
Subject: SF-LOVERS Digest V6 #89
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>From SFL@SRI-CSL Fri Nov 26 23:26:00 1982
Reply-To: SF-LOVERS at SRI-CSL
To: SF-LOVERS@SRI-CSL

SF-LOVERS Digest Saturday, 27 Nov 1982 Volume 6 : Issue 89

Today's Topics:

Books - Wolf's "Book of the New Sun", Harrison's "The
Stainless Steel Rat for President"
Radio - Miller's A Canticle for Leibowitz
Themes - shrinking
Query - decompression
Movies - thumbs down on "The Last Unicorn", Star Trek and planet names
T.V. - Spock's father
Music - themes from Rollerball, country and western SF

Date: 26-Nov-82 09:41:13-PST (Fri)
From: INGVAX.kalash@Berkeley (Joe Kalash)
Subject: Book of the New Sun

Actually, the third book is Sword of the Lictor, and the forth
book is Citadel of the Autarch. Both are only out in hardcover, and
they are getting nothing except rave reviews.

Joe

Date: 26-Nov-82 10:36:30 PST (Friday)
From: Sapsford at PARC-MAXC
Subject: Re: SF-LOVERS Digest V6 #88

I am sure that the Moderator will get zillions of these notes, but ...
the 3rd book in the "Book of the New Sun" series is "The Sword of the
Lictor", with "The Citadel of the Autarch" being the 4th and "last"
book (I quote last because the rumor is that there will be a 5th book,

using the same world as the "New Sun" books, but not directly in the series - I guess it is Wolfe's "Majipoor Chronicles"). Supposedly Timescape will release "The Sword of the Lictor" in paperback in Jan. '83. All four books are currently available from the Science Fiction Book Club.

Date: 26 Nov 1982 2216-EST
From: John Redford
Subject: Gene Wolfe's "Book of the New Sun"

The third book in the series is "The Sword of the Lictor", and not "The Citadel of the Autaurch", as was previously reported. TCotA is the fourth (and last) book. "The Sword of the Lictor" is out in hardback, and should be out in paperback in a matter of weeks; I saw a sample cover for it in the Science Fantasy bookstore in Cambridge. I recommend it. Our torturer-hero, Severian, is once again forced to flee for committing the crime of mercy. He loses his second love, meets his first (in monstrous form), and confronts aliens ("cacogens"), a king and a giant. Like a lot of Wolfe's words, "lictor" sounds made-up, but isn't. It means "a Roman officer who bears the fasces as the insignia of his office", i.e. an enforcer.

Date: 26 November 1982 20:04-EST
From: Charles F. Von Rospach
Subject: "The Stainless Steel Rat for President"

I got a copy through the SF book club. It wasn't bad, but I don't think it was quite up to old SSR books. Still worth the money, though.

Date: Friday, 26 Nov 1982 10:15-PST
Subject: A Canticle for Leibowitz
From: Tim Mann

"A Canticle for Leibowitz" is currently airing on KCSM in San Mateo (CA), on Sunday nights. I think two episodes have been broadcast so far, out of a total of 15.

--Tim

Date: 26 Nov 1982 1219-CST

From: CMP.TAYLOR at UTEXAS-20
Subject: Decompression

In regards to the recent questions on explosive decompression, one of the things that would not happen is the bends. The bends are caused when nitrogen in the bloodstream is not given an ample period of time to diffuse out. However, nitrogen is not normally found in the bloodstream and only enters when the body is under pressure, such as that caused by 33 feet of seawater (1 atm.). So unless you went from breathing normal air under pressure to zero pressure, you would not get the bends.

It seems to me that if you kept your mouth shut, you should be able to survive zero atmosphere for about 30 seconds. I suspect that if you opened your mouth that the lungs would be much the worse for wear.

Date: 26 Nov 1982 2248-EST
From: John Redford
Subject: thumbs down on "The Last Unicorn"

Anyone who has read the book "The Last Unicorn" by Peter Beagle is going to be disappointed in the movie. All of Beagle's songs have been replaced by some pop pap from Jimmy Webb, and a lot of good scenes have been cut out altogether. A lot of the book's charm was in its balance between the mundane and the magical: when a prince and a princess go out hunting unicorn, the princess sings a lovely little song and swings a golden bridle to lure in the beast, while the bored prince reads a magazine. The animators left out the mundane parts and didn't portray magic very well. There are some good parts; the poetry-mad butterfly was done well, and the Red Bull was appropriately fierce. But the characters generally lacked expression, and the landscapes were insipid.

Movies have so much more bandwidth than books that you would expect that a lot more detail would come across to a viewer than to a reader. That was certainly true in the Star Wars movies. They were full of little details that were never remarked upon or emphasized, but nonetheless gave you the feeling that this was a real, lived-in world. But in this movie, and in other attempts like "The Lord of the Rings", the visual version is much duller and narrower than the print one. It takes a powerful artistic vision to surpass a reader's imagination.

John Redford

Date: 26 November 1982 13:21-EST (Friday)
From: The One and Only Mijjil {Matthew J Lecin}
Subject: re: trek trivia
Reply-to: Lecin@Rutgers

Gav the Tellerite was the one found dead stuffed up a Jeffries' Tube.
An alien DISGUISED as an Andorian was the actual culprit.

{Mijjil}

Date: 26 Nov 1982 1235-PST
From: Henry W. Miller
Subject: Spock's father

Although it was not explicitly stated, it was implied very strongly that Spock's father was suffering the Vulcan equivalent of a heart attack while the Telerite was being attacked. It was probably the Orion disguised as the Andorian who did the foul deed. Although the technique was Vulcan, it is not inconceivable that other races might have had access to the knowledge.

This brings up a trivia point about Spock's father. We know that Mark Leonard, a very talented actor, played both Spock's father, and also the Romulan Commander in "Balance of Terror", but he also played (under heavy makeup) the Klingon Commander in ST:TMP.

-HWM

Date: 26 Nov 1982 (Friday) 1547-EDT
From: SPEAR at Wharton-10 (Daniel Spear)
Subject: ST-WOK and planet names

Presumably, when approaching a new solar system looking for a given planet, you don't start in the middle and count all the planets outward until you reach the one you're looking for. You look up in your star charts, find the latest recorded distance of that planet from its star, and look for the nearest hunk of rock that distance away. Now, it does seem improbable that an explosion would pull a planet toward the source, but it could have pushed at an odd angle (they don't line up, you know) such that the net result was to end up further away, even perhaps close to the orbital distance of the offending planet.

What I want to know is how a planet can spontaneously blow up.

Dan

Date: Friday, 26 November 1982, 21:36-EST
From: Dave Goodine
Subject: SF-LOVERS Digest V6 #88

In reply to the digest entry:

Date: 23 Nov 82 21:15:09-PST (Tue)
From: harpo!floyd!cmcl2!philabs!sdcsvox!sdchema!will at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: re: trek trivia

Ah, yes, I remember, now...an alien being was found dead in a service tube on the ship. But I'm not sure...was it Spock's father? It seems to me that he was accused but we all know he was innocent...who did it??

(i.e., was it Spock's father that killed him?)

It wasn't Spock's father that killed him, but a spy posing as an ambassador. I forget the name of the race(some random stellar-name-root with a TIAN ending), but they were blue skinned, white haired humanoids with curved antennae. (The impostor hid a communicator device in his left antenna.) The assassin's ship then attacked the Enterprise and severely wounded it. Kirk, sitting to the occasion, played dead(shutting down all power consumption except phasers and waited until the ship came close enough(it was very fast when it attacked (something like warp 11))... (usual all-bad-guys-killed (spy commits suicide) ending...).

Dave();

Date: Friday, 26 Nov 1982 12:23-PST
Subject: Theme from Rollerball
From: David Kaelbling

The theme from Rollerball is Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony.

David Kaelbling

Date: Friday, 26 Nov 1982 14:19-PST
Subject: Shrinking Alice & Rollerball
From: Paul Asente

Recently it was stated that Alice experienced shrinking/growing while she was through the looking glass. While many of the things she found on the other side were unusually large (gnats, wasps, and chesspieces, for example) Alice herself always remained her normal size.

Albinoni's Adagio did occur in "Rollerball," I believe during the part where the party guests are enjoying themselves by going around blowing up trees. The Toccata and Fugue also occurs as theme music, and various other baroque pieces show up as organ music during the rollerball games.

Date: 26 Nov 1982 2123-MST
From: JW-Peterson at UTAH-20 (John W. Peterson)
Subject: Shrinking storys...

"Stuart Little" (by E.B. White) is another children's story dealing with the subject- in this case an intelligent mouse born to human parents. I think a film of it was also made.

jp

Date: 24 Nov 1982 1406-PST
From: Lynn Gold
Subject: C & W SF (yee-HAW!)

There exists a country and western song called "The Cool Green Hills of Earth". I don't know who does it, but for those of you in the New York area (other than North Jersey, notably Rutgers) who have never heard the song, there is a woman who goes by the air name Alice Leroy on WVHC (89.7FM) who does a country show called "Western Star" every Saturday morning (unless something has changed recently) somewhere between 10AM and 2PM (it's only an hour long) who closes her show each week with this song.

--Lynn

Date: 26 Nov 82 01:04:28 EST (Fri)

From: Chris Torek

Subject: !!!SPOILER!!! Chalker's The Four Lords of the Diamond - !!!SPOILER!!!

Yep, I've read the first three of the Four Lords of the Diamond, and all 5 of the three Well World stories. That's right, all 5 of the three: the second and third BOOKS are the second STORY, and the fourth and fifth books are the third story. I liked all that I read, but then I'm an "LE" (likes everything). Chalker has good plots and new ideas for his books.

About the Four Lords of the Diamond:

The first book is titled "Lilith: A Snake in the Grass". In it we are introduced to the basic situation. The military of the civilized worlds (known as the Confederacy) has been penetrated by an alien robot, which has stolen all of their military secrets. Nothing more is known about the aliens and the government wants information, immediately. The robot has been traced back to the Warden Diamond, which is a disaster. The Warden Diamond is a stellar system with four inhabitable planets, by the names of Lilith, Cerberus, Charon, and Medusa. They were discovered and named by a scout named Halden Warden 200 years ago; he described them as follows:

[Pause while I go get the third book as a reference]

"Charon", came the first report. "Looks like hell."

"Lilith", he continued. "Anything that pretty's got to have a snake in it."

"Cerberus", he named the third. "Looks like a real dog."

And, finally, "Medusa. Anybody who lives here would have to have rocks in his head."

The coordinates followed, along with a code confirming that Warden had done remote but no direct exploration -- that is, he hadn't landed -- and a final code, "ZZ," which filled them with some fear. It meant that there was something very odd about the place, so approach with extreme caution.

[End quotation]

[General background, and "Lilith: A Snake in the Grass"]

Indeed, there was reason for caution, as they found out six months after the initial exploration team landed on Lilith, and had been to all three of the other worlds. A microorganism that originated on Lilith had infected the team, and they had then carried it out to the other three worlds. This organism had different effects on each planet, due to different conditions. On Lilith, nothing not organic in nature or originally from the planet was broken down by the little beasties. So six months after arriving, the scientists watched their shuttles, clothing, tools, etc. disintegrate.

Later the people remaining on Lilith discovered that some of them had picked up a new ability from their hosts. Somehow, they could communicate with their Wardens (as the microorganisms came to be called) and their Wardens could subsequently affect others. Using this power they could reshape objects or inflict pain or pleasure in others.

It was also discovered that no one infected with the Warden organism was able to leave the Warden system. The organism attached itself to the very DNA of the cell, and after a certain distance from the sun the thing died (if you can call it that; Wardens are only a handful of atoms). This unfortunately led to the painful death of the person.

So the Confederacy was faced with an impossibility. They had to get a good agent into the Warden system, into the established hierarchy, and then to report back. The only trouble was, once they got a good agent in, being a good agent, he would realize that he no longer needed the Confederacy; why should he work for them? They got him into the mess! And with what he knew about the inner workings of the Confederacy they would kill him as soon as he finished his mission! (Agents were normally "wiped" between missions, their memories stored in a computer.) His only chance was to become the "top dog": one of the Four Lords.

The solution was to use the Merton Process. This involved copying the mind of a person into another body. Only about one in twenty "imprints" worked, but they had plenty of bodies; they would destroy the minds of the criminals who would have been sent to the Warden Diamond for safekeeping. (The Confederacy hated to waste their most creative citizens; ordinary criminals were just retrained but the brilliant ones were sent to the Warden Diamond. This should give you an idea of what the inhabitants were like.) In the bodies of four different people, the agent they selected would be transported to each of the four planets. With a tiny quasi-organic transmitter implanted in his/her brain, the copy would relay his/her experiences back to the agent, who would be safe on a ship elsewhere in the Warden system.

The first report the agent received came from Lilith. His copy, in the body of Cal Tremon, had arrived on the paradise planet, and been put to work by a sadistic overseer. But a little while later Tremon's power began to manifest...

No more, or I'll take away some of the fun.

["Cerberus: A Wolf in the Fold"]

Cerberus was a watery world, whose only "land" turned out to be the tops of tall underwater trees. However, its Wardens had a very different effect from those of Lilith. Technology could and did exist there, at nearly the same level of the Confederacy. Here was where the raw materials from the other worlds was processed and sold, both to the planets of the Warden Diamond and to the Confederacy.

The agent was sent here in the body of Quin Zhang. The ability provided by the Warden organism was somewhat unique: people on Cerberus swapped minds as a matter of course. (This is what led to the Merton Process in the first place.)

["Charon: A Dragon at the Gate"]

Charon was a jungle. But on Charon, magic works! The Wardens have the ability to "convince" other Wardens that something is some way. While in reality the object or person that has been magicked does not change, all of the inhabitants of Charon believe that it has, so in effect, it has changed. Furthermore, in living things, the change slowly becomes permanent, as the Wardens produce subtle changes in the body of the affected being.

Well, I hope that's not too long. If there's more interest I'll reread my Well World collection and send in something on it too.

End of SF-LOVERS Digest
