

### חדשות האגודה – דצמבר 2018 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

- המועדון בירושלים יעסוק בספר "אבק כוכבים" מאת ניל גיימן (אופוס, 2000). המועדון יתקיים ביום שלישי, 18-12-2018, בשעה 20:00. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמות ולנרשמים למועדון (ובפייסבוק). מנחה: **גלי אחיטוב**.

- המועדון בת"א יעסוק באסופת הסיפורים "היה יהיה 2018" (האגודה הישראלית למדע בדיוני ולפנטסיה), ביום חמישי 27-12-2018 בשעה 19:30, בבית פרטי במרכז ת"א. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמות ולנרשמים למועדון. מנחה: **דפנה קירש**.

- המועדון בחיפה יעסוק בספר "המשחק של אנדר" מאת אורסון סקוט קארד (אופוס, 1994). המועדון יתקיים ביום חמישי, 27-12-2018 ב-19:00 מנחה: יערה פפר. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמות ולנרשמים למועדון, במייל של מרכז המועדון - **שניה הניקיון**.

- המועדון בגליל מערבי בכרמיאל-משגב יעסוק בטרילוגיית הערפילאים מאת ברנדון סנדרסון, אורח הכבוד המיועד של אייקון 2019. המועדון יתקיים ביום רביעי, 19-12-2018 ב-20:00, בבית פרטי במשגב. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמות ולנרשמים. מנחה: **קרן פייז**.

כל האירועים של האגודה מופיעים בלוח האירועים (שפע אירועים מעניינים, הרצאות, סדנאות, מפגשים ועוד) לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף לרשימת התפוצה או בדף האגודה בפייסבוק. Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site: <http://www.sf-f.org.il>

#### This month's roundup:

- A note about the passing of the legendary Stan Lee — of the Marvel Comics Universe (MCU) fame
  - Two quick SF TV show reviews (Lost in Space (2018) Season 1 + Black Mirror Season 2)
  - A few links to write-ups about recent and worthwhile Fantasy movies to consider watching
  - Sorry, no "Sheer Science" this month
  - Also, due to circumstances beyond my control, the expected review of Zion's Fiction has been delayed
- As usual, interesting tidbits from various websites.

– Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

Before we get to our usual fare, we must stop a moment or two and remember that this month one of the greatest living legends of modern fantasy, fiction, and science fiction has passed away:

## STAN ('The Man') LEE



(Born Stanley Martin Lieber; December 28, 1922 – November 12, 2018)

\*Can you name the various superheroes depicted in his "Super" portrait? I got 9, possibly 11...

Stan was one of the most dynamic and influential pop-culture writers and idea men of the last almost 80 years. His readership and audiences became devoted fans of his many superhero and other characters and stories in the comics, on TV (animated cartoons), and in film.

He either created or was a major influence in the ever developing and evolving stories and characters of such household names as Spiderman, the X-Men, Hulk, Captain America, and others. He spawned and inspired several generations of an untold number of new writers, artists, comic book people, movie and animation scriptwriters, and more (my humble self among them).

**We'll be putting together a special tribute issue in his memory – so don't just stand idly by... Please send in any worthy contribution and/or relevant material on and about Stan Lee.**

**In the meantime, see this:**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/films/2018/11/12/stan-lee-tribute-one-seismically-influent-creators-time/>

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**Some fun from the Websites:**

**It being December and we're coming up to the NEW YEAR 2019, let's take a look forward 500 years (we are, after all SF lovers...):**

**What will Earth look like in 500 years?**

By ROBERT LAMB

If you could travel back in time five centuries, you'd encounter a thriving Aztec empire in Central Mexico, a freshly painted "Mona Lisa" in Renaissance Europe and cooler temperatures across the Northern Hemisphere. This was a world in the midst of the Little Ice Age (A.D. 1300 to 1850) and a period of vast European exploration now known as the Age of Discovery.



But what if we could look 500 years into the future and glimpse the Earth of the 26th century? Would the world seem as different to us as the 21st century would have seemed to residents of the 16th century? For starters, what will the weather be like?

To read more, see:

<https://science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/earth/geology/earth-500-years.htm?>

**Have Money, Will Travel**



**Billionaire Yuri Milner's Breakthrough Initiatives Eyes Private Mission to Seek Alien Life**

By Mike Wall, Space.com Senior Writer Nov. 2018

MOFFETT FIELD, Calif. — Government agencies may not have a monopoly on life-hunting space missions for much longer.

Breakthrough Initiatives, which already scans the heavens for possible signals from faraway [alien civilizations](#), is considering looking for E.T. on worlds close to home, founder Yuri Milner said.

"We are thinking very seriously about solar system-based initiatives," Milner said here Sunday (Nov. 4) at the seventh annual Breakthrough Prize ceremony at NASA's Ames Research Center. "We're thinking, within our foundation, is there something we can do, privately funded, which will supplement the government-funded projects?" [[6 Most Likely Places for Alien Life in the Solar System](#)]

To read more, see:

<https://www.space.com/42384-breakthrough-initiatives-alien-life-search-mission.html?>

# Two Quick TV Show Reviews

Busy, busy, busy, but I have managed to catch up on some TV shows and movies (not all of which are SF). In addition, since the loss of my mother two months ago, I haven't been to a movie theatre – as adheres to the Jewish custom of a year of mourning for a parent – so I'm mostly doing reading. You can look forward to book reviews in the upcoming months.

## 1) *Lost in Space* (2018, Season 1, 10 episodes) - with some comparisons to the original 1965-68 series



2018- TV series (that's young Will's back to us)



1965-1968 TV series

I barely remember the original three season *Lost in Space* series of 1965-1968. As I recall, it was in some way based on the 1812 *Swiss Family Robinson* story by the Swiss writer Johann David Wyss about a couple and their kids, who are the sole survivors of a shipwreck (and I actually have a much clearer memory of the Disney movie of that name), and how they have to make do in the wild. I've often wondered if that story was inspired by Daniel Defoe's 1719 "*Robinson Crusoe*" – since both use the name "Robinson" (according to Wikipedia it is. See their write-ups for some nice descriptions of both stories).

About the only two things that I can say that "stuck" in my mind from the original 1960's *Lost in Space* series were the iconic robot, and the scheming Dr. Smith.



The Robot and Dr. Smith



Dr. Smith (So very memorably played by actor Jonathan Harris)

The 2018 series, however, uses some of the ideas from the 1960's show, but takes it a few levels higher, with regards to suspense and intrigue. The major changes are – that they are not entirely alone, and the "Jupiter 21" Robinson family spacecraft and crew makeup are different, as is the robot. Apparently, the original series pilot (entitled "No Place to Hide") was to have shown the crew to be on a 100-year suspended animation expedition to colonize a planet in the Alpha Centauri space. In the 2018 series, the Robinsons are part of a larger group of

families on a mother ship the “Resolute” who also crash land with them in their own “Jupiter xx” space wagon (though this is not so evident in the opening episodes).

The Robinson’s family makeup is also very different. Here the father, John Robinson, is no longer a “Professor”, but rather a rough-and-tough elite military man (an ex-SEAL) and not a ‘brain’ like everyone else in the family. This is also the source of many of the points of friction in the series, since he was overseas a lot and the mother, mission commander Maureen Robinson, was going to divorce him and take the kids away to the interplanetary colony.

The series empowers the women, with Maureen as one of the top US physicists, selected for the colonization mission, as well as her older daughter Judy who, at 18, is a medical doctor. Even scheming “Dr. Smith” is a woman with Smith’s stolen ID, who is in actually posing as her own sister Jessica in order to steal her place aboard the Resolute colony ship.

And in this show, the Robot is even a dangerous alien robot with AI who can take on various forms – like a combination of a praying mantis and a spider – or an erect two-legged, two-armed very tall and extremely powerful robot. The fact that it is a robot with evolving AI is good, but the added factor of it being of Alien origin is an excellent hook / bookmark for further expansion of the series’ plotlines.

In both series, young Will befriends the robot, but in this series, Will seems to have a sympathetic or quasi-telepathic connection with the robot, above and beyond his verbal control over him.



I can’t say that it’s the best SF show I’ve seen, but I’m very impressed by actor Parker Posey’s acting as the criminal and very psychotic June Harris, who steals her rich and brilliant physicist sister’s place on the Resolute, and then poses as psychologist Dr. Smith, manipulating everyone throughout the series.



The other actors all play their roles very well, and the filmography and special effects are very well done. Although I’m not an astrophysicist or geologist, but much of what is mentioned in those fields seems to be (or at least sound) very authentic.

Trailer for Season 1 doesn’t really do it for me, but the series is worth looking into, if you’ve not got something better to spend your time on.

About upcoming Season 2 – probably end of 2019 / beginning of 2020) – may contain spoilers for Season 1 if you haven’t seen it yet:

<https://www.digitalspy.com/tv/ustv/a854559/lost-in-space-netflix-season-2-release-date-cast-plot-trailer-robot/>

## 2) Black Mirror (2016 - Season 02 – Three standalone episodes)

If you've actually seen the episodes and you've read and agreed with my reviews of the several episodes of the first season of Black Mirror (see **CyberCozen** September 2017), then you'll surely agree with me that this is an SF series worth watching. In general, I was very captivated by the intelligence and ideas discussed in each standalone episode-story. The stories are very well designed and presented, the acting is clean-cut: nothing sophisticated, heavy or over-exaggerated, in fact very realistic.

### Episode 01 – Be Right Back

A young man – a heavy cellphone and social media user – dies in a car accident. After the funeral, at the wake, the widow's friend suggests she contact a company that can set up an AI simulacrum of her late husband, based on the history of his surfing, chats, messaging, etc. history — even his voice conversations. After she is signed up by her friend, she begins having realistic phone conversations with the AI of her late husband. Eventually she orders an android of him, based on his photos and medical data. However, she needs to 'retrain' him for the more intimate things, since he never discussed such things online ... and there are other concerns.

### Episode 02 – WhiteBear

This one is a very scary one, where a young woman wakes up in an abandoned house with no memory of who, where, why, when – and what is going on around her. All she knows is that there is a small photo of a cute little girl that she thinks may be her daughter. As she leaves the cottage, she sees silent people all round with cameras and mostly mobile phones filming her – no one talks. When she eventually meets some people who will talk to her, they are attacked and hunted down by crazy masked men and women who seem to be on a killing spree in the quiet town – but people are still silently hovering around and filming behind the murderers. The end is quite shocking – even disturbing.

### Episode 01 – The Waldo Moment

This one is about a behind-the-scene comedian, Jamie, who manipulates and voices-over a live cartoon figure "Waldo" who satirizes the political situation and includes interviewing political figures with embarrassing results (for them). In parallel, a newbie lawyer is hired by the leading political party (Monroe's), to front for them – and also take the flack and the fall if need be, if things go bad. Jamie's "Waldo" is set up to run in the upcoming elections and calls out Monroe at his various public appearances. This one touches on the power of the media, and possible unfair manipulation, since Waldo's runner is anonymous and responsible to no one.

## 3) AND, as a BONUS, check out this article about FANTASY FILMS

### The best fantasy films on Netflix you haven't seen

From swashbuckling swordplay to supernatural sorcery, Netflix is a trove of hidden fantasy treasures just waiting to be discovered. You may have seen the big titles on the streaming service, like *Pirates of the Caribbean* or *Stardust*, but that's just the edge of the map as far as Netflix's fantasy selection is concerned. Whether your palate prefers fire-breathing lizards or you're more of a cursed tomb raider aficionado, Netflix truly has something for everyone.

And the deeper you dig, the more varied and original they get. Sword masters fighting demons for possession of their soul? You bet. Pirate ghosts with a sentimental side? Definitely. Vampire John C. Reilly tap dancing with his pet tarantula? We wouldn't expect any less!

So strap on your sandals and saddle your dragon, because we're heading off into uncharted lands to seek out the best Netflix fantasy films you should be watching. Warning: Here there be monsters.

Read more: <https://www.looper.com/126702/the-best-fantasy-films-on-netflix-you-havent-seen/>

Also worth viewing: <https://www.looper.com/131295/the-best-2018-fantasy-movies-no-one-is-talking-about>

***We'd love to hear your thoughts on the above topics and with your OK, we may publish them!***

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