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Subject: SF-LOVERS Digest V6 #114  
Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Wed, 01 Aug 2012 05:49:36 GMT  
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Originally posted by: utzoo!decvax!ucbvax!sf-lovers

Article-I.D.: ucbvax.468  
Posted: Wed Dec 22 05:06:12 1982  
Received: Thu Dec 23 01:53:19 1982

>From SFL@SRI-CSL Wed Dec 22 05:02:04 1982  
Reply-To: SF-LOVERS at SRI-CSL  
To: SF-LOVERS@SRI-CSL

SF-LOVERS Digest      Wednesday, 22 Dec 1982      Volume 6 : Issue 114

Today's Topics:

Books    - J. Lieber's BEYOND REJECTION, Crowley's LITTLE, BIG,  
          Chalker's Nathan Brazil in WELL-WORLD, Anthony's  
          NIGHT MARE  
Movies    - SW/TEB/ROTJ the Other, The Dark Crystal

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Date: 20 Dec 82 18:45:54 EST (Mon)  
From: Fred Blonder  
Subject: Re: ``Beyond Rejection" by Lieber

From: KRIEGER

For those interested in the idea of sex change, et. al., a good selection to peruse might be BEYOND REJECTION by Lieber . . . I know little about the book except that I have looked at it quickly in the bookstore, and read an excerpt . . .

I thought this book was rather poor. The central theme of the book is the hero(ine) trying to find out who murdered him in his previous incarnation. At the end of the book (s)he (and the reader) discovers that the murder and murderer are part of an elaborate hallucination arranged to assist him/her in getting accustomed to a new (i.e.: female) body. After revealing this, the author doesn't bother to explain how the previous incarnation actually did die.

[Part of the plot sounds suspiciously like the Varley story "The Phantom of Kansas". --Stuart]

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Date: Monday, 20 Dec 1982 20:23-PST  
Subject: "Little, Big"  
From: obrien at RAND-UNIX

I just finished reading John Crowley's book "Little, Big", which I understand was last year's National Fantasy Award winner. I was extremely impressed. This book exhibits a command of language and mood that (Gene Wolfe aside) I haven't seen since Peake's "Gormenghast" trilogy. Highly recommended.

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Date: 15 Dec 82 10:17:52-PST (Wed)  
From: decvax!sultan!dag at Ucb-C70  
Subject: Re: Nathan Brazil's Death Toll

In reply to the comment that Nathan Brazil had topped anyone else in death toll:

=~ Nathan Brazil did not "kill" all of the non-wellworld inhabitants. He altered (eliminated) the equation in which they existed. This did not eliminate their souls, though. When the well was repaired and the equations re-established, the souls found themselves in new existances. I believe that they even remembered what they had been previously. This was done in order to prevent the universe from being irrevocably destroyed. Even with this in mind, he was reluctant to do it, whereas Tarkin and Vader enjoyed (or seemed to enjoy) what they were up to. You don't see Vader running away from those who want him to destroy the rebel alliance. ~=

Consider though, one "other" that has not been mentioned... Gypsy! He shows all of the important attributes of a Jedi. Like Obie-Wan he is able to make others forget that he is there and make them do things they would otherwise not do. I will not say what his connection is with the universe so as not to spoil it for those who have not yet read the Chalker "Wellworld" series, but it is much the same as the force. And he already knows Obie!

Just entering my 2.8 cents  
worth,

Daniel Glasser  
...!decvax!sultan!dag

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Date: 21 Dec 1982 (Tuesday) 1658-EDT  
From: SPEAR at Wharton-10 (Daniel Spear)

Subject: Review - "Night Mare" by Piers Anthony

"Night Mare" is the new Xanth novel by Piers Anthony. It is the second Xanth novel to be put out in the last several months (sort of gives you an idea of the effort involved in write one). Like the previous, "Ogre, Ogre," "Night Mare" uses a character which had a minor role in a previous novel as its main character. It is Mare Imbrium, a night mare introduced in Ogre, Ogre. Unlike the previous, the story is something that people familiar with Xanth are instantly interested in. Mind you, I liked Ogre, Ogre, but the story used mostly unfamiliar characters involved in a quest that no one (no readers) really cared about. Night Mare concerns the newest invasion of Xanth, the Next Wave.

Night Mare will certainly appeal to anyone who has read and enjoyed the other 5 books of the Magic of Xanth trilogy. It includes almost every character in the other books, and presents them in favorable, enjoyable lights. (Finally, come back all the way from book 2, Bink actually gets to do stuff!) I think it also will appeal to people who have not read the other books. Night Mare is simply a good, if simplistic, story, with a nasty bad guy and lots of heroics and mysteries and a happy ending. The basic story line, without giving away much, involves the NextWave of Mundanes, attacking Xanth. The Good King Trent is taken by a mysterious ailment, and Xanth, left without a ruler, turns to Good King Dor, who is struck by the same ailment, and Xanth, left without a ruler, turns to Good King Zombie Master, who is ... In fact, not only do most old characters appear, most of them become king at some point. Regardless, I will reveal no more.

There are two major qualities found in all Xanth novels, those being bad puns and sexism (in fact the latter is pretty common in all Anthony books). They both exist in Night Mare. There are references to a mountain pass made by the misstep of a huge giant named Faux, called the Faux Pass. A drink with a strong kick (literally) called Boot Rear. And so on. In fact, a couple times characters state that, "Xanth is built on puns," which is an interesting sort of meta-comment to see. Feminism takes some major steps in Xanth, if not in the authors mind, with the virtual recognition of equal rights for women, including amongst editorial comments by the author like, "of course women are always helpless in the presence of a virile male."

All in all an amusing book, totally without redeeming social value, but who really cares.

Dan

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Date: 20 Dec 1982 (Monday) 0037-EDT  
From: SPEAR at Wharton-10 (Daniel Spear)

Subject: The Other (revealed)

This is my first, last, and (obviously) only entry on this topic. It became crystal clear to me tonight who the Other must be. Lucasfilms has said that the Other will be someone who has not had a big part so far in the series. They also say that Lando Calrissian (sp?) has a much more important role in the new movie. Draw any parallels there? Making Lando the other would also answer people (to some extent) who accuse SW of being racist (i.e. that there are no other black people in the movies/universe). There might not be many, but the ones that are around are good. (An off-the-wall suggestion: Vader wiped out most of the Jedi. Might this explain the low occurrence of blacks?)

No more Other from me,

Dan

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From: healy.pa @ PARC-MAXC  
Date: 21-Dec-82 1:13:08 PST  
Subject: Re: SF-LOVERS Digest V6 #112

I must agree with many of you who have seen the SFL Digest go by @ 300 baud that this can be time consuming. Perhaps because this is the first time I have read it at home that rate doesn't repel me too much I have the inertia to respond. Dark Crystal (the movie) I intend to see during the holidays. I expect to enjoy it immensely despite the review that preceded this message. Have we all become so sophisticated that we cannot enjoy a good story?? Or good effects \ . . . I for one would vote for a separate dl. for star wars and one for star trek and leave sf lovers alone. I need something between space dl and reality. NASA isn't it. . . NYTimes isn't it. . . I always thought we were, but we are becoming redundant. Lets hear from some other neophytes out there who have good intentions and new inputs but no goforitness. Remember...computers don't think, they act on impulse.

Clark Healy @PARC MAXC

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Date: 21 Dec 1982 (Tuesday) 0739-EDT  
From: KENNEA at Wharton-10 (Richard Kenneally)  
Subject: A favorable opinion

I have been disappointed by the terrible reviews given to The Dark Crystal, particularly the NYT review. Granted, the dinner scene reminded me of some fraternity banquets I've attended, and the Skesis were thoroughly hideous. However, they certainly aren't worse than arms being cut off by various light sabres, and I doubt that many children will be up late with Dark Crystal nightmares. The kids I know come up with much better excuses to stay up late.

I truly enjoyed the movie. It was an excellent attempt at muppet-like animation on a grand scale. I'll admit that it certainly lacked a Lucas, but the plot was not that far below the other fantasy and SF movies we spend so many hours talking about. What it didn't lack was imagination in creating a world and the many interesting critters in that world. The land-striders were wonderfully weird, as was the scene in the forest where we are treated to something similar to the Star Wars bar scene. As far as the way the Podlings carried on, ever been to a Polish wedding?

One problem I did note was the inability to make eyes "track." ET and Yoda weren't subjected to quite so many facial close-ups as were the Gelflings. Eyes and mouths are still a large problem for Henson and his followers to solve.

When you go to see The Dark Crystal, don't expect much deep, philosophical meaning, just enjoy.

-]Rick

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Date: 21 Dec 1982 08:32 CST  
From: Johnston.DLOS at PARC-MAXC  
Subject: Re: Review: The Dark Crystal

I question whether Richard Freedman actually saw the movie. I caught it this past weekend and thoroughly enjoyed it. I didn't WANT to see Kermit--I wanted to see fantasy, and Kermit is a little too cutesy, although I like him in his place. My big problem is the quote: "Aughra, a mad astronomer with detachable eyes, shows Jen and Kira around his mechanized planetarium, and the Skeksis' roachlike warriors pursue them as they ride their long-legged Landstriders." Well, first-off, Aughra is a woman (even has nipples showing through), and Jen didn't meet Kira until after the Skeksis creatures had destroyed Aughra's home. Then they finally got onto the landstriders well after the encounter with Aughra. I feel this isn't a review--it's a cheap income for no effort.

Rick

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Date: 21 December 1982 20:42-EST  
From: Steven A. Swernofsky  
Subject: The Dark Crystal

I thought to send this review from Newsweek because it is so succinct.

``The Gelflings Vs. the Skeksis" [Newsweek, Dec. 27, 1982]

It takes some optical adjustment to sort out the strange beasties that populate @i(The Dark Crystal.) They include: the Skeksis (villainous and vulturelike creatures, with bad table manners); the Mystics (gentile, wise and droopily decrepit, with armadillo tails); the Garthim (the Skeksis' militia, a metallic mix of beetle and crab); the Podlings (button-faced ethnic types, clearly derived from happy but oppressed southern European peasant stock); Aughra (a one-eyed hag who's into astronomy, fierce but benevolent); Fizzgig (a scene-stealing canine, Toto with extra teeth); the fleet Landstriders (towering catfish on stilts), and most important, Jen and Kira, the Gelflings (immediately identifiable by their humanoid features as our hero and heroine: he looks like Dondi and Bruce Lee reconstituted as a 12-year-old elf, she like Mia Farrow after too much plastic surgery).

Welcome to Jim Henson's world of wonders, a fantasy pastiche without a single human in it. Henson and his gifted designer, Brian Froud (of ``Faeries" fame), run some wild visions across the screen, but even young kids will quickly recognize the story line as a meltdown of every Mythic Quest from the Greeks to Tolkien to George Lucas. There's an ancient prophecy to be fulfilled and a young hero armed with a magical crystal shard who must journey to a dark castle where, at the time of the Great Conjunction, he must save a divided, dying world. Tots of a tender age may be nightmare-prone from this encounter: the reptilian Skeksis, who drain and drink the vital fluids of their victims, don't behave like Muppets, though Henson and codirector Frank Oz make sure that no permanent harm befalls the good guys. What grown-ups will make of this depends on your susceptibility to the genre. As drama, ``The Dark Crystal" comes fully alive only at its rousing climax, and it's hampered by the Ken Doll blandness of our hero. As a bestiary, however, it is bountiful--a prodigious and amusing parade of things that do much more than go bump in the night.

David Ansen [Newsweek reviewer]

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Date: 22 December 1982 01:18-EST

From: Steven A. Swernofsky  
Subject: The Dark Crystal (movie)

I watched The Dark Crystal last Friday, its release date in the L.A. area. The Muppets are interesting, and nice to watch (yes, even the bad guys), but the story leaves much to be desired. The plot is too simple, too contrived, too haphazard. The Gelflings (the only humanoids and presumably the hero and heroine) are silly and hard to identify with. If you're into fantasy movies in a big way, or you're really interested by good animation, see this movie. Otherwise, you may be in for a slight disappointment, as it's too thin to make a story worth repeating.

-- Steve

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End of SF-LOVERS Digest

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