

MT VOID 01/13/23 -- Vol. 41, No. 29, Whole Number 2258

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The latest issue is at <http://www.leepers.us/mtvoid/latest.htm>.
An index with links to the issues of the MT VOID since 1986 is at
http://leepers.us/mtvoid/back_issues.htm.

Update to Science Fiction Discussion Groups (NJ):

In the 01/27/23 issue, we wrote, "Meetings are still fluctuating between in-person and Zoom. The best way to get the latest information is to be on the mailing lists for them."

That is not quite true. Currently, all Middletown meetings have returned to be in-person at the Middletown Public Library. The next several Old Bridge meetings will still be Zoomed, partly to accommodate distant members, and partly because for the winter meetings, driving is always iffy.

The second sentence remains true, however. [-ecl]

The Latest Travel Information:

"How to travel to space, Earth's hottest new destination" from the Washington Post:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2023/01/09/space-tourism-travel/>

Mini Reviews, Part 10 (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper):

This is the tenth batch of mini-reviews, all comedies:

BULLET TRAIN: The people who see BULLET TRAIN are going to have problems following it if they haven't taken the Evelyn

Wood speed-watching-and-listening course. The dialogue is delivered really fast, as are the action sequences, and with five assassins trying to various people (mostly each other), there is a lot of action. But even if the film is a little hard to follow, what you can follow makes this film a lot of fun. Brad Pitt is an actor who does comedy as well as he does drama, and I find his performance here reminds me of his brilliant job in BURN AFTER READING.

Released theatrically 05 August 2022; now streaming on Netflix. Rating: low +3 (-4 to +4) or 8/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt12593682/reference>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/bullet_train_2022

MARRY ME: MARRY ME is a musical romantic comedy with mathematics. She's a pop star, he's a math teacher and the coach of the math team. There are short sequences with the math club, but much longer dance numbers; I would have preferred it the other way around. After all, the love song will last something like five years and then won't be remembered. At the same time the math in the math club will last forever and ever. When she finds out her celebrity fiance cheated on her, she impulsively marries the math teacher instead. One might think that if this happened in real life there would be millions of people protesting how immoral this is, but this seems to be how a lot of reality shows work.

The Barbra Streisand film THE MIRROR HAS TWO SIDES represents mathematicians as if they were some sort of weird bug. It is nice to see mathematicians and entertainment people supporting each other and to heck with Streisand.

(It's an odd choice to put your main characters on the screen when you also have dogs because dogs are real attention getters and will take attention away from your main characters while they are on the screen. But at least they use a math competition as the climax rather than a lambada contest.)

Released theatrically and on Amazon Prime streaming 11 February 2022. Rating: low +2 (-4 to +4) or 7/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10223460/reference>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/marry_me_2022

BROS: BROS is a standard rom-com plot set in the LBGTQ+ community. It is notable in that all of the principal actors are LBGTQ+, and there are many comments in the script about how Hollywood always has straight actors playing the gay main characters in movies such as BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN and BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY. (And also how Hollywood insists on an unhappy ending for them.)

One can argue that you are seeing exaggerations and stereotypes here, but I don't think anyone would claim that (e.g.) BRINGING UP BABY (1938) is a realistic, unexaggerated portrayal of straight people. The interactions between the various subgroups may be exaggerated, but there is undoubtedly some truth to them, since these are found in all groups that appear homogenous to someone outside the group (hence the saying, "Two Jews, three opinions," or Emo Philips' Baptist joke).

This definitely has a high level of raunch, but so do a lot of straight rom-coms (e.g., THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY), so if you're okay with the latter, this shouldn't be a problem.

Released on Peacock streaming 30 September 2022. Rating: +1 (-4 to +4) or 6/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9731598/reference>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/bros_2022

[-mrl/ecl]

THE ILIAD (letter of comment by Peter Rubinstein):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on THE ILIAD](#) in the 01/06/23 issue of the MT VOID, Peter Rubinstein writes:

[Evelyn writes,] And these are the good guys?

Well, no, they aren't. It's been a while since I read THE ILIAD, but I never read it to say that they were the good guys. Perhaps that's just my bias showing. [-pr]

This Week's Reading (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper): In all the descriptions and recommendations that I heard of THE MOUNTAIN IN THE SEA by Ray Nayler (Picador, ISBN 978-1-250-87227-2), I don't recall any of them using the term "octopus intelligence" or I would have read this a while ago. The idea is that climate change and/or pollution have caused a speed-up in evolution of octopuses and they are now fighting back against humanity. We are not talking about the giant octopus of IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA, but ordinary size octopuses. Whether the progression of inter-species communication is accurate or not is a bit questionable, but it is certainly a well-thought-out effort.

In THE PURCHASE OF THE NORTH POLE by Jules Verne (Project Gutenberg), someone unilaterally decides to auction off the North Pole area to a single country and distribute the proceeds to all the other countries with an interest in the area. I'm not sure

whether this is even more unlikely than the plan to then fire giant cannons to change the Earth's angle and make the Arctic more temperate (and much of the rest of the Earth uninhabitable or even submerged). In any case, it is definitely proto-cli-fi.

THE HILLS OF HOMICIDE by Louis L'Amour (Bantam, ISBN 978-0-553-24134-1) is not typical of L'Amour's writing--rather than be a Collection of Western stories, it is a collection of hard-boiled detective stories (although at least one is set in the Western landscape). While perhaps not as good as Chandler's or Hammett's writings in that genre, these do give a different look in L'Amour's oeuvre. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

Freedom of the press in Britain means freedom to print
such of the proprietor's prejudices as the advertisers
don't object to.

--Hannen Swaffer

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