who burst upon the horror film scene in 2017 with GET OUT, and followed it up with US (2019). For all three Peele also wrote and produced as well. The editing is designed to give much of the film the texture of found footage.

Many filmmakers have a fantastic first film (just as many authors have a fantastic first novels), but then they have a "sophomore slump"--their second film is a real let-down. Poole avoided this; US may not be quite as good as GET OUT, but it is certainly a good film. However, his third film showed this decline. Poole's career reminded us of that of M. Night Shyamalan: THE SIXTH SENSE was

great, UNBREAKABLE was good, but SIGNS (an alien invasion film like NOPE) was a disappointment. Ultimately NOPE is also a disappointment, inscrutable and incoherent.

Released theatrically 22 July 2022. Rating: low +1 (-4 to +4) or 5/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10954984/reference>

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

VESPER: VESPER is a film set in a post-ecological disaster world, where the disaster was caused by genetic engineering--humans botched controlling nature, now nature is getting its revenge. (Although some of the revenge seems to be from a ruling group that controls the seeds to grow food--seeds which are good for only one season. This is not science fiction.)

This is yet another film with weird organisms (other reviewers have also noted a similarity to ANNIHILATION). But in this film the exteriors lack any bright colors, making the world look dingy and gray. There are also mutant humans that have been created by biology and botany and electronics. The pacing is somewhat slow, more so in the second half.

Released theatrically 30 September 2022. Rating: +1 (-4 to +4), or 6/10.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt20225374/reference>

What others are saying: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/vesper\\_2022](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/vesper_2022)

[-mrl/ecl]

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**Firemen** (letter of comment by Sam Long):

In response to [Sam Long's comments on firemen](#) in the 11/11/22 issue of the MT VOID, Fred Lerner writes:

In "American Railroads: Decline and Renaissance in the Twentieth Century" by Robert E. Gallamore and John R. Meyer (Harvard University Press, 2014) we are told that "When a railroad was able to replace substantially its steam engine roster with diesel-electric locomotives, it could retire roundhouses, specialized steam maintenance mechanics and facilities, coal chutes, water tanks, and firefighters in the engine". Evidently the editorial staff at Harvard University Press knows more about political correctness than about steam railroading. [-fl]

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**NOSFERATU** (letters of comment by Gary McGath and Kevin R):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on NOSFERATU](#) in the 11/11/22 issue of the MT VOID, Gary McGath writes:

On October 28, I provided live accompaniment for NOSFERATU at the Plaistow, NH, public library. The version the library used replaced the characters' names with the names of Stoker's characters. Count Orlok became Count Dracula, Hutter became Jonathon (sic) Harker, etc. I found this mildly annoying, but it wouldn't really matter if you hadn't seen the original version of the movie.

The "werewolf" is pretty unimpressive. It doesn't look especially dangerous, and the bit with it could have been left out at no loss.

There are some scenes where Orlok is out in the daytime, most notably the one where he packs his cart with coffins before leaving the castle. This is inconsistent with the premise that he dies if he's out at sunrise. Unless maybe it's only the sunrise, not daylight as such, that kills him. He isn't in the direct rays of the sun when he vaporizes. [-gmg]

Evelyn responds:

Actually, it's not clear that he *is* out in the daytime in that scene. NOSFERATU was filmed day-for-night, and then all the night scenes were tinted blue. However, the various versions floating around (including the out that replaced all the names) did not have any tinting. I would need to watch the tinted version to know whether that was actually daytime. (We ended up with the same version you saw, though a series of problems with the library getting a better version.) [-ecl]

Kevin R writes:

In 1992's BATMAN RETURNS, the character played by Christopher Walken is named "Max Shreck," with only the one "c" (<https://batman.fandom.com/wiki/>).

A wink from Tim Burton? [-kr]

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

THE SCIENCE OF MURDER: THE FORENSICS OF AGATHA CHRISTIE by Carla Valentine (Sourcebooks, ISBN 978-1-728-25184-4) covers a lot of ground, but overlooks one of the key tropes in Christie's novels: the intentional identification (or rather mis-identification) of corpses (and living persons). Out of thirty-three Hercule Poirot novels and twelve Miss Marple novels, for example, there are nine intentional misidentifications of corpses, two dozen people who are not who they claim to be (including three

in one book and even more in another), as well as at least twelve people in disguise. One novel has not only a misidentification of a corpse, but *three* cases of false identity. (And that's not even the most extreme or famous example!)

I was disappointed that the book is basically a book about forensics, with some examples from Christie's work, rather than a discussion of Christie's work from a forensic perspective. This is made even more disappointing in that Valentine has decided that her readers might not be familiar with Christie's work, so she won't give any spoilers. For those of us who know the stories, this is annoying. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

A man's friendships are, like his will, invalidated by marriage--but they are also no less invalidated by the marriage of his friends.

--Samuel Butler

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