



The Menace from Earth

Robert A. Heinlein

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She was beautiful
She was smart
She was irresistible
She was after my boyfriend...

Contents:

- The Year of the Jackpot · nv Galaxy Mar '52
- By His Bootstraps [as by Anson MacDonald] · na Astounding Oct '41
- Columbus Was a Dope · ss Startling Stories May '47
- The Menace from Earth · nv F&SF Aug '57
- Sky Lift · ss Imagination Nov '53
- Goldfish Bowl [as by Anson MacDonald] · nv Astounding Mar '42
- Project Nightmare · nv Amazing Apr/May '53
- Water Is for Washing · ss Argosy Nov '47

The Menace from Earth Details

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From Reader Review The Menace from Earth for online ebook

Kenneth says

A collection of Heinlein's stories from the 1940's & 1950's which I read back in the early/mid 1960's. "By His Bootstraps" is the one I remember best, a time travel story with a seeming paradox.

Anmiryam says

There are two stories in this collection that have stuck with me since I was about ten: The Year of the Jackpot and The Menace from Earth. I still reread them on occasion. Jackpot is the scariest story I've ever read since it starts off as a tale about oddball happenings that seem statistically impossible, moves onto nuclear war and then to the sun going supernova.

'Menace' I always loved because as a geeky awkward girl that there it a future of being smart and striving for achievement would not preclude finding someone to love. Classic YA before there was YA.

Michael O'Donnell says

This collection of short fiction by Robert A. Heinlein, first published in 1959, collects eight stories from various sf magazines of the forties and fifties. The stories are as follows:

'The Year of The Jackpot' — a statistician's graphs of unrelated phenomena, from stock market prices and rainfall to people stripping in public, all point to a peak on the same date, and indicate that the whole world is in for a bad year. Unfortunately, there also seems to be something wrong with the Sun.

'By His Bootstraps' — probably one of Heinlein's most well known stories, it tells of a man who interacts with multiple versions of himself by means of a time portal. Which came first, the chicken or the egg?

'Columbus Was A Dope' — two barflies and a bartender debate space travel and exploration, with one patron contending that exploration is pointless and Columbus should have stayed at home. The location of the bar provides a neat twist ending.

'The Menace From Earth' — a teenage girl, living on the Moon, finds her love life under threat when a femme fatale arrives from Earth on vacation.

'Sky Lift' — a spaceship pilot must undergo a long period of high-G acceleration on a mission to Pluto to deliver a cure for a plague ravaging a research station.

'Goldfish Bowl' — two scientists investigate two massive waterspouts which have appeared in the Pacific. During the investigation, they disappear and find themselves in a featureless prison, being kept as study specimens, or perhaps pets, by some unknown intelligence.

'Project Nightmare' — the Soviet Union has planted atom bombs in multiple US cities, primed to explode at

the same time if the US does not surrender. A secret team of psi-enhanced people must use their telekinetic and clairvoyant abilities to prevent the bombs from exploding until they are found and disarmed.

‘Water Is For Washing’ — a man with a phobia of water finds himself fleeing for his life when an earthquake allows the Pacific to flood an area of California which is below sea level.

Despite the age of these stories, they all hold up reasonably well, with none being unreadable. You have to allow for the attitudes prevalent at the time of writing, especially with regard to the female characters, but even here, ‘The Menace From Earth’ gives us an unusually-strong-for-the-time female protagonist.

‘By His Bootstraps’ was an entertaining romp, despite the ending being obvious a mile off, and ‘Project Nightmare’ was a genuinely tense thriller.

All in all, a decent Heinlein collection. Nothing outstanding, but worth your time.

Jim says

Another set of short stories by RAH & they're something he excelled at. They're kind of an odd collection, but good. Well narrated. Not as good as The Green Hills of Earth collection, although there are a few really good stories in this one.

“**The Year of the Jackpot**” is overshadowed now by Big Data, but still an interesting premise.

“**By His Bootstraps**” is too long, although that does help make the point. Time travel creates some interesting conundrums & this loop takes on a few of them.

“**Goldfish Bowl**” has never really grabbed me. Interesting concept, but too dated even when I first read it.

“**Columbus Was a Dope**” is pretty fantastic. It's short & makes a wonderful point.

“**The Menace from Earth**” features one of the neatest ideas in SF - humans wearing wings & flying on the moon. He makes it so believable! There's a pretty good YA romance in it, too.

“**Sky Lift**” is pretty fantastic, too. Just what would be the effects of prolonged high gravity acceleration on a human? Chilling answer.

“**Project Nightmare**” is kind of a silly thing about Psi powers.

“**Water Is for Washing**” is another of his stories about a phobia, but I liked “Ordeal in Space” far more. Again, I don't think he gets it right, although the idea is kind of interesting.

Raymond Ford says

I love science fiction short story collections, and this collection from Heinlein is a great example of how early sci-fi writers really let their imaginations go - something that is lost in today's sci-fi I think. Written

from 1941-1957, it totally captures both the anxiety and possibilities of the era including the jargon and slang of the 1950's. We have nuclear end of the world stories with Project Nightmare and The Year of the Jackpot. We have teenage angst in a time when generations of people grew up on the moon in The Menace from Earth. And we have a brilliant time travel story in "By His Bootstraps" where the main character plays every character in the story through time travel. Lastly we have the awesome sci-fi "what if" stories about traveling through space or aliens manipulating our world in ways we never thought possible.

M.M. Strawberry Reviews says

After the seriousness of the last couple of stories in the Future History timeline, this is a more light-hearted read as a young woman on the Luna colony struggles with the fact that a beautiful tourist from Earth seems to be trying to steal her boyfriend. it ends in a bit cheesy/cliche way, but as i said, it's a more comedic read compared to some of the other stories in this collection.

Nick D says

A collection of short stories/novellas by Heinlein between 1941 and 1957 (two years before Starship Troopers and four years before Stranger in a Strange Land).

The Year of the Jackpot - A mathematician studies minor peculiar events around the world and plots them to determine when the world will likely end. A good story.

By His Bootstraps - Published in 1941, this is a mind-boggling account of the realistic paradoxes of time travel. It's a formula that's been done to death now, but I can imagine this really messing with people in '41. Bob Wilson is visited by multiple future Bob Wilson's and we follow him on his journey and see how he himself becomes those future versions of himself. It gets technical.

Columbus Was A Dope - A very brief story regarding a conversation between four men about an upcoming interstellar expedition. The journey will take 60 years and require multiple generations to complete it. One man finds this absurd and doesn't think it's worth exploring, especially at the price of children living entire lives on a space ship. The other men have more of a pioneering spirit and feel chasing the impossible is the only way to make it possible. The final line provides irony contrasting with the single doubters opinion.

The Menace From Earth - A sneakily progressive (for the time) short about a self-described "career woman" living on the Moon dealing with jealousy. Holly is a teen spaceship designer that works in partnership with Jeff. Both make ends meet by acting as guides for "groundhogs", tourists from Earth. Much of the story takes place in Bats' Cave, a massive dome in which people can wear special wings and fly around (much like a skating rink or swimming pool on Earth). Jeff seems to have taken a shine to a pretty "groundhog", and Holly refuses to admit that her jealousy is based in romance. Rather, she puts up the appearance of being upset that their business partnership is now on shaky ground. This is a really well-written story, using the drama of flight as a metaphor for the emotional state of Holly.

Sky Lift - Science-fiction that is heavy on the Science, this is a pretty straightforward story about two astronauts making an interplanetary trip to rescue a settlement from a terrible health crisis. The issue is, in order to get there in time, the pilots will have to pull 3.5 G's for a continuous nine days - which is something

close to a suicide mission (By comparison, modern astronauts pull 3 G's only during blast-off and then settle back once in orbit). The story details the effects of the high gravity on the body and the sacrifice of a few to save many. Decent story.

Goldfish Bowl - A definite standout in this collection. Scientists Eisenberg and Graves are sent to investigate two mysterious and massive pillars of water that have appeared near Hawaii. In doing so, the pair find themselves trapped in a room with nothing to interact with except mushy food and balls of water that are completely self-contained. Graves shares his theory with Eisenberg that perhaps they are being kept as pets by a higher form of being, the way we keep goldfish in bowls. This kinda reminds me of Flatland.

Project Nightmare - I really like the premise of this one, but I feel the impact was lost a bit in delivery. Basically, Russia has planted atomic bombs in cities throughout the US and plans to detonate them. The government enlists the help of people with ESP to find and mentally suppress these bombs until they can be disposed of properly. The bulk of the story is the frantic strategizing of the lead scientists as they assign certain individuals to find the bombs in specific cities. In that frenzy, I think the story comes across as a little too confused and unfocused.

Water is for Washing - A man with a fear of water due to past near-drowning undergoes the ride of his life. While in the Imperial Valley of California, an earthquake causes the below sea-level city to quickly flood. As he attempts to flee, he stops and rescues two children and a hitchhiker that stole from him earlier. The four try to outrun the rising waters, and in the process the man shows some development. Another good story.

Overall, this was an excellent collection. I had never heard of any of these before, and if it weren't for the bargain shelf at my local comic book store I would have never discovered it. I'm really happy to have read these stories.

Mary JL says

This is one of Heinlein's few story collections. There are 8 short stories from the late 1940's and early 1950's.

The stories vary in quality--the title story "The Meance From Earth" is actually not bad--the description above does not do it justice.

It also contains two really good Heinlein short stories that are not well known, but are favorites of mine. One is "The Year of the Jackpot" and the other is "Goldfish Bowl".

I like Heinlein's early work much better than his later work. If you have never read any of his short stories, this collection would be a good start--all the stories---though a bit dated in spots--are still quite readable.

Toby says

A collection of mixed entertainment quality. Some very good short stories on the whole but I found the final

few to have perhaps aged badly, being far more relevant to the period they were written than 2019.

Lisa (Harmonybites) says

With Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke I think their short stories are more impressive than their novels, and if I were to list my favorite short science fiction stories, Asimov and Clarke would crowd out almost everyone else in the top ten. With Heinlein I tend to think it's the reverse--that it's his long fiction that is the most memorable--stronger than that of Asimov and Clarke just as their short fiction is much more memorable than that of Heinlein. I just don't think any Heinlein short is of the same caliber as Asimov's "Nightfall" or "The Dead Past" or Clarke's "The Star" or "The Billion Names of God."

But--it surprised me just how enjoyable these were. This is a reread, although I last read this ages ago in my teens. The story I remembered best--and still like the best, is the title story, "The Menace from Earth." It's quite light-hearted and there's a lot here to like. JK Rowling, eat your heart out, Quidditch has nothing on the winged flyers of the Moon! And I quite liked fifteen-year-old Holly Jones--she has quite a lot in common with Heinlein's Podkayne of Mars, only more level-headed and the ending of this novelette doesn't make me want to bounce the book against the wall. "By His Bootstraps," a time-loop story, is another one I found very memorable--although I don't think on first read decades ago I hated Bob Wilson oh so much. With "Goldfish Bowl" I definitely remembered the odd form of the water and the food--and the story does creepy well. "The Year of the Jackpot" is quite unsettling and like many of Heinlein's stories, features a nice little twist. The other four stories aren't as strong--but none is less than entertaining.

A. Roy King says

"The Menace From Earth" is a collection of short stories from the 1940s and 1950s by science-fiction master Robert A. Heinlein. Not surprisingly given the period of writing, the stories come across as dated, especially in attitudes toward women. Nevertheless, it's valuable to go back and read material from seminal SF writers like Heinlein (along with Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke).

One thing I'm struck by is the variety of story ideas represented in this collection. Most of these stories could fit loosely together in a common future where humankind is spreading out into space. Heinlein does a good job of asking "what-if," building an interesting scenario, and placing characters into it, confronted by a challenge.

I think my favorite story from this collection is the title story, "The Menace From Earth," which imagines what things might be like for human colonists on the moon. Because of the low gravity, flying has become a popular sport, and the great cavern used for this becomes the setting for a love triangle.

ARK -- 23 November 2014

Jon says

1943 Retro Hugo Finalist for Best Novelette

“Goldfish Bowl” by Anson MacDonald (Robert A. Heinlein) (Astounding Science Fiction, March 1942)

Available as a Hoopla audiobook*: <https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/1...>

* It will be difficult to find this shortstory in that audiobook since Hoopla doesn't usually provide any bookmarks/table of contents links.

Contents (via ISFDB)

- The Year of the Jackpot • (1952) • novelette - Listened 4/11/18 am 3.5 stars
- By His Bootstraps • (1941) • novella (start at timestamp 01:17:05) - Listened 4/12/18 am 3-3.5 stars
- Columbus Was a Dope • (1947) • short story (start at timestamp 03:09:50) - Listened 4/13/18 am 3 stars
- The Menace from Earth • [Future History] • (1957) • novelette (start at timestamp 03:18:30)
- Sky Lift • (1953) • short story (start at timestamp 04:13:30)
- **Goldfish Bowl** • (1942) • novelette (start at timestamp 04:46:50) - Listed 4/15-16/18 while traveling for business. May need to re-listen as I had many distractions. Interesting. 3.5 stars
- Project Nightmare • (1953) • novelette (start at timestamp 05:59:15) The best defense is a good paranormal Cold War offense. 3.5 stars
- Water Is for Washing • (1947) • short story (start at timestamp 06:48:25) 3 stars

Jearith says

This is the first R.A.Heinlein book I ever read, and I must say it was great. Looking back some of the stories weren't nearly as good as some of his other works, but it will always hold a special place in my heart. The story that really got me hooked onto Heinlein was "By His Bootstraps", I saw the ending coming, but I didn't really mind that much. The book is a great read with lots of fun, charm, and memorable stories. There is an interesting story "Fish Bowl" which posses some interesting concepts of how we think about pets.. if you are looking for some fun, light, Scifi, check this one out for sure.

Jeff Yoak says

I re-read the title essay again today. While the story is great either on paper or in traditional narration, I have a copy produced by The Atlanta Radio Theater Company that is my favorite. It's a short but sweet example of Heinlein's amazing style... and the end turns me into a great big crybaby. :-)

2012: This is actually the first of Heinlein's I made it through with Alex (6). He was incredibly touched by the story. Heinlein tends to have a vocabulary that is still just a little bit tough for him, but we got through this one and he loves the story. It gave us another half hour or so talking about gravity on the moon, and the recreational flying it might allow. :-)

Ed says

8 short stories published in the pulps between 1941 and 1957 are found in this 1959 compilation from the grandmaster Robert A. Heinlein. The quality of the individual stories varies, but the title story and 'By His

'Bootstraps' are worth the price of admission and show the imagination for which RAH is regarded as one of the all-time best SF authors.

'The Year of the Jackpot', end of the world romance.

'By His Bootstraps', ingenious time travel yarn.

'Columbus Was a Dope', cute short.

'The Menace From Earth', amusing technological romance.

'SkyLift', straightforward rocket pilot tale.

'Goldfish Bowl', alien presence.

'Project Nightmare', ESP powers.

'Water Is For Washing', future action tale.
