

Off to see a movie...

I'm heading out to see a movie this evening (got to get the early show price). I'm going to see something I haven't seen in years a 3D movie, complete with cardboard glasses. I hope we get to keep them, because I need some 3D glasses to see some stuff from NASA. I think they need the red/blue glasses, not the polarized lens glasses, so I'm hoping it is a red/blue thing...

Anyway this post is a preview of my review. I haven't been impressed with the previews to this movie. It looks like another of those take a book and lets ruin it type. But I'll find out more when I get there. I think the 3D is going to make or break the movie. If it works well it may make it, if it doesn't it will be a flop.

Just my early take based on previous trailers...

Well, just got back from the movie, dinner, putt-putt and ice cream. I'll have to say I was pleasantly surprised with the movie. Apparently the producers realized that a this book needed a different treatment. Instead of completely forgetting the book, the new and intrepid explorers are actually re-investigating the book. With this take, I didn't care that it wasn't following the book at all. Just new characters following the same journey.

I can't comment on the 3D, since the theater I went to did not have the equipment to show it in 3D. It was a decent comedy/adventure. Brendan Fraser again does a very good job with this type of movie. The special effects outside of 3D weren't too bad either. They kept the "Center of the Earth" fairly dark, and this always seems to help blend in the special effects. The characters all seemed to interact very well together. I'm not sure I will need to find a 3D capable movie theater, but if the TV version is 3D, I may rent it.

So there you go. I recommend seeing it, but you may want to hit the early shows.

A Morbid Taste for Bones – More books as movies

Sort of...

Years ago, one of my favorite things to watch was the series “Mystery” on PBS. I’m not even sure they have that on anymore, but I enjoyed it when it was on. This series generally brought classic fiction mystery novels to television. Hosted at one time by Vincent Price and then Diana Rigg, this series brought to the screen books and stories like Sherlock Holmes, Miss Marple, Hercule Poirot and a favorite of mine Brother Cadfael.

I had not read any of the Cadfael mysteries before seeing them on TV. I had read most if not all of Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories, and quite a few Miss Marples and Poirots. Since I knew the good treatment the BBC gave the other mystery stories, I was pretty sure that Cadfael would be no different.

As a pleasant surprise, I found that I was correct. I read the many Cadfael novels starting with “A Morbid Taste for Bones”. This was the first PBS/BBC show I saw on Cadfael, and it was also the very first book. Good of them to keep the chronology of the books. After that first show, and reading the first book I tried to read the books before watching the shows on PBS. Generally a very good match of book story to TV story. The characters had the same depth in both instances. They did add a little thing here or there, but it didn’t affect the story telling or change the feeling and meaning of the original story. If you can find these shows (I’ve seen them on

Cable every now and then) check them out. If not check out the books from the library. The author is Ellis Peters.

Now what brought this all up? Well the topic of one of my previous posts reminded me of the first story. I just had to read it again. I may finish it tomorrow when my daughter is at rehearsals.

In case you read or see the series. Good reading or watching...

Hancock a different kind of superhero

This show has already be hit hard by the critics. Again it was one I thought looked interesting in the reviews. It was almost exactly what I was expecting. There was a surprise or two in the movie, that I will not give away here.

Anyway the basic story is a superhero with a drinking problem. Like superman he can fly, is very strong, and bullets don't seem to hurt him. He tends to do more destruction than most superheroes and is not in good favor of the city officials. In fact there is a warrant for his arrest.

He does save a struggling ad man who decides to revamp his image. I liked the struggle Hancock had with his personal problems. Even though he was physically superior to normal humans, his emotional levels are not up to normal human par. A good portion of the movie is dealing with this emotional problems, and this did make it slow at times , but I did like that part After Hancock works through his problems, the movie takes off again. And into the couple of surprises I

mentioned.

Anyway I think for adults this is just a fun movie. It really won't get you thinking, it is way to spend an afternoon or evening. There is some adult humor, and some violence. The main character is a drunk at the beginning of the movie, so that may be a factor in your viewing pleasure.

So all in all it is a good movie, not up to par with the best superhero movies, but definitely well above the worst. If you don't go into it looking for too much, you may have as much fun as I did.

The surprise plot twists are also interesting.

Indiana Jones and me.

In June of 1981, just after I graduated from College, Raiders of the Lost Ark was released in theaters. At that time video rental and purchasing was in its infancy. Machines were expensive, and there were the "format wars". So the movies in the theaters ran much longer than they do now, and they were often in cheap theaters for years after the initial release. I saw Raiders with friends during the summer of 1981 multiple times, and I eventually saw it with my future wife in 1983. It was a fun movie.

In 1984, The Temple of Doom was released. I was able to see that movie in theaters as a newlywed. While we liked the movie, the dark atmosphere of the second Indiana Jones left us wanting the first movie again. Finally the price of VCRs became more reasonable, and Raiders of the Lost Ark was the one we added to our collection. After it was released to Video, we also added the Last Crusade. It wasn't until 2004

that I added the Temple of Doom to my collection.

This spring the fourth installment of the Indiana Jones movies was released. It marked the first Indiana Jones movie I did not see with my wife. Being a widower made that impossible. Still, I went with the two daughters still living at home. I went in a partial Indiana Jones costume. At the movie I wore my hat, my brown pants and beige shirt. It was too warm for my leather jacket. And only a few noticed. But with the audience, I'm sure most weren't seeing movies at the time the last movie hit theaters.

Some time early in my marriage, my wife and I were shopping and we stopped in a small store in the local mall. There was a felt Fedora. My wife thought it looked good on me, so she bought it for me. She called it my Indiana Jones hat. It was just the thing to take on our vacations. I had that hat for years, until I left it in a coffee shop, one time too many. I hope whoever picked it up enjoyed it. After that I found a much cheaper version of the hat, since I was sure I would misplace it again. And I used that hat for a few years. 2 Christmases ago, my four daughters pitched in to buy me an official Indiana Jones fedora. I was very touched that they would do that. So if you check my 'About' page, you will see a picture of me in that hat.

At times I wish I could have been the adventurer that Indiana Jones was. Searching for lost artifacts, ancient civilizations sounds like great fun. The more conservative, stay-at-home, take care of the family person almost always won the battle of personalities. When we took trips to more wilderness areas, the adventurer showed his face (and hat). We hiked many a mile through the gorges of SE Ohio, the Black hills and Bad Lands in South Dakota, and even the wilds of amusement parks and zoos. I'll never be that adventuring soul, except in the inner reaches of the mind.

That's about it for Indiana Jones and me, until the last movie

is release on video. It will be added to my collection. Maybe by that time, I'll be able to get the whip, and a more authentic leather jacket.

Books as Movies – 2

I remembered a book I enjoy yearly that was made into a movie. It was an animated movie, but it was a movie.

Long before Peter Jackson made the “Lord of the Rings” series, Rankin-Bass made “The Hobbit”. This was actually a decent handling of the book. This movie was designed as a family friendly TV movie. That is exactly what it was. There were a number of things that were different from the book, but what can you do in a 70 minute movie.

This little animated movie actually set the stage for the animated movie I wanted to talk about. Rumors were rampant about the quality of the animation for the “Lord of the Rings” in 1978. I think that is the only thing that made the movie interesting. A 132 minute movie trying to fit a trilogy the size of “The Lord of the Rings”. There was a lot of stuff left out in the 10+ hours of the Peter Jackson movies, how did they think they could do any of this justice.

Well, they didn't. For me, the animation had some problems, mainly with the big battles. They didn't look like they fit with the rest of the movie. Other than that, I don't remember much about this. My problems were with the story adaptation. There were many things missing in the story (of course) and the way the characters were drawn and written, made me wonder if anyone read the book. There was no depth to any of the characters. No drive in the Hobbits. Gandalf just seemed like an angry aging wizard (standard issue). And other characters

seemed flat.

Before Peter Jackson made his films I thought of getting this movie just for a collection. I'm glad I waited.

Books as Movies

I've been writing a lot about all of the comic book movies I've seen, but not to often about books that became movies. This may be a on going series in books that eventually became movies. I was talking with [one of the other bloggers around here](#), and something brought this up. (Old age is creeping up on me, so I can't remember what it was.)

Anyway, I started complaining about good books and stories that became rotten movies. I understand the reasoning behind the changes script writers make when converting a book/story to a movie. Some things flow better in words, than they do on screen. Somethings needed for a good movie are missing from the book. Two different media, so it makes sense that some changes would be made.

The first on my list is a story by one of my favorite authors, Isaac Asimov. The story was "Nightfall". A classic science fiction tale about a planet that never had night. With many suns in its skies, true darkness came on very rare occasions. The story was how the people reacted to the up coming event, and the effect it had on them. It was a very gripping story, that I thought would make a good movie. I didn't get to see it when it was in the theaters, and only saw it many years later on video. Let's put it this way I wasted money renting it from a library.

They forgot to change the names to protect the innocent. I can

understand why it took years before another Asimov story became a movie.

Now it has been years since I've seen that movie, and I'm not sure if anything could cause me to see it again, but here are a few things I remember.

1) Terrible acting. David Birney was the lead character, and he as stiff and boring. The rest of the cast made no impression on me at all. I remember the lead because he was sooo.. bad.

2) Constant looking at the Suns/Sky with freaky music and video effects. Once would have done enough, but over and over again???

3)They advertised this as "Isaac Asimov's Nightfall" I think he gave permission, and the used the character names and book title. Everything else had nothing to do with the original story.

4)The sets and locations for the movie just bit dust.

5) It was 83 minutes too long.

6) I kept thinking it would get better, it never did....

If you want some real fun, read the reviews on [IMDB](#). I've spent too much time on this already.

Time travel again

In talking with friend, and of course responses to my other post on time travel, I am recalling more movies and TV shows that involved some sort of time travel.

I'm going to get the various STAR TREK shows and movies that had some time travel in them out of the way now.

I'm just pulling these off the top of my head, so I'm sure I miss one or two (or more), I'm going after my favorites, not all of them (There were many).

Since I had to stop watching the ENTERPRISE show when it moved to cable only, I can't comment much on the time traveling adversary that was in that show. The last season I saw, had Captain Archer looking at a view of the future... I didn't see anything after that and I don't know what happened.

In Star Trek the original series, there were many time travel shows, some with the Enterprise sling shotting around a star or the Sun to go into the past. Others with other agents that allowed them to visit the past.

Of them all my favorites are "Assignment Earth" with Agent Gary Seven. I assumed that this may have been setting up a spinoff show, but I don't recall anything coming from that.

And the "City on the Edge of Forever". Going back and changing history based on saving the life of one person. Was this a show to say how important the acts of one could be, or a morality show to say we should not delve into things we don't comprehend?

That's enough of the TV shows, my favorite time travel STAR TREK was the Star Trek IV – The Voyage home. Lots of funny stuff in that one. Russian on a US Aircraft Carrier (the Enterprise) during the height of the cold war. Spock with the whales. Scotty giving the engineer the formula for Transparent Aluminum, or trying to talk to the computer. Just a fun show.

Of course the Next Generation got into the act of time travel. I don't recall as many of those so I guess they didn't make much of an impression on me. But the First Next Generation movie used the "NEXUS" to travel around time? Of course Kirk was brought to the future to save the day. Then in the Star Trek Next GEN: First Contact. The new Enterprise fights the Borg and goes back in time to the first Faster than light

travel from Earth. I found that show very interesting in spots, but generally don't like shows with the Borg. Just my preference.

One of my favorite time travel Star Treks has to be on Deep Space Nine "Trials and Tribble-ations. Some of the crew from Deep Space Nine go back in time and interact with the original Star Trek Series, Trouble with Tribbles episode. Worf's line about the Klingons on the space station is worth watching it one more time...

Since I can't travel backward in time, only forward at a set speed, I guess that's enough for now. I was just a blogging fool this evening.

Remake of a movie

Every once in a while a remake is made of a movie. Most of the time it is because the first movie was very good, and they think the remake will be as good. Such movies that come to my mind are "The Thomas Crown Affair" ([1999](#) and [1968](#)) and "Oceans Eleven" ([2001](#) and [1960](#)). Today I saw a remake of an different sort. One that was made because the first movie wasn't everything it could be. Today I saw "The Incredible Hulk" ([2008](#)).

I'm going to try very hard not to give any big spoilers, I won't tell you the end or anything about the big battle we all know I HULK movie should have. I just want to talk about what was done right this time. The original HULK movie was one I barely mention that I saw. From somebody who really likes comic book movies (see other posts – shameless plug for my own writing), The first Hulk really does not exist for me other than a bad dream.

So what did the 2008 version of the HULK have? Let's start with the most important need of any movie. It had a very good story line and plot. The action of the plot drove the characters. The characters seemed to react and not act. All the characters, from the leads to the cameos and the supporting to the CGI actors were believable. Could I tell it was a CGI character, sure, but that did not detract from the movie (Its about a comic book, should that really make a difference?) But the CGI characters were believable. They had expression and enough realism to be considered as other parts of the story. This had a lot to do with the quality of the story in addition to the quality of the actors.

Now on to the characters. I've seen most of the main characters in at least one other movie. Some of these movies were very memorable. I didn't see those characters in this movie. Again this is one of my best compliments to actors and writers. I don't want to see an Elf princess as a respected scientist, love interest in a movie that has no elves. I don't want to see an illusionist as a studious scientist either. I didn't see that. They became their characters, and the story drove them, or they drove the story. This would have been a good movie even if the comic never existed.

My rating -- This will be one I see again in the expensive (stadium seating) theater. That, of course, means the DVD will join my collection.

Slight spoilers... Things I liked because I liked the campy TV show... And I like comics

Bruce Banner's eyes when he changes to the Hulk look very similar to the old TV show.

The lab equipment that is used to create the Hulk also looks a lot like the old TV show.

At the beginning of the movie, Bruce Banner is watching TV, a

clip from the old Bill Bixby TV show "The Courtship of Eddie's Father" is on.

Bruce Banner using the line or trying "You won't like me when I'm angry"

Lou Ferrigno's cameo and his being the Voice of the Hulk.

Stan Lee's Cameo.

Tony Stark showing up during the movie.

The super soldier serum from WWII is mentioned.

There were others, but I can't remember them now.

August Rush meets the Chipmunks

I rented two movies for this evening, the first was "Alvin and the Chipmunks". From my childhood days I remember listening to The Chipmunks Christmas Song and Alvin's Harmonica Song. I didn't think I would like the Chipmunk movie. It was cute, not at all what I thought it would be. Great kids movie, and entertaining enough to keep the parents amused. They did play the Chipmunk song during the movie, but I didn't hear the Harmonica song. Just a little disappointed in that. Can't have everything.

Now the movie "August Rush". Much different than I thought it would be. I saw the previews and theatrical trailers for this movie, and they didn't do it justice at all. This is one I may end up purchasing for my collection. I'm not exactly sure where it would fit in. Not my normal movie choice. It's not

exactly a music movie, not exactly a love story, not exactly anything but what it is. I found that Robin Williams can be a bad guy. His character was played to perfection. Since he was the only actor whose name I recognized, it wasn't hard for me to put and keep everyone in their own character. The movie flowed around the story, and the characters made the story. I can give no better compliment to a movie. I was entertained through the whole thing

19 years ago...

The first Indiana Jones movie was released 19 years ago. My wife and I didn't go to movies often. At that time we had 3 daughters at home the youngest was 1 1/2 years old. Somehow we got to a movie theater to see this one. When we did go to movies, they were usually action movies. My wife was hard of hearing, and she felt she got more out of the action movies, because she didn't need the dialog. On this movie, she said she was wrong. We waited for the movie to come to the cheaper theaters just to see it again, so she could watch the lips and pick up more dialog. Then when they came to video, we actually bought them to get the closed captioning. Except for the 2nd movie, we watched these shows over and over again. Our children grew to like them too (something about brainwashing could go in here, they were just repeatedly shown 2 of the Indiana Jones Movies).

Then came today. Since 1989 a lot has changed. My children grew up, the baby at that time is now 20. My youngest is 16. Two other daughters are married. I have grandkids. I am a widower... This was the first Indiana Jones Movie I did not see with my wife. There is a piece missing to the show. That after show conversation, trying to fill my wife into some of the

dialog. Her squeezing my hand when something in the show startled her. Her say how good looking either Harrison Ford or eventually Sean Connery was. Complaining about all the new characters, the story, or just whatever. Who we liked, who we didn't. And after the first two movies and the Alan Quartermain spoofs, watching the third, saying when will we see the new Alan Quartermain??? There never was a 3rd Alan Quartermain. By the time the last Indiana Jones rolled out, the lead in Alan Quartermain was looking like Indiana did in this last movie. No, there won't be a spoof following this one, unless its by the same people who brought us Scary Movie and the Superhero Movie. That might be fun.

So today was a fun day, since I got to see the newest Indy, but at the same time there was a bit of a shadow over the whole thing.

I wore my Indy outfit (Brown slacks, beige shirt, boots and Fedora – too warm for the leather jacket) to the theater today, I'm not sure how many noticed. Funny thing, while I got an "Indiana Jones" Fedora a couple of Christmases ago, it was just one of the brown fedoras I've had. I started wearing one shortly after the first movie. My lovely wife said it looked good on me, and I needed something to keep the sun off my face during our summer vacations (usually hiking somewhere). I lost my first hat, but I still have the second (not as nice since we couldn't afford a good one at the time). Now I have the hat my daughters bought me for Christmas. I can never thank them enough for that gift. As they can tell you, I wear that hat often. Most of the winter, and summer. I don't tend to wear it in the spring or on windy days. In the spring, I'm looking for as much sun as possible, so all hats are off my head.

Strange what watching a movie will make you think...