

## UPCOMING ISFA EVENTS

### FUTURE MEETINGS:

February: 18th, The Vintage, 6, Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2. Writer's and Artist's Workshop (The renovations taking place in the Vintage should be finished by then, the barman told me last workshop!)

March: 3rd, The Horse & Train, Eden Quay, Dublin 1. General Meeting - Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, Comics and more in our popular Table Quiz! The winners from the last quiz will be setting the questions this time, led by Pdraig O'Mealoid.

March: 24th, The Vintage, 6, Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2. Note change of date! Writer's and artist's workshop.

April: 7th, The Horse & Train, Eden Quay, Dublin 1. Michael Scott, author of many, many books (he has ten appearing this year alone) will talk and answer questions.

April: 21st, The Vintage, 6, Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2. Writer's and artist's workshop.

# ISFA NEWS

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**JOE HALDEMAN INTERVIEWED**



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membership card and badge.

## EDITORIAL

TrinCon 400 will be held in Trinity College next weekend, the 7th - 9th of February. It will feature many authors and publishers, a games room and much more. It is very important that this convention is a success - with the publicity it's getting, especially abroad, the reputation of Irish sf is at stake. Just added to their list of guests are Tom Shippey and Elizabeth Scarborough. I've also just seen their t-shirts which are better than anything produced by any British Eastercon I've been to - a snip at only £5. Dublin University Science Fiction Society are to be congratulated on achieving what they have so far - best of luck for the convention itself. The ISFA AGM was held on January 28th. There was barely a quorum which was disappointing, but many thanks to those who did come along. During it a lot of very positive statements were made, the success of the association in the past year was detailed, and a new committee was elected. I will give more details on the resolutions of the meeting next issue, but for the record here are the committee - posts will be allocated shortly. Richard Greene, David McKane, Theresa O'Connor, Jonathan Redmond, Brendan Ryder, Paul Sheridan. I look forward to working with all of them and hope we can make the Association more entertaining and useful for all sf fans in Ireland, and outside!

BRENDAN RYDER

# *Dandelion Books*

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## **WRITERS AND WRITINGS**

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Michael Scott, author of 'Windlord' and 'The Bard' will be the star attraction at the ISFA April meeting, on the 7th. He informs us that he has about ten books coming out this year, from Sphere and Wolfhound. One for the horror fans is 'Image' with a sequel called 'Reflection' - he describes it as 'erotic horror'.

From the Star recently came the news that the 'old USSR is selling off space hardware to help meet bills. It seems you can pick up a Vostok rocket for only £2,000,000, though the Star considered this extravagant.

Salman Rushdie has just completed his 1000th day in hiding after being sentenced to death by Iranian religious leaders for 'The Satanic Verses'. Since publication of the controversial book he has lost his home, his wife and his

freedom. (Locus)

Angela Carter, a guest at the 1987 Worldcon in Brighton, is seriously ill with lung cancer. Respected in the literary world, she is known in the horror field for the book on which the film 'The Company of Wolves' was based, a Little Red Riding Hood tale with a difference. (Locus)

Orson Scott Card will have a new trilogy out soon. The first book, entitled 'The Memory Of Earth', will appear in March 1992 in the U.S. The remaining books have been passed to his publishers already, and are 'The Call Of Earth' and 'The Ships of Earth'. (Locus)

Irish author Graham Andrews, guest at last year's Octocon, was profiled in an EC publication recently. It featured a photograph of Graham with his new book 'Darkness

Audible' which is about 'a writer going mad in Belfast'.

## **EASON'S COMPETITION**

The ISFA is delighted to announce that from this month we will be running a monthly competition for an Eason's Gift Token. You can expect to see further cooperation between the Association and Eason's, including a major display in the O'Connell Street branch for SIFEX in April. But for this month we have a selection of six books, one of which will go to the first six people to correctly answer the following question:

A major fantasy author recently signed at Eason's of O'Connell Street, then came on to a meeting with the ISFA. Who is he and what are the names of three of his books?

Answers before February 21st to the ISFA address, or by phone at 924712.

## **ISFA COMPETITIONS**

Aisling Gheal Short Story Competition, 1992  
One of the main aims of the ISFA is to promote Irish writers. This is why we were delighted to see the success of last year's competition and hope and expect that this year will prove to be bigger and better. The rules are given below; the prize fund will be in the region of £200 - £300, plus the beautiful Harry Harrison Trophy for a year on the winner's mantelpiece.

**RULES:** 1. All manuscripts must be typed, double spaced on one side of the page, we prefer A4 sized paper, but foolscap is acceptable. 2. Stories must be between 1,000 and 7,000 words in length. 3. All submissions must be accompanied by a title page, giving the story title, name and address of the author, and an approximate word count. 4. Each page must be numbered, and have the title of the story on the top. Do not write the name of the

author on each page. 5. Only original stories which have not been previously published will be accepted. 6. An entrance fee of £1 per story is payable to cover administration costs. 7. Please ensure you keep a copy of the story as no manuscripts can be returned. 8. The judges' decision is final. 9. The closing date of the competition is the 21st July, 1992 - absolutely no entries after this!

## **SFEX**

Art Exhibition & Competition  
Bewley's Cafe on Grafton Street will again be the venue for this popular weekend. It will take place the weekend after Easter, starting with a press & artists reception on Friday night, and continuing from Saturday at 9.00 a.m. The rules are available from the ISFA address, or by phone, or on the poster, or the next Newsletter.

## **FANS**

A table quiz will be held in the Lantern, Harold's Cross, Dublin at 8 p.m. on the 18th February. Admission is £2.50, tables of four. The event is being run by the Irish Astronomical Society.

Just received is the latest issue of RPG Quarterly, a role-playing games magazine, which is a big improvement on the previous issue. It's available from the usual outlets (The Alchemist's Head, Virgin, Mark's Games) as well as by post for £4.50 for four issues. Enquiries to The Registrar, 28 Abbey View, Monkstown, Co. Dublin. They report that a Virgin Games Store will open on Dawson Street, Dublin 2, at the end of March. This has to be the street with everything for the sf fan - three bookshops, including Forbidden Planet, a computer shop, a hi-fi shop and now a games store!

# CONVENTIONS

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## TRINCON 400

The guest list for Trincon is as follows: Iain Banks, Greg Bear, Catherine Brophy, John Brunner, Ramsey Campbell, Storm Constantine, Diane Duane, Stephen Gallagher, David Garnett, Mary Gentle, Harry Harrison, Katherine Kurtz, Anne McCaffrey, Ian McDonald, Peter Morwood, Nicholas Royle, Geoff Ryman, Terry Pratchett, David Pringle, Elizabeth Scarborough, Bob Shaw, Tom Shippey and David Wingrove. There will also be role-playing, films, MUDS, a dealers room and plenty more. Registrations start at 12 noon, Friday, in the G.M.B. Events start at 6.00p.m. with a Charity Dinner, followed by a Transworld Publishers Party. The location is Trinity College and Powers Hotel, and the dates 7th - 9th February 1992. This promises to be a great weekend and it's well worth the attendance fee of £15 adults (Children under 14 half the above rate). More details etc from The Secretary, TrinCon 400, 75 Kincora Avenue, Clontarf, Dublin 3, telephone 7021827.

## ILLUMINATION

The 43rd British Eastercon. Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. 17th - 20th April. Registration: £25, rooms £28 per person per night. GoHs Paul McAuley, Geoff Ryman. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ, England. Two attending memberships for sale, contact Bobby or James at 680316.

## FREUCON

The 1992 Eurocon: 24th - 26th April. Freudenstadt, Germany. Registration £20. Details from Oliver Gruter, Dept. of Physics, RHBN College, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX, England.

## MAGICON

50th World SF Convention: Orlando, Florida, USA. Registration: \$95 until April. Details: MagiCon, Box 621992, Orlando, FL 32862-1992, USA.

## O3: OCTOCON '92

16th - 18th October, The Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin. Registration (until April) Attending £10, Supporting £5, Junior(U16) £5. GoH: Orson Scott Card. 'Green' theme and a Tolkien celebration. Membership etc available from O3, 30 Beverly Downs, Knocklyon Road, Templeogue, Dublin 16. Telephone 934712 anytime. (Note: anyone wishing to help out on the organisation of the con ring the above number anytime - it's a big job!)

# CLUBS

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## RED DWARF FAN CLUB

The Red Dwarf Fan Club is personally supported by Rob Grant and Doug Naylor. Membership (which entitles you to a quarterly news- letter 'Better Than Life', a badge and a membership card. For more information contact 52 Granville Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Telephone: 284 0201.

## HORIZON

The Blake's Seven Appreciation Society. Founded in 1980, Horizon is a friendly club and welcomes new members, who will receive 4 glossy, A4 size, 70+ page newsletters (containing interviews, LOCs, articles, news on the cast etc.) plus free photo & membership card. Also vast range of fanzines & merchandise (incl. photos, scripts, notepads, mugs, badges, photo stamps & special deal on the BBC B7 videos) and regular London and regional meetings and

outings. Please send 2 IRCs for application forms, current rates &/or further information to: Miss Ann Steele, Horizon Club, 66 Sherwood Park Road, Sutton, Surrey SM1 2SG, England.

## STARBASE IRELAND

Star Trek group, based in Dublin. £5 membership entitles you to a quarterly A4 magazine, a membership badge, certificate and card. (Overseas write for details) Memberships from STARBASE IRELAND, P.O. Box 3208, Dublin 14. SI will be holding a 'Federation Day' at the end of March, in the New Ormond Hotel, Dublin, from 11-6. Admission is £1.50 to SI members, £2 to others. Events include games, fancy dress, talks etc.

## SSTS

Star Trek group, primarily based in the south-west, but with meetings throughout the country. Publications include a short newsletter; they also ran the first Star Trek convention in Ireland. Further information from Damon Wise, 4, Lisin, Tullyglass, Co. Clare.

Entries are free in the Clubs section, but we would appreciate being kept up to date regarding the activities of your group. New entries will be accepted on receipt of a sample mailing (if you publish anything) and a chaty letter.

## FIRST CONTACT

### A DISCUSSION COLUMN FOR SF AND RELATED SUBJECTS

Dear Mr. Ryder, I was most delighted to receive your letter, membership application and ISFA Newsletter. Enclosed please find all the

necessary forms and funds, I think, with a bit extra for the air postage on the T-shirt. We have nothing like ISFA here. There is the Portland Science Fiction Society, with meetings semi-monthly (24 meetings each year), but membership hovers around 50 hardy souls, with the core group being almost the same since the early 70's. However, we do host a Convention, ORYCON (This is a play on the State Name, which is pronounced ORYGUN), and in 1991, the 13th Convention, there were about 1300 attending. The 1990 Westercon was also held in Portland. This is the Annual West Coast Convention (now somewhere around 45 years old), and was quite delightful. ORYCON must be well-thought of by artists and artists, as the number attending is quite high for what I would consider a small regional meeting. Since I have never attended anything but ORYCON (and the one Westercon), however, I have no yardstick for measurement. Of course, a disproportionate number of successful and famous authors of Science Fiction and Fantasy live in Orygon, and this may have something to do with it. ORYCON's GOH in 1990 was Howard Waldrop, 1991 were Emma Bull and Will Shetterly, and 1992 will be Esther M. Friesner. Waldrop is an undefinable genius, Bull and Shetterly were charming and insightful, and Friesner will have her turn this year (reputed to be a wonderful person by John Lorenz, our oft-Chairperson of ORYCON... As to the field, here are my observations, in no particular order: The big burst in Science Fiction in this country was, of course, STAR WARS, which brought the field well and truly into the public consciousness. The first ORYCON was held in 1979, and I think that was the moment, here at least, when the field realised that there were a LOT of teenage males attending, that they were well-dressed and well-funded, and that they would buy ANYTHING that interested them. That has held steadily

since that time. Role-playing games I am not really interested in. My son does a bit of that, and there are a lot of them around, judging from the sections in bookstores and the tiny speciality shops, but it seems too time-consuming to me. The Star Trek thing I pay only vague attention to, but some of the costumes can be quite diverting. Fantasy. Boy, that covers a lot of ground, and gaining all the time, particularly among women readers. Women authors, too, for that matter. Some of the finest Fantasy written in this country is done by women. Increasingly, I find myself with my nose in works by women authors. Some of this is a product of what has almost become a sub-culture of readers: Vampires, specifically modern (or at least in historic times) vampires. Combining many of the elements and readership of Romance Novels ('bodice-rippers'), coupled with intrigue and exotic sex, the so called Sexy Vampire novel is riding a strong wave. I hardly need mention Anne Rice, and the continuous best seller in vampire novels in paperback has been Nancy A. Collins' "Sunglasses After Dark", one of my all-time favourite books. You folks got the hard-bound of that one, sadly. We didn't (though I acquired one). And, interestingly, two very well-done Werewolf novels, "Wilderness" (Dennis Danvers) and "St. Peter's Wolf" (Michael Cadnum) were released in 1991, so this may be the next biggie. Gay and Lesbian Science Fiction and Fantasy. Yea, who'da thunk it? There have always been short stories and occasional novels with these underlying themes, but the small speciality presses have started to actively publish for this segment of society. Sandy Bayer has written two charming lesbian mysteries: 'The Crystal Curtain', and 'The Crystal Cage', and Jeffrey McMahan's 'Vampires Anonymous' is quite humorous. This is going to get bigger. Horror. Perhaps on a downturn, excepting vampires and werewolves. I mean,

how many anatomically incorrect ways can you kill people? A bunch, it seems. I read horror, of course. Hell, I am trying to WRITE Science/Fantasy/Horror stories, so perhaps I shouldn't be so hard on the genre, but there's a lot of bad Horror out there. Or maybe that should be 'unenjoyable Horror'. You know what I mean. The 'If you can't scare 'em, gross 'em out' school. Comics. Well, comics have been big since I was very young, and are a growth area, expanding to appeal to the needs of society for escape, sex, violence, good writing, and nifty art work. There is some pretty weird stuff out there, but also some really beautiful things. The people who discovered comics 40 years ago have been rediscovering them, and have the money to indulge themselves. This is currently powering the industry. Look for continuing appearances by your favourite comic personalities on the Big Screen (and some incredible padding in those bras). The same people who love comics and Graphic novels have found something else to slake their thirst: Japanimation. I may think this is bigger than it is, because I am somewhat into it, but there are at least three fledgling companies who are releasing and selling subtitled Japanese stuff at almost toxic rates. One company, AnimEigo, had over 3000 paid pre-orders for the first episode of 'Bubblegum Crisis' in their pockets before release last September, at \$34.95 a copy., and had equal demand for succeeding episodes, plus continuing production of the first episode. The receptionist at AnimEigo (a delightful English lady, and my age), the mother of one of the owners, told me that they can hardly meet the demand. So, what we have, almost straight across the board, are a bunch of people of college-age, who have begged, borrowed, and stolen enough funds to bankroll their operations, and are doing not so bad. So, when you hear of AnimEigo, U.S Renditions, U.S.

Manga Corps, or Streamline Productions, remember. Some of it is barely better than Saturday morning in suburbia stuff, but titles like: 'Akira', 'Appleseed', 'Black-Magic M-66', 'Dirty Pair' (ANYTHING Dirty Pair, posters, comics, lunchboxes, tiny anatomically correct dolls, you name it), 'Dominion', 'Laputa', and 'Nausicaa', are generally well done, and frequently very enjoyable. 'Akira' is a landmark in animation, 'Robot Carnival' is wonderful, and 'Laputa' is a lovinglydone bit of modern-day fantasy. Cinema 21, in Portland, regularly shows Japanimation films to sold-out houses. I dragged some of my friends to 'Laputa' and they thought it was marvellous. My personal favourite, among the films which have grown out of comics, is 'Black-Magic M-66', but this is strictly a matter of taste. One of the staple features of many of these films, oddly enough, is the powerful female protagonist, who rises up from near-defeat time and time again to win out in the end. None of my Japanese friends can explain this, considering the treatment of women in Japan... Like you, I started out with Clarke, Asimov, Heinlein, and the other classic authors, then branched out from there. Most of the well-known authors of the past 40 years are on my shelves. As for books I have enjoyed in the past year or so: Bone Dance - Emma Bull, Cloven Hooves - Megan Lindholme, Take Back Plenty - Colin Greenland (no surprise here, is there?), Hellflower - Eluki bes Shahr (somewhat like the Greenland, but I liked it better [heresy!]). If this is not available in Ireland, let me know and I'll send you some copies. It's that good.), Pyramids, Reaper Man - Terry Pratchett, Chase The Morning - Michael Scott Rohan, King of Morning, Queen of Day - Ian McDonald (a classic book), The Wild Blue and The Gray - William Sanders (somewhat humorous alternate history, his earlier 'Journey to Fusang' is one of my favourites), Shadow - Ann Logston (generic fantasy, but well done),

Summer of Night - Dan Simmons (truly depicts how young boys in this country were when I was a kid), Magic Casement, Faery Lands Forlorn, Perilous Seas, Emperor and Clown - all by Dave Duncan (neat stuff!). This is likely a very ignorant question, but are there current Irish writers in the field besides Ian McDonald? Anne McCaffrey doesn't count, you understand. I'm sure there are Irish writers who I don't know are Irish. It probably wouldn't be a bad idea if I had the name of a reputable large bookstore somewhere in Ireland, that puts out a catalogue, if such exists (another dumb question, I'm certain). So, you asked for it. My apologies if I have droned on a bit long. After nearly forty years of reading the stuff, the ever-evolving nature of the field continues to enchant me.... Sincerely, Dennis Bershaw, Orygon, USA

(Some Irish authors worth looking out for: Michael Scott is probably the most prolific, with some 10 books coming out this year alone! Of course, James White from the north is about the most famous, and he has a new book just out, 'The Silent Stars Go By'. Other writers are up and coming, and you will notice their names on a regular basis in FTL and some of the small press from Britain. One or two may well break into the 'professional' field soon - I think it's about time. Regarding a book shop: The Alchemist's Head, 56, Dame Street, Dublin 2 is Ireland's oldest SF & Fantasy bookshop; although they don't issue catalogues I'm sure Gloria or Val would be happy to help you out.)

Frank McKeever (Belfast) & Graham Andrews (Belgium) are currently vying with each other for the title of largest sf collection in Ireland, (yes, I know Graham is outside Ireland, but he is from Belfast!) Frank tells me that they both have a collection of roughly 3,000 titles - can anyone else compete with that? (Padraig in



Dandelion Books or any of the Alchemist's Head people cannot enter 'the shop' as their personal collections!)

Dear Brendan, Thank you for the Newsletter, received today. I enjoyed it. As asked, I am giving you the list of my five most memorable books.

1. Day Of The Triffids - John Wyndham, 2. The Stars Like Dust - Isaac Asimov, 3. David Copperfield - Charles Dickens, 4. Robinson Crusoe - Daniel Defoe, 5. Alice In Wonderland - Lewis Carroll.

As you can probably guess from this list, I like adventure, strong characterisation, dialogue (vocal and mental) and, above all else, improbability. David Copperfield may seem to be an odd choice, but what impressed me was the superb way in which Dickens used words. He didn't just describe things, he put them into your hands and encouraged you to feel, smell and taste them. I wish I could write like that. Wyndham, Asimov, Defoe and Carroll, all have or had the same ability. So had Brendan Behan. I am glad I joined the ISFA. The only time I met any of you was at the recent Star Trek day. It is good to know there are other minds like mine around. It is a lonely life, being an oddity. Most normal people are sane, practical, closed. They live only one life at a time, in one dimension, with one set of rules. How boring! Good luck with your endeavours in 1992. May ISFA "live long and prosper" and may I turn out to be a productive member. Wide horizons and joyous encounters, June Cooke, Dublin.

Dear Brendan,

Please find below the titles of five books I've really enjoyed reading: 1. To Your Scattered Bodies Go - Philip Jose Farmer, 2. The Many-Coloured Land - Julian May, 3. Dragonsinger - Anne McCaffrey, 4. The Robots Of Dawn - Isaac Asimov, 5. The People Collection - Zenna Henderson Adrienne Power, Dublin

(The request for 'Five Books' seems to have worked well - I don't have enough room to put in the many verbal responses I received, unfortunately. However, for the April issue how about five books you hated? I'll continue with the good ones next month though.)

## REVIEWS

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### HEADS

BY GREG BEAR

LEGEND £3.99, 117 PP

Heads is one of a series of novellas that Legend released last year in deluxe format. It now appears in paperback form at a more reasonable price. And well worth the price it is too; Bear delivers a powerful and complex story in a compressed and economic format. It has been said that the novella is the ideal length for science fiction and on the strength of this book I'd have to agree. The story involves two elements which dovetail into each other as the book progresses. The first one is William Pierce's search for Absolute Zero. The second is his wife Rho Sandoval Pierce's purchase of a consignment of frozen heads (two of her ancestors are among the lot). The story takes place on the moon and the narrator is Rho's friend Mickey, who has been given the job of financial officer for William's project. The social setup on the moon is described convincingly, as is the technology. The one aspect I found difficult to take was the Church of Logology. They have an interest in the heads and as the story progresses we get to find out more about this religious sect. It is unfortunate that Bear models it too closely on the Church of Scientology and its guru L. Ron Hubbard. It is the one aspect where the author's hand shows

and the book verges on parody. However, this aside, the book has a gritty, realistic feel. The character interactions are solid, the 'extended families' social setup is logical, given the economic climate described, the technology is matter-of-fact and the revelations concerning the heads and the consequences of Pierce's quest for Absolute Zero are all the more frightening for that. JOHN KENNY

## **MORTAL MASK**

BY STEPHEN MARLEY

LEGEND, £8.99, 404PP

This book looks very interesting, the cover looks appealing and the blurb on the back of the book gives you the impression that you are in for two to three hours of a riveting read, but don't let yourself be fooled - this book is as boring as bus spotting (I apologise to any bus spotters). The book is set in ancient China, in and around 189 A.D. and its main character is called Chia Black Dragon (among other things) who has a very long list of crimes and a price on her head. Why no one in the entire book tries to collect this reward is beyond me. We don't find out until three quarter way through the book what the plot is, and even then it is very vague, involving re-introducing a race of super-beings to earth (they happen to be on the moon at the time of the book). Chia is the daughter of one of these beings. She is half-human as it is and does not want her ancestors to come to Earth as she is afraid of what they might do, so she is fighting a cult of worshippers who want the return of the beings. The book is very slow moving and very uninteresting - take my advice and go bus-spotting! STEPHEN YOUNG

## **DARK VOICES 3**

THE PAN BOOK OF HORROR

EDITED BY DAVID SUTTON

AND STEPHEN JONES

PAN, £4.50, 317 PP

Another year has gone by, the anthologies have been piling up at the door, but it's nice to see one familiar face, the Pan Book of Horror now in its 32nd year. In this year's collection we are presented with 14 stories all 'Guaranteed to chill the Blood'. Well I don't know about that - the stories are good, although predictable. Among the contributors are such notables as Bob Shaw, Basil Copper, Ramsey Campbell, Brian Lumley and more. Some stories are excellent, some funny and some passable. I suppose it is good though that I can't say that any of the stories are bad, though some are corny. In the first story 'A Bit Of A Downer' by Bob Shaw we meet a man about to commit suicide in order to take revenge on his apparently unfaithful girlfriend/ fiancée. A good quirky little gibbet of a tale, showing the inner workings of a man going over the edge! Of all the stories my favourite has to be 'Amy' by Richard East-er. It's a nice piece filled with tension and will have you squirming in your seat. It involves a sink unit trash compactor, a woman's hand and a deaf-mute child - use your imagination! The rest of the stories are of the usual P. B. H standard, with no greatly disappointing piece, apart from the Charles Wagner story 'Vision in a T-Bird', which was too weird even for me. Other stories that spark the imagination include 'The Picnick-ers', 'He Who Laughs', and 'Nasty Little Habits', all a good bit of nasty fun. RONAN FITZGERALD

## **THE RUBY KNIGHT**

BY DAVID EDDINGS

GRAFTON BOOKS, £4.99, 444 PP

I have to admit freely that I am a fan of David Eddings after reading the Belgariad, Mallorean, and the first book of the Elenium I was really looking forward to reading this book. I am very glad to say that I wasn't disappointed. As everyone who has read 'The Diamond Throne'

will know, Sparhawk, a Pandion knight, is one a quest to recover the Bhelliom, Eosia's most precious and powerful jewel, to heal Ehlana, his queen Azash, an evil god, also wants Bhelliom for his own evil purposes. This book concentrates on the actual search for the jewel and its subsequent recovery, leaving the way open for a gripping finale in the third book. The plot resembles the Belgariad, bringing in prophecies and such like but the characters are different though just as well developed. Sparhawk, Kalten, Sephrenia and the others appear seriously lifelike and sometimes it was an effort to put the book down. The book itself is a veritable joy to read. The dialogue is witty, charming and downright realistic. The plot is clear, though it moves at a relatively slow pace, as if the quest is nothing out of the ordinary. I quite enjoyed the change in pace. It reminds us just how slow travelling was without cars and the like. Eddings kept me enthralled with the mysterious flute, hopefully all her mysteries will be revealed in the third book. Overall, a typical Eddings book. If you're a fan, go out and buy it; if you're not buy it anyway. I could nearly guarantee that you'll be an ardent Eddings follower by the end. STEPHEN YOUNG

### THE ANIMAL WIFE

ELIZABETH MARSHALL THOMAS  
FONTANA, 380 PP, £4.99

This book is a historical fantasy, set about 20,000 years ago, when mammoths and sabretooth tigers still roamed the Earth. Kori, the central character, leaves his mother's lodge when he becomes a man and goes to live with his father. Kori's skill in hunting gains him his father's respect but his inexperience with women disrupts his tribe's lifestyle. Kori manages to get his new stepmother pregnant and also abducts a woman from another tribe. His tribe dislike this, and treats the woman like an animal, hence the title. The book is basically

a diary told by Kori and through his eyes we are given a look at this lost civilisation. The culture and traditions of this tribe are strange to us, but realistic. A lot of thought and work has gone into this book, and it shows. It is wonderfully descriptive, although like a lot of historical books, is fairly slow-moving. I doubt this book would be everybody's cup of tea. If you are looking for a book with a good atmosphere and wonderful descriptions then this is the one for you. But, on the other hand, if you're looking for something lively with a bit of humour, then move on. This book will leave you dead in the water. GER O'BRIEN

### THE LOST YEARS

JM DILLARD

PAN SF, £3.99, 307PP

At first glance, this is required reading for any Trekkie. What happened to the Enterprise crew at the end of the five year mission? This book bridges the gap between the end of the afore-said mission and the start of the first Trek movie (well, actually it doesn't quite bridge the gap: there's a sequel to The Lost Years out already. The start of the first Trek movie is a while away yet, it would seem). So, what happens to the crew? Kirk is promoted to Admiral (the one thing he swore he'd never let Starfleet do to him), Spock gets engaged on Vulcan to a woman named T'Sura and takes up a teaching position at the Vulcan Academy of Science. Bones toddles off to meet the High Priestess that he met in the episode "For The World Is Hollow, And I Have Touched The Sky", Uhura teaches communications at Starfleet Academy and Scotty remains as Chief Engineer on the Enterprise, with the responsibility of overseeing the 2-year refit (which we see completed at the start of the first Trek movie). Practically nothing is said about Sulu or Chekov. That's how the book starts off. However, a crisis evolves (naturally) which



results in all the major characters being thrown together by several rather amazing coincidences, and of course the entire future of the known galaxy hangs in the balance, etc., etc. "Good?" Trek books work because their storylines are interesting and gripping (and humorous) enough to prevent the reader from thinking "Hang on a sec, that's ridiculous!" 'The Lost Years' is not a good Trek book. It is not a terrible Trek book either. Parts of it are good. Not much of it is funny, although there are some comments about the similarity of Vulcan names that brought a chuckle or two. The technical side of the book is a bit questionable. A lot of the book takes place in various shuttlecraft (small 3/4 person craft). This book would have you believe that a shuttle of this size can travel from Vulcan to the other side of Romulan/Federation Neutral Zone in about two days. I doubt this. Kirk's Admiralty job isn't at all bad: he gets to play interstellar diplomat on far-off planets. It's rather like being a captain again. Uhura and Spock's father Sarek get kidnapped by some bovine race from the back of beyonds; Kirk and another admiral, Ciana, are posted to sort it out, and also to help settle the cow race's internal disputes. Bones accidentally ends up being the prisoner of an ancient Vulcan mind-lord who.... ah, but that would be telling. Not a great book, overall. But better than some. For committed Trekkies only. COLM RYAN

## JOE HALDEMAN

INTERVIEWED BY IAN COVELL

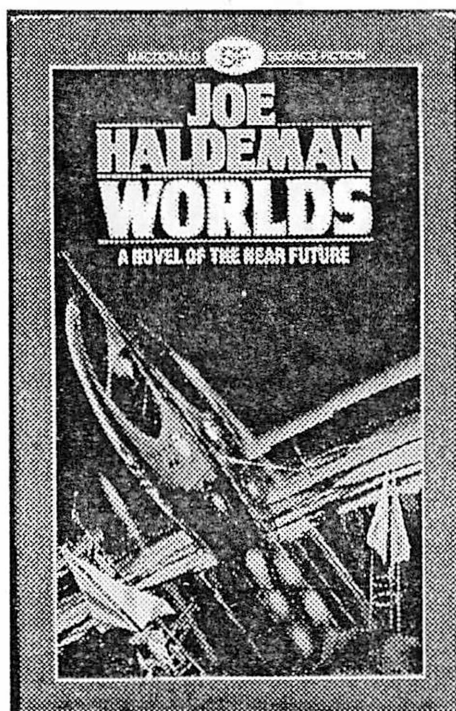
Joe Haldeman visited Britain briefly in April 1991. He was kind enough to agree to a short postal interview.



IC: You have said that Joseph Conrad, Ernest Hemingway, and Carson McCullers have written 'perfect stories' - and gone on to list other 'perfect stories' by CM Kornbluth, Robert A Heinlein (to whose characters 'Worlds Apart' is dedicated), and Daniel Keyes; 'Mindbridge' is dedicated to Dos Passos and John Brunner (one of whose collections you introduced).. are these writers among your favourites? If you modelled your early fiction on writers, are they the same as those mentioned?

JH: It's hard to answer those questions without disappearing behind a fog of cavils &

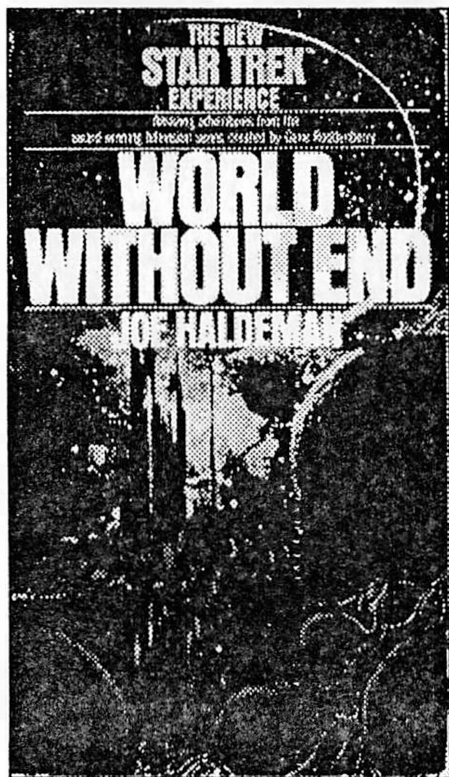
exceptions. Almost everybody must have read avidly in their youth, authors who later have little or no appeal, but who nevertheless must be considered important influences. (Obviously Henry James, in my case!) I tend to think in terms of favourite stories rather than favourite authors; THE STARS MY DESTINATION, THE DISPOSSESSED, 'Flowers for Algernon', THE DOOR INTO SUMMER, CHILDHOOD'S END, THE SHEEP LOOK UP, DHALGREN, CITY, WOLFBANE, 'He Who Shapes', THE HUMANIDS, THE PUPPET MASTERS, 'The Word for World is Forest', 'The Marching Morons', 'Universe' would be among them in sf. Outside, I'd say ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE, FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS, CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, TREASURE ISLAND, THE GREAT GATSBY, 1918, MADAME BOVARY, ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT, THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE. (Writing this in a noisy hotel lobby; if I were at home with my library, the list might be different.) Collections have probably influenced me as much as novels, beginning with Poe's stories, Healy/McComas, and GREEN HILLS OF EARTH. Later I'd add EXPEDITION TO EARTH, 'THE HUNGER' AND OTHER STORIES, the collected works of Hemingway, Turgenev (esp. the HUNTING SKETCHES), Chekhov, and Stevenson; THE DUBLINERS, DANGEROUS VISIONS, THE DOORS OF HIS FACE, THE LAMPS OF HIS MOUTH, FANCIES & GOODNIGHTS, THE CATHEDRAL, EVERYTHING THAT RISES MUST CONVERGE, 'THE OPEN BOAT' AND OTHER STORIES, THE BALLAD OF THE SAD CAFE, 'Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones, TALES OF MANHATTAN, THE ANARCHIST'S CONVENTION.. That's a long list, but it misses THE GIRL WITH GREEN EYES & DELIVERANCE and who knows what else. Where to stop? Not thinking about horror, I



missed King, Straub, and Barker, all of whom I like. I've only occasionally used specific models. MINDBRIDGE derives structure from John Dos Passos. 'Seasons' is an adaptation of Greek tragedy to hard sf. 'More Than The Sum of his Parts' evokes Poe. '26 Days on Earth' is a reaction to Boswell's London Journals.

IC: Do you see any similarity of theme, or approach, or another attribute to the authors you admire?

JH: If there's a common element to most of those works, it would probably be a tendency toward the sensational or even lurid. I'm not much attracted to the mundane, no matter how well executed, unless the style is itself exotic: I like Carver, but not Cheever, Edna O'Brien but not Austen.



IC: Do you differentiate between admiring and liking?

JH: Yes, there are some writers I admire without especially liking - admirable style but not my kind of story. Cheever's novels, later Updike, later Delany, Zelazny's Amber stories (though I like his work generally).

IC: Is there some technique or style or other, which you either will not use, or you don't feel you can use to your own satisfaction?

JH: Collaboration.

IC: In 1980, in a little-known story called 'The Woman Hunter', you explicitly parodied Mickey Spillane, an author I would see as long

superseded by other writers. Was there some special reason for that story?

JH: I typed out 'The Woman Hunter' after seeing Spillane's movie 'The Woman Hunter'. It was just a beery chuckle, but I showed it to my agent and he sold it to a skin magazine for more per word than I'd ever made from sf? Good illustration, too..

IC: Do you think there are themes which only sf can tackle properly?

JH: That's not an assertion you would want to make about any genre. SF is and especially effective approach for themes of alienation, of course, and the relationships between humans and machines, and other obvious stuff.

IC: Many of your novels include strong mystery (and, of course, war) elements, **TOOL OF THE TRADE** is a sparkling spy thriller, and you have written some truly upsetting horror stories, though as yet no novel; do you see yourself moving into other genres in the near-future?

JH: Most of my novels are more or less sf even when they have strong mystery / horror / spy / literary associations. I do have vague plans to write a pure horror novel about 5-6 books in the future.

IC: In an interview you mention having written ten novels, only eight published. Are the other two still unpublished?

JH: I have been paid for two novels that were finished but never published: **A COLD PLACE TO DIE**, which was the third Attar book and a real dog, or dogfish; and the novelisation of **POLTERGEIST**.

IC: **ATTAR THE MERMAN** had a fairly



interesting idea, but didn't last (both published in '75, though I think they were written '71 or '72?) - only a few years later we got THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS.. was the idea then ahead of its time, are you aware of any connection between the two?

JH: The Attar books were the start of a thoroughly commercial series that didn't sell enough to survive. I don't know anything about THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS. I'm sure that if it were similar enough to the Attar books, the publisher's lawyers would have been all over them.

IC: Do you know why the film novelisation was rejected?

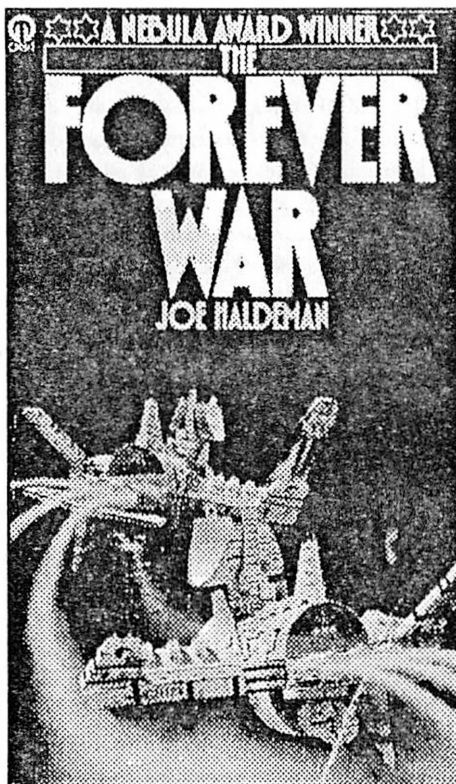
JH: I had a little argument with Spielberg, which ended the same way all arguments with The Great Man do : "You're fired".. I finished the book but it wasn't published. I've seen one copy of the bound galley; it must be my most rare book by four orders of magnitude.

IC: You've written what I'd call a 'pure fantasy' story (one of the original THIEVES WORLD tales) but no more, so far as I know..?

JH: I wrote 'Blood Brothers' as a one-shot, just to see what it would be like to work in shared-world anthology. Don't plan to do any more - it would be silly to waste time in a genre you don't like, and I find most fantasy trivial and boring.

IC: WORLDS was published ten years ago ('81); WORLDS APART 'shortly after' in '83. Was the series planned as a trilogy - and if so, why has it taken so long to write/publish the third?

JH: The first two volumes of the WORLDS trilogy created a deliberate setup for the last one. Both sf novels are about young men who



face physical/intellectual challenges and prevail through application of some traditionally 'masculine' strength; I wanted to write a novel about an older woman who faces an emotional/spiritual challenge, and solves it through something a little more subtle than luck & pluck. One reason it's taken a while to finish is that a man my age writing about an old woman is in large part writing about his mother - and my relationship with my mother changed drastically in mid-trilogy; she had a massive stroke and, rather than have her suffer a nursing home, my wife and I had her move in with us. Since she requires total care, there's an odd role reversal involved, like having a septuagenarian infant to care for. So it's taken me some time to get everything into perspective.

The book - **WORLDS ENOUGH AND TIME** - is about 3/4 done now.

**IC:** **THE HEMINGWAY HOAX** has an odd flavour in that it starts almost lightheartedly with a literary fraud, introduces adultery, increasingly strong s&em elements, and ends in a massacre - a progression visible in several comedic/erotic stories. **THE FOREVER WAR** is an attack on institutionalised warfare, but do you think violence is a necessary part of fiction.. of life?

**JH:** Violence isn't necessary to fiction, but you can make a good argument that conflict is, and violence is the most dramatic physical manifestation of conflict. (LeGuin wrote a convincing essay demonstrating that conflict isn't always necessary to fiction, but I think that most stories written without conflict are tours de force (pun intentional) or workshop demonstrations). Incidentally **THE HEMINGWAY HOAX** isn't about violence and sex, at least in my mind, so much as it is about evil and love. It just ain't subtle..

**IC:** I've got to say I didn't understand the ending of **HOAX**..

**JH:** A lot of people have problems with **THE HEMINGWAY HOAX** leaving too much unsaid. The first version was even more sparse, my editors complained that you had to be a Hemingway scholar to decipher it. (The first person who read it was a Hemingway buff; he thought it was the best thing I'd ever written!) I recognise the problem but I'm sticking to my guns this time. The story has a strong consciously metafictional element, being about H's narrative strategies without actually imitating them. The principal here is one he often repeated: "If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may

omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them." (From **DEATH IN THE AFTERNOON**) I do think it's a sound principle, though I wouldn't state it in so mystical a way. (And of course you can take it to its ultimate Zen absurdity: a book full of blank pages is about everything..)

**IC:** 'You Can Never Go Back' was an earlier version of **THE FOREVER WAR**'s mid-section, its alternate used in the book; do you think the earlier version would have strengthened the book?

**JH:** Avon's new edition of the book has the earlier version restored. Ben Bova thought it was unsuitable for **Analog** - too depressing - and so I wrote a different middle, which wound up in the book. I've always wanted to bring it out with the original (admittedly depressing) middle and John Douglas at Avon was willing to go along with it.

**IC:** I understand you wrote the screenplay of **ROBOT JOX** (with Dennis Paoli?) but I saw it was novelised by Robert Thurston - were you asked to novelise it, were writing circumstances against that?      ◊

**JH:** They did ask me to novelise it, but after rewriting the screenplay six times I was heartily sick of the story, which was not my idea in the first place. (It was Homer's.) The movies available on videotape in the U.K.

**IC:** Other novelisations: you were dissatisfied with the second **STAR TREK** book, **WORLD WITHOUT END**, and tried to pull out of writing it, finally writing a new book with a completely different central idea. Has the first idea been used elsewhere?

JH: I don't know where this question comes from. It sound like a natural kind of 'telephone game' distortion (where you whisper 'the sheep are shellfish' to someone and he repeats 'the cheap are selfish' to the next person). What happened was not at all dramatic: I agreed to a two-book contract with the Star Trek people, but after writing one, decided one was enough. They disagreed, although I offered to pay the advance back, and so I wrote **WORLD WITHOUT END** sort of against my will. I think it's a better book than the first one, though.

IC: Do you follow the myriad **STAR TREK** books well enough to know if the biographies you created for the major characters have been used and embellished since?

JH: No. I read through a yard-high pile of Star Trek stuff before I wrote the first book. That was plenty.

IC: I noted you wrote a script for Disney's Epcot in '79, and were writing scripts for Disney cable TV in '82 - were any of these scripts turned into exhibits or films?

JH: George Lucas and I put together a "tour-of-the-solar system- pavilion" script for EPCOT, but it never found a sponsor. I later wrote a television adaptation of a Frank Robinson story for a Disney sf series that never got off the ground either. Though who knows? Especially with this new cable sf channel.

IC: Several stories have a starfaring civilisation based on African and South American success following the destruction of the 'western/industrialised' countries and their influence. Do you think there is a chance our societies could overreach ourselves and fall prey to the fragile underpinning of their power?

JH: Of course they could. I wasn't doing prophecy in the various Confederation stories, though. Just giving someone besides the Anglos a chance to rape and pillage the universe.

IC: **WAR YEAR** was altered at the end of its first (hb) appearance - in what manner?(It was also narrated by someone who died before the end, that seems an odd approach to a realistic war novel..)

JH: When I handed in the ms. the editor said I couldn't have a first-person-viewpoint character who dies on the last page. It was my first novel, so I rewrote it rather than argue. (I later found out that it was her first novel, too, as an editor). The idea had been to make John Farmer an "everyman" Vietnam soldier: everything that happened to me or soldiers I knew happened to him, including, of course, being killed. When it came out in paperback, I restored the original ending.

IC: Have any other of your books been censored/abridged before publication? Have any countries not published your books?

JH: Travelling in the USSR, I found that most writers and critics were familiar with my work, although none of it was publishable there, because it "treated things that do not exist, like homosexuality." They've since published one novella, "To Fit The Crime," which is a tale of poor (Noble Worker) aliens murderously exploited by (capitalistic) Earthlings.

IC: Your earliest sf novels have a very strong central male-female relationship; this diminished and even disappeared in intervening books, but has reappeared in the last few. A deliberate policy?



JH: It's not a deliberate policy, other than a general uneasiness about repeating myself. MINDBRIDGE is situationally similar to THE FOREVER WAR in that both have a love-bonded man and woman facing the unknown in outer space. I blush to admit that I never noticed that until a small array of critics pointed it out. (My answer to the charge being a feeble "So what?") Most of my serious books do seem to have more or less coequal male and female protagonists, or at least protagonists who have an opposite-sex partner at their sides. This is probably autobiographical; my wife of 25 years is an indispensable partner in this unpredictable writing business (and we are) for various reasons closer than most married people. (the canard that all happy marriages are unlike, and only unhappy ones are interesting, seems to me naive and backwards. Pairings seem always to fail for the same handful of reasons. Couples who stay together.. at least in the loose no-fault American culture, do so for complex and even mysterious reasons.)

IC: You write plays, which require good dialogue; you write poetry, which needs rhythm, vocabulary, pith; you narrate with charm, speed, humour and brevity; you've written sf, mystery, thrillers, horror, verse, and character studies - so, what's written, what's to come, and what's planned for the future?

JH: What's in the works? I'm currently finishing up WORLDS ENOUGH AND TIME. After that comes the novel 1968 and a short story collection, as yet untitled. That's all I've contracted for. I'm throwing together notes for a few other books - THE COMING, HARM'S WAY, and the above mentioned horror novel. I may be doing a screenplay for BUYING TIME this year or next. Have stories coming out in Playboy, F&SF, and a couple of anthologies. A

book of poetry making the rounds, and another one (light verse) almost finished. Scratching my head over a truly weird collage novel and occasionally tossing a recipe into RICH COOK, POOR COOK, a cook-book I've been accreting for the past fifteen years.

IC: Thank you Mr. Haldeman.

## COMIC REVIEWS

### ANIMAL MAN

(D.C. Comics - £1.60)

### STAR WARS: DARK EMPIRE

(Dark Horse - £2.75)

### BATMAN VERSUS PREDATOR

(D.C. Comics - £1.85/ £4.50)

First, what used to be one of the best comics around and now - isn't. ANIMAL MAN used to be written by the excellent Grant Morrison, then the almost as excellent Pete Milligan took over: unfortunately only for six issues. A year ago Tom Veitch started the downfall of this once great comic. He is still on some ridiculous storyline which has become so slow-moving and boring, sleep is usually induced before the end of an issue. Basically Tom Veitch has ruined one of my favourite comics.

But will Veitch ruin one of my favourite films? Masters of the licence, Dark Horse, bought the rights to publish comics based on the 'Star Wars' trilogy. Will they be as good as their 'Aliens' stories? Published bimonthly, STAR WARS: DARK EMPIRE is a six-issue, limited series written by Tom Veitch with art by Com Kennedy. This dynamic duo brought us 'The Light and Darkness War', which I quite liked. 'Dark Empire' is set six years after 'The Return of the Jedi'. All the film regulars get a mention, and there's even hints at there being a new villain that would make Darth Vader look like

McCauley Culkin (who will be in the new movie). I'm scared already! Despite what I said about Tom Veitch, this shows promise. Die-hard fans of the movie should enjoy it. The high price is because it is printed on very high quality paper. It's a pity that no one bought Com Kennedy any new colours for Christmas...

Next, **BATMAN VERSUS PREDATOR** - a three-issue limited series written by Dave Gibbons (best known for his artwork on 'The Watchmen' and 'Give Me Liberty'). His artwork is certainly better than his writing. The plot is predictable, a Predator kills a few Gotham City residents and then beats up Batman. Dave Gibbons proves he's seen 'Predator 2' a few times. The £4.50 version is printed on better paper and has a few trading cards, most definitely not worth the extra cash. The artwork is average - not much to recommend about this, I'm afraid. People will buy it, no matter what's inside the covers. A thinly disguised marketing ploy.

As a postscript to last month's Sandman review, Neil Gaiman won Best Short for Sandman?19 (Sept '90): "A MidSummer Night's Dream", at the World Fantasy Awards 1991. A comic first, I think!

MARK BAGNALL

## TV REVIEW

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### 'STAR TREK SON OF THE NEXT GENERATION' (at last!!!!)

Hurray for Hollywood! After two seasons of ham acting, wooden delivery of lines and pauses in dialogue that would allow any half-witted Klingon all the time in the world to vaporise the Enterprise in the time it takes the

crew to react to commands - the whole crew are to be sacked! Yes, it's official. A fresh line-up every few years is the new directive from 'Those-who-know-best'. The current line-up could be compared to a ring of three-quarter-ways melted ice-pups around the only real actor to ever walk on the set - the captain. Dammit, nobody DOES anything in that ship! Riker's day is spent listening to praise and chanting up women; when the going gets tough, he stands behind the Captain and stares at the screen - and stares at the screen, and stares at the screen. Data (incorrectly pronounced by the American cast as 'Day-ta') is as useful to the storyline as a two-week old kitten sniffing around a ball of wool; no doubt pandering in the direction of the suspiciously large number of cat owners in the fan clubs - the ball of wool is life, etc. Dammit he even twitches his nose like a cat. They should have thought a little longer about recruiting a talking mime artist (complete with white face) aboard a vehicle supposed to be at the cutting edge of humanity. We also have the novelty of a race who until very recently were the sworn enemies of mankind (who gave HIM clearance!). And as for the women, with all due respect they'd be better off making pots of English tea for the only man in the ship who makes any decisions - the Captain. Yes, well done the Yanks. They have seen what we couldn't; that the Next Generation were long overdue their one-way tickets to the airlock.

THE SILVER SURFER MALAHIDE