

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 5/14/86 -- Vol. 4, No. 43

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

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

LZ meetings are in LZ 3A-206; HO meetings are in HO 2N-523.

\_ D \_ A \_ T \_ E                      \_ T \_ O \_ P \_ I \_ C

05/21 HO: Is DR. WHO science fiction? (Specific discussion of  
THE CLAWS OF AXOS)

06/04 LZ: THIS PERFECT DAY by Ira Levin ("Utopias")

06/11 HO: ?

06/25 LZ: STAR GUARD by Andre Norton (Humans as underdogs)

07/16 LZ: SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE by Robert Silverberg (Ethics)

08/06 LZ: TUNNEL IN THE SKY by Robert Heinlein (Faster-Than-Light Travel)

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 3G-434 (957-5619). HO Librarian is Tim Schroeder, HO 2G-427A (949-5866). LZ Librarian is Lance Larsen, LZ 3C-219 (576-2668). Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, MT 1F-329 (957-2070).

1. The next Holmdel meeting will discuss the financing of local PBS stations by science fiction fans in general, and the Dr. Who TV series in particular. Our own local version of Dr. Who, better known to some as Gentleman John Jetzt, will be arriving in his space-time machine promptly at noon, so don't be tardis.
2. My understanding is that the Soviet government's plans to build a memorial to the four workers killed at Chernobyl have bogged down in arguments as to which four workers it was.
3. The viewpoint that science and technology are not intrinsically evil, as I expressed it in the last notice, was mine and mine alone. In no way was it intended to represent the viewpoint of AT&T, its staff, or its management. AT&T wants to wait until some current projects reach fruition before deciding on this matter.
4. Would anyone who has Chapter 12 (the last chapter) of the Buck Rogers serial on videotape please contact Estes Slade (LZ 3C-115A, 576-2940)? Or you can just return it to him, no questions asked.

Mark Leeper  
MT 3G-434 957-5619  
...mtgzz!leeper

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First, "The Three Garridebs" ...  
Then, "The Three-Pipe Problem" ...  
And now ...  
Three Sherlockian Reviews  
Reviews by Evelyn C. Leeper

THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES edited by Richard Lancelyn Green  
Penguin, 1985, \$4.95.

This anthology contains eleven stories written between 1920 and 1982. It is (as are most anthologies) a mixed bag. "The Adventure of the First-Class Carriage" and "The Adventure of the Sheffield Banker" were the weakest of the set, being unlikely in their denouements and uninteresting in their execution. "The Adventure of the Marked Man" and "The Adventure of the Tired Captain" were better, being reminiscent of several Sherlockian stories, yet the former was perhaps more sordid than Holmes would have preferred and the latter merely ho-hum in its rehashing of themes. "The Adventure of the Megatherium Thefts" was 1) predictable, and 2) unrelated to the animal. (Oh, well, I guess I shouldn't expect another "Sherlock-Holmes-meets-Professor Challenger".)

"The Adventure of the Trained Cormorant" and "The Adventure of Arnsworth Castle" were even more predictable. (The compulsion some authors feel to attach their Holmes story to a reference in the Canon, as in "Trained Cormorant" should probably be fought more often than it is.) "The Adventure of the Green Empress" relies on a situation that is (if one wishes to try it) almost impossible and is, in addition, only inaccurately told to the reader in its first description, so that there is no chance for the reader to deduce the ending. "The Adventure of the Purple Hand" is perhaps the best of the batch. (It is by D. O. Smith, who has also written "The Adventure of the Unseen Traveller" and "The Adventure of the Zodiac Plate.") "The Adventure of Hillerman Hall" (by Julian Symons) is interesting for its characters (read it and you'll see what I mean), but otherwise mundane. As I said, a mixed bag, but containing such a range of stories than it's a must for Sherlockians.

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SON OF HOLMES by John H. Lescroart  
Donald I. Fine, 1986, \$15.95.

This novel chronicles not Sherlock Holmes, but the son of Holmes, Auguste Lupa. (That Holmes would name his son after a fictional detective he disdained is almost as hard to accept as that he and Irene Adler had a son.) The story takes place in France in 1915, there is a lot of World War I intrigue, and the villain is completely obvious from halfway through the book. If this book is any indication, the child is

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but a pale shadow of the father.

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A THREE-PIPE PROBLEM by Julian Symons  
Penguin, 1975, \$2.95.

Sheridan Haynes is an actor playing Sherlock Holmes in a British television series of the detective's adventures. When London is beset by the "Karate Killer" he decides to emulate his alter ego and do a little sleuthing. The resulting novel, although well-written as a modern detective story, will be disappointing to those of us who like the Victorian flavor of Sherlock Holmes. Somehow, characters flitting from bed to bed (even off-page) isn't Sherlockian. Still, if you're not a stickler for atmosphere, it's a good read.

\_ N \_ O \_ T \_ E \_ S \_ F \_ R \_ O \_ M \_ T \_ H \_ E \_ N \_ E \_ T

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Subject: McKiernan: On Prequels, Sequels, Forerunners

Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!cbosgd!cbuxc!dim

Date: Tue, 6-May-86 14:55:10 EST

While recovering from a shattered left femur, for my own amusement, and to stay sane, I wrote a tale of the quest of the Dwarves to recover Moria. Doubleday loved it. The estate of JRRT did not. Doubleday then asked me to make the tale my own, to provide a new history, geography, background, etc., pulling it out of Tolkein's world and into a world of my own. Yet I had to keep the same story: Dwarves quest to recover a lost homeland.

After another year, I had revised the tale. Now it was set in a world I called Mithgar. The revised tale is titled "The Silver Call".

While awaiting Doubleday's reaction to "Silver", I got to thinking about that background, that history, and decided that it, too, would make an exciting story, and so I began a new tale. I was about half way through the first draft when Doubleday called and said that they liked the revision and that they had slotted "Silver" in their publication schedule. I replied that I was at work on the "prequel" to "Silver" and would they hold off publication until they had a chance to look at the manuscript, and if they liked it, then let's publish the stories in the correct chronological order. Doubleday agreed, and I soon finished the prequel...called, of course, "The Iron Tower".

I sent "Iron" to Doubleday; they liked the tale and agreed that it should indeed be published first.

For business reasons, Doubleday divided "Iron" into a trilogy (I would have much rather seen it as a single book, for that's the way I wrote it).

Doubleday published "Iron" in hardback, and a year or so later Signet published it in paperback.

And the "sequel", "The Silver Call", is rolling off Doubleday's presses at this very moment, but Doubleday has split the tale into two books this time. So, "Silver" will come out as a "duology".

And therein lies the tale of two tales:

The Iron Tower:

Book 1: The Dark Tide

Book 2: Shadows of Doom

Book 3: The Darkest Day

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The Silver Call:

Book 1: Trek to Kraggen-cor

Book 2: The Brega Path

("Silver" available in Doubleday hardback in May and June, 1986, respectively) (just had to get in a plug)

Incidentally, I want to thank all of you who have commented both publically on the net, and privately by e-mail, and have passed on your opinions to me concerning "Iron"; I look forward to hearing from you about "Silver".

If anyone else wants to hop in here, feel free.

Dennis L. McKiernan

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Subject: notes on Short Circuit

Path: msudoc!drexel!sjuvax!bpa!burdvax!sdcrcf!ism780c!ism780!steven

Date: Mon, 5-May-86 16:46:00 EST

Starring Ally Sheedy and Steve Guttenberg.

Also starring Fisher Stevens, Austin Pendleton, G.W. Bailey and Tim Blaney.

Directed by John Badham. Written by S.S. Wilson and Brent Maddock.  
Produced by David Foster and Lawrence Turman.

Photographed by Nick McLean. Art Direction by Dianne Wager. Edited by Frank Morriss. Music by David Shire. Robots designed by Syd Mead. Robots constructed and operated by Eric Allard.

From Tri-Star Pictures (1986).

A military robot gets zapped during a thunderstorm and comes to life with a peacenik personality in "Short Circuit", a prime example of all that is derivative in the field of high-concept filmmaking. Lovable No. 5 splits for the Washington/Oregon countryside from the Nova

Laboratories complex, finds an ally in addled Stephanie (Ally Sheedy), and is pursued by Steve Guttenberg and Fisher Stevens as No. 5's creators (good guys) and cardboard villain G.W. Bailey.

Sounds achingly familiar, doesn't it? I mean, you could cut a montage of all the scenes showing an innocent being learning about Earth from television (E.T. in "E.T. the Extraterrestrial", Starman in "Starman", Madison the mermaid in "Splash", the aliens Wak and Neek in "Explorers"); we didn't really need to watch John Badham give us his version. Writers Wilson and Maddock are first-timers (the script was discovered by producer David Foster's son Gary while he and the writers

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were enrolled in a UCLA Extension course on screenwriting) so you can forgive them for wanting to convince themselves they could accurately duplicate a hit movie formula. But what's everybody else's excuse?? I think it starts with an M and ends with a Y and is green.

All that aside, the movie is slickly done and reasonably entertaining. Since the formula is so old there's not much possibility for suspense, this version wisely decides to treat all situations as comedically as possible rather than opting to create some sort of action/adventure flick. Guttenberg is written as a girl-shy computer nerd; he says the lines, but without any conviction and the rest of the movie just plays himself. Sheedy is convincingly dippy; not much of a challenge for her. Fisher Stevens has the best time under lots of Pakistani makeup as a malapropism machine. Nick McLean returns to Astoria, Oregon (where he shot "The Goonies") for another professionally mounted job. Won't set the summer box-office on fire (too familiar), but well executed enough to show a tidy profit, I think.

Two and a half stars out of four.



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