

Eternal Sunshine #180

May 2024

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Quote of The Month – “Well, the fact is, what I do is not a bad occupation. Someone is always willing to pay.” – (Joubert in “Three Days of the Condor”)

Welcome to **Eternal Sunshine**, the zine that has ONE MORE ISSUE before it is officially folded. With More Than Ever finally ending in a 17-17 two-way draw, we'll have EOG statements and that's the END.

We wrapped “Beer for Breakfast” late in April. Now I'm in rehearsals for “Noises Off” where I play Freddie. I hadn't originally planned to audition, but I got a lot of encouragement from Steohanie and James (the Chair and VP of the Mesquite Arts Theater). I also didn't expect to be cast, as there were a LOT of very talented people in that packed audition room. But I knew I had a strong audition, which is something I didn't feel confident about with “Beer for Breakfast.” And really, that was enough for me: knowing I did well. Getting the call later that evening to be cast was simply icing on the cake. It's a hilarious farce, and a wonderful group of people. It should be a lot of fun and a real triumph. If you're in the Dallas area, the show runs from June 7 to June 23 and tickets can be purchased here: https://buy.ticketstothecity.com/purchase.php?event_id=14415

I guess that's it from me for now. See you in June!

Game Openings

No game openings, as the zine will fold when the currently-running games are completed.

Standby List: Current standby list who are qualified to standby in More Than Ever: Harold Reynolds.

Meet Me in Montauk The Eternal Sunshine Letter Column

Robert Lesco – I feel your pain with regard to audiences of late. When I was in Toronto to see Ringo Starr and his All Starr Band I felt like I was sitting on a hydra's lap with all these phones on the ends of arms surrounding me. I enjoyed the moment instead.

It sounds snobbish but you cite the reason I do not watch first run/mainstream films. Audiences are far better behaved at revue cinemas or for special screenings possibly because they cost more but it could also be that audience members are treated better at these events.

The Dining Dead – Eternal Sunshine Movie Reviews

Late Night With the Devil (Shudder) – As seems to happen frequently these days, this film arrived with lots of “best horror of the year” and “best movie I have seen in a long time” hype. And as ALSO happens frequently, I found it to be a let down after that kind of build-up. The plot focuses on Jack Delroy (David Dastmalchian), host of the late night 70’s-era talk show “Night Owls.” He’s always a second-tier host compared to Johnny Carson, and wants desperately to launch himself into the top spot. One Halloween he invites on a psychic, a professional skeptic, a parapsychologist, and the subject of the parapsychologist’s latest book – a teen girl named Lilly who is supposedly possessed by a demon.

My two biggest problems with the movie were the plodding overacting by most of the cast (the exceptions being Ingrid Torelli who plays Lilly, and Rhys Auteri who plays Gus the show’s sidekick), and the generally obvious storyline. Most of the surprises were telegraphed too early and too openly. Another problem: I am old enough to have watched late night TV in the late 70’s. So while I appreciated the **look** of the show, the vibe wasn’t at all the way it was back then. Instead of being a nostalgic representation of how things were, it was clearly a representation of how people who weren’t alive then think they were. Very different.

There have been movies over the last ten years with similar plot ideas (even going as far back as the early 90’s controversial BBC movie Ghostwatch), and to be fair this isn’t a bad movie by any stretch. It had a few moments, and was put together well. It just isn’t anything to get excited over. It took me two sittings to finish it, mostly because I’ve been so busy. If it had grabbed my attention, I’d have made it in one.

Older Movies Watched (that I’ve seen before, sometimes many times) – Nothing I can think of offhand.

Out of the WAY #68

by W. Andrew York
(wandrew88 of gmail.com)

Howdy!

First off, for those who enjoy Hangman, I’ve decided to go ahead and be a guest GM of the game in Tom Howell’s *Back of the Envelope*. So, if you’re interested in following or in playing the game, go ahead and sign up with him at off-the-shelf@olympus.net. It’s an E-zine that comes out every four, or so, weeks with Tom attaching it to his Email for easy download, or direct reference if you don’t want to download it to instead open it directly from your Email account.

I’m hoping to start it in his next issue (coming out after his current due date of May 22). But first, we next to exchange (read I need to send him) some files to make sure he can read what I put together and that it translates into the program he uses to put *BotE* together. I don’t expect any issues, but if there are it may not start until the following issue. I hope that those players who enjoy the game, and those who are interested in it, follow me over there. Tom also runs a number of other games and would welcome some new players for them.

I did finish a few books, and make headway on others, over the month. So, there are some reviews below. As three of the books are sequels for lengthy series that earlier books have already dived into, I’m mostly going to comment on the specific setting/story. For more in-depth info on the series, see the previous reviews.

Baseball-wise, lots of games played but the Express have slipped a bit and are now about middle-of-the-pack in the Pacific Coast League. \Of late, the Rangers have been active in calling up people and shuffling folks around. That can make it difficult for players to get comfortable with an ever revolving cast of teammates. But, the games are still enjoyable to attend and to chat with other regulars and staff.

We did get to see Max Scherzer in a rehab start a couple weeks back, looked great. He was later sidelined for a bit, but we’re hoping he’ll make another appearance this homestand. It’s always a great time to watch future hall-of-famers from the intimacy of a minor league park.

At AFS Cinema, they recently started an “Essential Cinema” series on filmmaker Oscar Micheaux. I’d never heard of him, and it’s unfortunate. From the intro by a University of Texas professor (paraphrased, with some additional bits), he was the first major Black film director. Originally a novelist, after studios floated the idea of buying the rights to his first novel, he decided to make the film himself – this was in the 1910s! He founded his own studio and made the film – an 8-reeler in the Silent Era (film sadly lost to time). Apparently, of the 40 or so films he made, only about 15 remain today (I’m not sure if that is whole films or that some remain only in parts).

His second film, which is the one screened, was “Within Our Gates” (1920). It only survived as someone found a Spanish print over 50 years later. It was preserved from the unstable print and restored by the Library of Congress (et al). The intertitles were retranslated back into English with an attempt to recreate the original intertitle language and style (based on Micheaux’s writing from the time and a few examples of the original English ones left in the Spanish print).

In short, the film was AMAZING. It is a straight drama, following a black woman from the north, travelling into the south, then to Boston, while experiencing love, betrayal, discrimination and, through flashbacks, lynchings and attempted rape. Along with the main thread, there are subplots such as between a con man and detective. The person I saw it with said it was the first silent film she’d seen that grabbed her attention and kept it. Truly, if it was filmed today (with requisite technology changes – sound, music, advances in camera/editing, etc.), it would likely make it to distribution (not a blockbuster by any means, but not just circulated as an art film).

Of the silent films I’ve seen, to my memory, this is the first that had a strong through-story without resorting to discrete (and disconnected) vignettes or comedic overtones. Yes, there were a few times I was a bit lost but that could be to missing parts (at least one substantive scene is missing, but acknowledged on an intertitle to keep the viewer from a hanging plot thread).

The AFS Cinema series has three films left. Unfortunately, two are on dates that I’ll be at baseball. But, I’m likely to see the other one. The friend that joined me for the first has already obtained her ticket for the second one and is looking forward to seeing it (and I to hear her thoughts about it).

Other than that, things around here are pretty routine. Spring has definitely sprung, already a couple days over 90 degrees. Forecasters are looking at 50+ days over 100 degrees, with one thinking we might come close or break the record of 90 days. Before they hit in earnest, we’re hoping for rain to fill our lakes (Austin is a surface water sourced city) which are both under 50% full. I saw a bit on the news that Austin, over the past 5 years, is roughly a combined 19.5 inches short of average rainfall. We’ve had a wet start to the year, so far, but there’s a lot to catch up!

I hope everyone has a great May and we’ll be back next month. Not sure after that, as things may wrap up if the Gunboat game ends in a draw...a bit longer if they decide to fight to a solo win in, likely, a bitter battle for control of Europe.

See ‘ya next month!

Letter Column

(always welcome, send them in!)

(if something shouldn’t be included here, clearly mark it as a personal comment)

None received, send some in!

Mini-Book Reviews

(finished since last issue)

Casca Series:

Casca: Soldier of Fortune by Barry Sadler (1983; 181p).

This is a book set after the first book in the series, sort of a “where is Casca” today (post-Vietnam War) book. Taking place in SouthEast Asia after the Khmer take-over of Cambodia, Casca and friends are hired as a mercenary crew to infiltrate Cambodia to spirit out a Chinese family that was left behind. The book gives a look into the criminal groups abounding in the area, involvement by the Nationalist Chinese recently ousted from mainland China to Formosa and the policies of the Khmer government towards the remaining Cambodian population (at least from an early 1980s American viewpoint of it). Recommended for fans of the series. [April 2024]

Casca: The Sentinel by Barry Sadler (1983; 172p).

Casca, in the wilderness of northern Europe after the Hunnish invasion, comes across a small highland village recently taken by a roving band of marauders. Seeing the injustice, he takes action to right the wrong. Afterwards, he retreats up the mountain to become a frozen sentinel of the village – to reawaken when most needed (ala an Arthurian theme). When that time comes, he deals with the situation and, eventually, leaves to find his fortune in the new

European reality. What happens afterwards, including a run-in with his old nemesis “The Brotherhood”, sets the mood for the book’s conclusion. Recommended for fans of the series. [April 2024]

The Jefferson Bible [compiled by Thomas Jefferson] (103p).

The original title was The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth and pares down the four Gospels of the Bible into those passages that directly relate to Jesus’s life and his teaching, but not his miracles and resurrection (basically focusing on the non-supernatural). The passages were then arranged in a (roughly) chronological order.

An interesting read, just focusing on the human side of Jesus’s life, gives a solid grounding of the teachings directly relatable to daily living (life in the world with God) as opposed to the next stage (life after death). Worth reading of this look into the life of Jesus is of interest. [March 2024]

say a little prayer by Joanne Redmond (2023; 176p).

A series of 101 brief vignettes that give suggestions and examples of where and how to incorporate prayer life into daily life. These prayers are not meant to be lengthy talks with God, but more towards short moments to keep God in front of your mind akin to a brief prayer before eating. Suggestions include, as you’re starting your car, ask God for a safe trip. Or, when posting on Facebook (or where ever), pause to ask God whether you should actually send it.

Only if you’re looking for ideas on how to further your prayer life. [March 2024]

Sharpe Series:

Sharpe’s Command by Bernard Cornwell (2024; 307p).

Having pretty much covered Sharpe’s life from the beginning of his military career to his post-Napoleonic adventures, Cornwell takes a slice of the early Spanish campaign that he hadn’t covered – the skirmish over the bridge at Almaraz in May 1812. Leading just his small troop, Sharpe is sent to reconnoiter the crossing at Almaraz with the intent of denying the bridge to the French (direct route that connects the northern and southern wings of the French forces, otherwise split by the river). As usual with Sharpe, things are not necessarily what they seem. And, things go quickly beyond the scope envisioned by his superiors when he was dispatched to gather the information.

It was fun to dive back into Sharpe’s world and see, yet another, great adventure. Seeing some of the characters, lost in future novels, was a great pleasure. Sadly, the book moved along at a rapid clip and I was at the end before I knew it. I don’t know if another Sharpe novel is in the works in Cornwell’s mind, but if so, it can’t come too soon! Recommended for fans of the series. [April 2024]

Babylon 5 Quote

FYI – reference last month’s “Swedish Meatball” quote: I finally found it in the quote book, under the Slapstick heading!

In “A View from the Gallery” – Lochley: “You’re supposed to be the head of covert intelligence. Well, right now I’m not seeing a hell of a lot of intelligence, covert, overt, or otherwise!”

Source: But In Purple...I’m Stunning! by J. Michael Straczynski, edited by Sara “Samm” Barnes, copyright 2008.

Deadline for the Next Issue of Out of the WAY:

**June 5, 2024 at noon Central US Time Zone
See You Then!**

Game entries, letters of comment and other material can be sent to:

wandrew88 at gmail.com; or by post to: W. Andrew York; POB 201117; Austin TX 78720-1117

Eternal Sunshine Game Section

**Diplomacy, "More Than Ever", 2021A, W 13
Game Ends in A/F Draw**

**EOG Report and Statements Next Issue!
End of Game Statements due by June 8th at 7am My Time**

Deadline for the FINAL issue of Eternal Sunshine is: June 8th, 2024 at 7am My Time (U.S. central time) –subzine deadline is earlier