



pinin' for in trade for a few of those mushrooms. Just come to MT 4A-217 on Wednesday, November 4, at high noon to 12:30PM. This is the ol' philosopher sayin' "LOOK UP, WALK IN THE SUNSHINE, AND SMILE!"

THE MT VOID

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2. I haven't been able to write a whole lot this issue. I am concerned that I may lose my home. New Jersey may end up buying it from me as a historical site. Yeah. My place. What do you think about that? In 1703 my lot was part of an unused field owned by a local farmer Ezra Burton. He rarely got out to this end of the farm, but one day he did and he saw Uriah Tendle cutting across his land. Uriah was driving a wagon with a big barrel on the back of it. Burton shouts out "That'll be one shilling toll." Tendle doesn't want to pay so whips his horse to speed up and the barrel falls off the back of the wagon and spills all over the ground. Now the barrel was, as I said, big and worth more than the shilling, so he stops to pick up the now empty barrel. He pays the shilling to Burton and picks up the barrel, and pays Burton the shilling. "Shame you lost all that stuff you were carrying," Burton says. "Not all that bad. That was just acid from my tannery. I was taking it over to the Raritan to dump it. Actually you saved me my morning. No point in taking an empty barrel over to the Raritan." Now Burton was a thrifty man and he gets this idea. He says, "You pay me two shillings toll each trip, you can pour what you want off the wagon. But always do it here where it won't make my good crops smell bad." Yes. On my property was born a major New Jersey industry.

3. For those of you who follow the leading financial indicators, Charlie Wasserman is over the flu. He is feeling a lot better, and is eating solid food according to sources near him. He has been back to work since Friday. Just how long it will take for this to reflect in the stock market, the experts are unsure.

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PRINCE OF DARKNESS  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper  
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Capsule review: A very demanding and very rewarding horror film. Horror and science fiction combine together to make a film for real long-standing horror film fans only. Lots of old stuff but a lot that even the long-time fans have not seen before. The last half-hour is a let-down, but it is hard to imagine an ending fitting the buildup. Rating: +2

A lot of horror films are coming out about now. Released in one weekend are both P\_r\_i\_n\_c\_e\_o\_f\_D\_a\_r\_k\_n\_e\_s\_s and N\_i\_g\_h\_t\_F\_l\_y\_e\_r\_s. Earlier this year Clive Barker directed and wrote H\_e\_l\_l\_r\_a\_i\_s\_e\_r. B\_e\_l\_i\_e\_v\_e\_r\_s, based on a respected horror novel, came out this year. Then there were a number of minor pieces of the N\_e\_a\_r\_D\_a\_r\_k ilk. Horror, I understand, sells well on videocassette, so it is pretty tough for a horror film to lose money. I

was vaguely aware that the aforementioned \_ P \_ r \_ i \_ n \_ c \_ e \_ o \_ f \_ D \_ a \_ r \_ k \_ n \_ e \_ s \_ s was from

John Carpenter, but he has had a spotty career. I like his \_ D \_ a \_ r \_ k \_ S \_ t \_ a \_ r, \_ H \_ a \_ l \_ l \_ o \_ w \_ e \_ e \_ n, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ T \_ h \_ i \_ n \_ g, and maybe a few others. His most recent, \_ B \_ i \_ g \_ T \_ r \_ o \_ u \_ b \_ l \_ e \_ i \_ n \_ L \_ i \_ t \_ t \_ l \_ e \_ C \_ h \_ i \_ n \_ a, was a good idea that went amazingly bad. But

then things are not always what we expect. \_ P \_ r \_ i \_ n \_ c \_ e \_ o \_ f \_ D \_ a \_ r \_ k \_ n \_ e \_ s \_ s, for

example, turns out to be the best thing that Carpenter has ever done. It may well be the fantasy film I will want to remember from 1987.

For 2000 years the Brotherhood of Sleep have kept secret what Christianity was \_ r \_ e \_ a \_ l \_ l \_ y about--have kept secret the true nature of evil and of the Devil, a secret with roots far older than humanity. Now, 2000 years after they discovered the secret, it is becoming important to understand it once more. The laws of physics are changing and the focus of all that is happening is one small rundown church in Los Angeles. There a group of scientists, their graduate students, and a priest are trying to unravel the mystery of what is happening. And what is happening will tie together particle physics, mathematics, and orthodox Christianity.

The \_ P \_ r \_ i \_ n \_ c \_ e \_ o \_ f \_ D \_ a \_ r \_ k \_ n \_ e \_ s \_ s has everything it needs but the payoff.

The final third of the film is good Carpenter-style suspense, but it fails to live up to the promise of the first two thirds of the movie. If it had, this would have been an excellent science fiction film as well as a good horror film. As it is, \_ P \_ r \_ i \_ n \_ c \_ e \_ o \_ f \_ D \_ a \_ r \_ k \_ n \_ e \_ s \_ s is rich in ideas and has some good suspense to boot, but doesn't quite deliver.

I really enjoyed the film, but have to give this film a qualified recommendation. It takes a lot of effort just to understand as much of what is going on as the director wants to show you. There are many scenes that are deliberately disturbing and a lot more that are violent, though it has been pointed out to me that there is very little actual

blood. If you haven't seen many horror films, you may not find this one worth your effort; there are a lot of other good films out there. If

you have seen a lot of horror films, you will recognize little ideas

here and there from (are you ready?) D\_r\_a\_c\_u\_l\_a, T\_h\_e

E\_x\_o\_r\_c\_i\_s\_t, T\_h\_e T\_h\_i\_n\_g,

T\_h\_e Q\_u\_i\_e\_t E\_a\_r\_t\_h, T\_h\_e L\_e\_g\_e\_n\_d\_o\_f

H\_e\_l\_l\_H\_o\_u\_s\_e, T\_h\_e N\_i\_g\_h\_t\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e

L\_i\_v\_i\_n\_g\_D\_e\_a\_d,

E\_s\_c\_a\_p\_e\_f\_r\_o\_m\_N\_e\_w\_Y\_o\_r\_k, F\_i\_v\_e

M\_i\_l\_l\_i\_o\_n\_Y\_e\_a\_r\_s\_t\_o\_E\_a\_r\_t\_h, T\_h\_e K\_e\_e\_p,  
and T\_h\_e

T\_e\_r\_m\_i\_n\_a\_t\_o\_r. Yes, there are recognizable ideas inspired by each of these, yet there are so many new ideas in this horror film that the familiar ones are outnumbered.

The name of the man who crafted all these ideas into a single screenplay is Martin Quatermass. Perhaps that is a pseudonym and even a film reference. Since some of the images, like the marauding street

schizophrenics, are reminiscent of images out of Carpenter's E\_s\_c\_a\_p\_e\_f\_r\_o\_m

N\_e\_w\_Y\_o\_r\_k and A\_s\_s\_a\_u\_l\_t\_o\_n\_P\_r\_e\_c\_i\_n\_c\_t  
1\_3, it is at least conceivable that the

film was written by Carpenter himself. In any case, it is often hard to follow exactly what is happening; the film makes the audience work a little. And a little knowledge of paradoxical 20th Century physics helps to set the atmosphere (that's a remarkable statement all by itself!).

If you are tired of seeing old ideas rehashed in horror films,

P\_r\_i\_n\_c\_e\_o\_f\_D\_a\_r\_k\_n\_e\_s\_s will show you a lot you haven't seen before.  
You

people (and me) who wanted to see a horror film of power in Clive

Barker's H\_e\_l\_l\_r\_a\_i\_s\_e: sorry, Barker didn't deliver, but P\_r\_i\_n\_c\_e  
o\_f

D\_a\_r\_k\_n\_e\_s\_s is what you were expecting. I'd give it a high +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

DISCLAIMER: As might be obvious, a film that audaciously plays with ideas will appeal to me more than to the viewing public at large.

A prime example is L\_i\_f\_e\_f\_o\_r\_c\_e, itself a film that gave a science fictional alternate interpretation to traditional beliefs.

## NIGHTFLYERS

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

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Capsule review: An incompetent adaptation of a mediocre novella add up to a must-miss science fiction film. Besides seeing how someone managed to turn an obviously inadequate special effects budget into an impressive set of effects, this film has little going for it--certainly not the characters. Rating: -1.

I was recently discussing the new "Star Trek" series with some fans who were unhappy with it. The series is certainly weak in ideas and my friends' solution was to solicit stories from established science fiction writers. I was somewhat doubtful that a good story in incompetent hands would stay good for very long; I remember the disappointment of seeing D u n e. I think another case in point of at least a fair story that did not fare well in the transition to screen is "Nightflyers." George R. R. Martin (who is a pretty good writer) wrote the novella on which the film was based. Admittedly, it is not his best work but it deserved a better shake than it got in this weak and boring adaptation.

The story deals with an expedition to a celestial phenomenon which may or may not be connected with a hypothetical alien race called the Volcryn. The Nightflyer, the craft for the expedition, is piloted by a crew of one, a mysterious young captain seen to the other members of the expedition only as a life-sized hologram that can appear whenever and wherever he (it?) wants. Then mysterious things start happening and people start getting killed and the travelers suddenly have more to think about than an alien race.

Well, that doesn't sound too bad. That is all taken from Martin's novella and this adaptation is at least Hollywood's idea of "faithful to

the original story," which is to say, yeah, much of the plot is there and the plot of the film is more like the source story than it is like any other story or film that comes to mind. (Any better than that and you start calling it a "literal adaptation.")

So the story is recognizably Martin's "Nightflyers" and I will say one more good thing for it: it has cheap special effects done really well. Someone very intelligently knows how to get 4/5 the quality of effect at 1/5 the cost. For that and other reasons I was reminded more than once of D\_a\_r\_k\_S\_t\_a\_r. But there is where my charitable feelings toward N\_i\_g\_h\_t\_f\_l\_y\_e\_r\_s end abruptly.

I have rarely seen a bunch of characters I cared less about. I started counting the number left alive the way I used to count the days left till summer vacation. With the exception of the expedition cook,

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the characters are developed pretty much by how they argue with each other. The direction is nearly humorless and you watch through the whole film without them ever showing any personality at all. The hero should be something like Ripley in A\_l\_i\_e\_n, but instead she looks like a lawyer's wife who has just stepped out of the beauty parlor, with her high heels, her frosted lipstick, and her big earrings. The captain looks like a 1980s rock star, complete with earring. Much of the wardrobe and all of the hairstyles are from the late 1980s in spite of the 21st Century setting. The science was laughable (if they let the air out of the ship it would implode; noisy, smoking explosions in a vacuum--that sort of thing). The continuity was confusing and error-ridden. I know I would not want to fly a spaceship that uses burning torches and candles for lighting. The film even picks up a major fault of the story: the audience can figure out what is going on much faster than the people on the ship. This is an amateur film which makes a lot of amateur mistakes. Rate it a -1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

