

The Devniad, Book 12

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Flix Pix My Ten Favorite Movies of 1995

The original version of this list was created at the last minute for a New Year's Eve party, but I thought you might enjoy seeing and greeting it with the hoots and rancor engendered by all such subjective discussions of cinematic preference. Happy video rentals, all.

Note I don't say "best," but "favorite." I average at least a movie a week. Of 50 to 60 big-screen experiences, these are the ones that managed to float my boat.

1. *Persuasion*

Perfect adaptation of a Jane Austen classic. After the New Year, I finally saw *Sense and Sensibility* and loved that too. But this one is colder, plainer, entirely more beautiful.

2. *Crumb*

Brilliant documentary about how the strange underground comix artist R. Crumb got that way. Not for the squeamish, of course. And if nerdiness makes you squirm (not likely for a NESFA member), be warned that R. Crumb makes Woody Allen look like J. F. Kennedy, Jr.

3. *Shallow Grave*

Stylish, chilling thriller with a real 90s feel about Scottish yuppies covering up a death when money enters the picture. The real reason I missed the Intersection

con: after seeing this picture, I was too **scared** to go to Glasgow.

4. *Beyond Rangoon*

Dreamy, visionary epic by John Boorman about a beautiful young American (Patricia Arquette) who comes to modern Myanmar (Burma) to escape tragedy, but finds revolution, absolute danger, and liberation. I think it changed my life a little, too.

5. *Waterworld*

Mad Max gets wet. I don't care how much Kevin Costner went over budget. This movie didn't cost **me** \$170 million, just \$6.50, so what's the problem? An exciting science fiction film with tangy characters and jaw-dropping action.

6. *Hoop Dreams*

Acclaimed documentary of two kids who get a chance to make it out of the ghetto through high school basketball. But this is real life, so who makes it and who doesn't really matters. Took two of my teenage nieces (Lisa and Jill), who join me in deeming it "awesome."

7. *Braveheart*

Mel Gibson directed, stars in this big, lusty epic about a 13th century Scottish revolutionary hero. Humor, terrific characters, great battles. And heaps of authenticity: the heroines are the only people in the picture with clean hair.

8. *Clueless*

Alicia Silverstone is a California princess with a heart of gold in this funny, bitchy satire that's hard on her, her friends, her school, and her America. Same director as *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, and as dead-on.

9. *Il Postino (The Postman)*

An Italian film very loosely based on a true story about a lonely, romantic mailman on a remote island who befriends a visiting Great Poet (the great Philippe Noiret as the great Pablo Neruda) in order to get advice on romance.

10. *Apollo 13*

Tom Hanks leads a team of astronauts who may very well not make it back from their Moon flight. Based on the true story. It actually makes engineering exciting.

Also good: *Babe...Muriel's Wedding...The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill But Came Down a Mountain...The Secret of Roan Inish...Immortal Beloved...The Madness of King George...Toy Story...Unstrung Heroes.*

Backchat

on APA:NESFA #309, February 1996

To all

After working on my brother Michael's ChronoCollisions game at Boskone, we Devniacs (there were 5 of us in attendance, so you weren't just seeing blurry) came up with a stripped-down trivia spinoff idea that I might as well note here. (Met with some positive

response at the Boskone debriefing already.) This wouldn't replace Michael's game or my favorite Trivia Bowl; just be in addition to them.

As Mark Olson says, "Fans know everything." So at a future con, why not put up a board, perhaps near Information, wherein anyone can jot down some SF (or other) trivia question that's been bugging them, or that comes up at the con. (These would be questions you sincerely want to find out, not ones to which you already know the answer.) Surely one of the other 900 fans present will wander by and jot down the answer. This would be simple, cheap, very low maintenance, fun. And remember, when a fan's gotta know, she's gotta know.

What thinkest thou all?

To Mark Olson

If we want to get SF people on a U.S. postage stamp, maybe we'd better go in heavily for name recognition. So first choice would probably be Asimov, not John Campbell. Dr. A's science cred and vast writings outside the field should help. (Although -- do you have to be born a U.S. citizen? Maybe not, look at Santa Claus.) Rules say the postal commission has to wait at least 5 years after death, so Asimov should be coming into contention soon.

Second to Asimov, my favorite, Robert A. Heinlein. Especially if the Republicans stay in. Third choice? Well, given that 5-year rule, I suppose Christopher Priest and Andrew I. Porter would urge Harlan Ellison for the earliest possible consideration....

To Michael Burstein

Eternal thanks for introducing me to the club's famous copy machine, Mr. Gestetner. Really admired your technique. Since you had just learned

yourself from Mark Hertel, assume you were following the Surgeon's Learning Curve: "See one, do one, teach one."

Good luck with your new *Analog* submission. Hope Editor Stan Schmidt is schmidten.

Your Boskone trip report left out what lunching with the pros is really like. I'm guessing beluga and peacock's tongues swilled down with the true the blushful Hippocrene.

Thanks for the intro to Maureen McHugh after her reading. Already knew she was a great writer. Now suspect she's not a bad person either.

Interesting that you were born on February 27, and I on the 26th. My birthfellows are Victor Hugo, Jackie Gleason, and Theodore Sturgeon, which explains my admixed resemblance to all three. You share the 27th with (in ascending order of magnitude) Constantine the Great, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Steinbeck, Liz Taylor, and our own A. Joe Ross.

To Leslie Turek

Nice warm writeup on our first encounter, and my REM, face-badge-face-smile. Wish we'd had even more time at the Art Show reception so I could ply you with likker and hear the **really** good stories about early NESFA. Oh well, next time. Readercon? In between, of course, there's all this (gestures metaphorically to the vast expanse of the APA).

Although you share my love for Teresa N'Hayden's *Making Book*, you say her "On Copyediting" is "proof that a good writer can make any subject interesting and amusing." As a former copyeditor and enthusiastic devotee of this most endlessly fascinating of subjects, I object most strenuously to your implication, madam!

Trust you Magic rowdies to be so tumultuous you get tossed out of the con suite. Truly the devil's game.

Also loved Esther Friesner's play post-banquet, after the passing of the lens for the Skylark and obligatory "sunshine" joke. In the scene where Jane Yolen is sexually menaced by a villain, I came **this close** to standing up in the audience and shouting out an appropriate rhymed couplet: "I HERE INTERPOLATE AN EXTRA LINE; HE FAIN WOULD PUT IT WHERE THE SUN DON'T SHINE!"

But like my entree, I was chicken.

To Paul Giguere

Ken Knabbe says that you said we adopted you as an Honorary Devney after you sat at our "family" banquet table. Thanks for the reminder. Our house attorney will be contacting you shortly to collect your adoption dowry and inform you of dues, duties, responsibilities, so on.

Agree about *Cetaganda*: minor Miles. And you bring up a good point. Who do we like better, Miles or his alter ego Naismith? Now that you mention it, Naismith may very well be more fun.

Are there any prospects of the GENIE SF boards moving en masse to AOL? Never seen them, but hear they're by far the best around. You know this stuff. Why don't you write AOL, explain what an e-mail-crazy community we are and what financial benefit they'd reap, and get them to offer the GENIE SF people a deal?

To Anna Hillier

So you're into astronomy. You must be agog at all the new discoveries we're lately making Out There.

Thanks for the kind words about the poem and about my skill at shameless flattery; you're just saying that because

you're such a kind, thoughtful, perceptive, intelligent person with truly exquisite aesthetic sensibilities.

To Tony Lewis

Good to chat with you at Boskone. At the Trivia Bowl, I was amazed how many knew the answer to your last question, "What spaceship had the designation Z9M9Z?"

Thought the Bujold book was a triumph. Beautiful cover, presentation, choice of material, so on. Please pass congrats on to Suford. Her Vorkosigan Saga pronunciation guide was alone worth the price of the book.

In a flattering mention of *Proper Boskonian* last year, the editor of the fine New Orleans fanzine *Challenger* referred to our zine as product of "the awe-inspiring Boston club." World-class conrunning aside, the face that the Bujold, Smith, Henderson, and other books from NESFA Press are showing to the world is simply splendid.

By the way, I return honors with a review of *Challenger* (plus other fanzines) in a "Zineophile" column for *PB 37*, due out in May/June.

To Ray Bowie

Re your comments about the prejudice toward SF media fans by SF literary types. Is it justified?

I think (like most prejudice) some of it arises from fear.

More people consume SF movies, TV shows, and games than ever experience literary SF. Hell, more people must consume media SF **publications** alone -- Trek novels and so forth -- than ever read the latest from Ursula LeGuin and Michael Swanwick and Neal Stephenson and Guy Gavriel Kay put together. Maybe even throwing in Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle. There are just so many more media fans that one fears

their market preferences will crowd SF literature off the shelves.

We're afraid the gorilla will swamp the canoe.

This fear doesn't do anybody much good. And it ignores the fact that lots of lit SF fans, myself included, would feel bereft if *Forbidden Planet* and *2001* and *Star Wars* and *Alien* and *Blade Runner* and *Mad Max* and *Close Encounters* and *Terminator* and *Brazil* and *Waterworld* were suddenly plucked from the canon. Some intelligent lit fans (you know who you are, Burstein) are even rumored to feel the same way about *Babylon 5* or *Red Dwarf* or *Dr. Who* or Mr. Roddenberry's Opus.

Anyway, what to do? The smart move, of course, would be to figure out how to get the gorilla to paddle.

To Joe Ross

See my comment to M. Burstein about the secret origin you two share.

Speaking of superheroes, been meaning to ask you for months -- who **is** the Hero Schweitzer, and why should I hail him? I have some dim memory the reference is to an old TV or radio show (which would be right up your alley), but I just can't tune it in.

Your sad and funny putting-the-old-Olds-out-to-pasture story reminds me of a great old George Booth cartoon in the *New Yorker*: Dazed, mussed-up businessman sits in his living room staring blankly ahead and clutching a drink, while tow truck drags a pile of scrap out of the driveway in the background, with wife in foreground explaining concernedly to a visitor: "Just last night, Pertwee said he'd decided to 'run the old heap until it falls right apart,' and this morning -- it did."