



The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

כנס "בדין"

כנס "בדין" – הכנס הספרותי השנתי יתקיים גם השנה במהלך שבוע הספר. עקבו אחרי עדכונים [בדף הפייסבוק של האגודה](#), ובאתר [האגודה](#).

הנחה לחברי האגודה ברכישת כרטיסים להצגה "ארץ הרובוטים" בתיאטרון תמונע

הצגת מדע בדיוני על הרפתקאות יאן טיכי בכוכב הרובוטים, מאת שמואל שוחט ובבימויו, על פי סיפור של **סטניסלב לם**. לחברי האגודה תינתן הנחה של 20% ברכישת כרטיסים להצגה "ארץ הרובוטים" בתיאטרון תמונע: 50 ש"ח בלבד לכרטיס במקום 65 ש"ח. **למימוש ההטבה אמרו את הקוד "אני רובוט" בעת הזמנת הכרטיסים**. להזמנת כרטיסים [לחצו כאן](#). ההצגה תתקיים ב-3 ו-4 ביוני 2014.

על ההצגה: הצגת מדע בדיוני המתרחשת בעולם עתידי ומרוחק, עולם המזכיר מאוד את שלנו. יש בה הומור ומתח, היא מלאה דמיון ומסתירה קריצות ליצירות מוכרות. אבל יותר מכל, היא משל המציב מראה מול האנושות וחושף את פניהם של גותני ההוראות בחברה, ולא פחות מכך, של מקבלי ההוראות כיום. זהו סיפורו של יאן טיכי, חוקר חלל והרפתקן אמיץ, הנשלח במצוות שירותי הביטחון והביון של כדור הארץ למשימת ריגול חשאית בכוכב הרובוטים העיוני. שם, מחופש לרובוט, הוא מתערה בחברה ומגלה תרבות רובוטית המבוססת על שנאת האנושות וכדור הארץ. האם יותר הגיבור על אנושיותו ויכנע לפחד, או שמא יצליח לשחרר את האזרחים מהשקר הכובל אותם ויציל את האנושות מאימת כוכב הרובוטים?

מועדון הקריאה של חודש מאי יעסוק בספרו של ניל גיימן "אבק כוכבים".

בת"א: ביום חמישי, 22 במאי, בשעה 19:30 ב"קפה גרג", ויצמן 2, ת"א. מנחה: [דפנה קירש](#). בירושלים: ביום חמישי, 22 במאי, בשעה 20:00 ב"קופי בין", יפו 34, י-ם. מנחה: [יהושע ברנהרט](#). רצוי להביא למפגש עותק של הספר. הכניסה חופשית ואינה כרוכה בתשלום, בחברות באגודה או בהגעה למפגשים נוספים.

מועדון חודש יוני יעסוק בספרו של פיליפ פולמן "המצפן הזהוב".

לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף לרשימת התפוצה או לדף האגודה בפייסבוק.

נשמח לראותכם!|

More Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site: <http://www.sf-f.org.il>

1- Live Free or Die by [John Ringo](#)

Reviewed by **Leybl Botwinik**

Book 1 of the *Troy Rising* books/ 593 pages

Baen Publishing Enterprises 2010

Cover: Shows a space scene of tens of space ships surrounding a planetoid with what looks like a gigantic tower on it. There are flashes and some beams that look like they are in a fight. Overlaid and in front of this planetoid is a metal mask similar to a Greek or Trojan battle helmet.

About the Author: A totally new name for me, but according to the inside cover – very prolific. That having been said, in the list of books to his name, many are in collaboration with other writers (M.Z. Williamson, T.S. Taylor, J. Cochrane, T. Kratman, L. Evans, and D. Weber – also new names for me [I guess I've been out-of-touch for a while ...])

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The premise of the book is an Alien invasion and one man's war to get Mankind to fight back and free themselves from the Alien yoke.

The book begins a little slow – imagine your typical SF movie with some bored guys monitoring the space waves via radar and SETI equipment – when lo and behold something flicks on and to their surprise – there is a first contact. Of course, big government is pulled in and the US president is called up... all the standard stuff.

This first encounter is a space gate that has been opened by a friendly space-faring federation of mostly merchants called "Glatun" that want to trade across the galaxy with different civilizations. Unfortunately, they find nothing of interest on our planet, so trade is very, very minimalistic.

Rather embarrassing for mankind [... but then they probably never heard of Israel].

Three years later, a new arrival via the gate: the Horvath, a militaristic civilization. Their greeting is very different. They nuke Cairo, Mexico City, and Shanghai – and demand the total surrender of all of the Earth's population and all of it's Heavy metal natural resources in tribute – or else, more of the same. Earth has no technology to fight back.

The Glatun are contacted, but back down from helping Earth. Although their technology and weaponry is far-far superior to the Horvath's, they don't want to get involved. Earth is nothing but a backwards planet with nothing to offer, and if – in a fight with the Horvath – a Glatun might die, then the Glatun officers

would get in trouble, a commission would be set up to investigate, etc. etc. – Earth is left on its own – and capitulates to the Horvath demands.

All this in the first 20 pages. Now the fun begins.

Tyler Vernon, our hero, is 5-ft-2, 135 pounds and has a Masters in Computer Science. However, he never made it in IT, but instead became semi-famous for:

"... a science fiction based webcomic about a free-trader ship. One of the few that had gotten national syndication. A small TV show. A movie deal in the works.

And the gate opened. And science fiction as an industry died.

... and the Horvath came..."

So now he works 3 jobs (woodcutting for firewood, a job in the local library, and at the market) – in some backwoods community in New Hampshire.

I like this idea about SF being washed up: What need is there for speculation about other civilizations, futuristic technology, etc. – when the aliens are now real. Add to that the invasion and practical enslavement of humankind, and people start losing hope in the present, let alone in the future.

Being a die-hard SF aficionado, however, Tyler hears about an SF get-together in Boston he wants to attend – if only to meet fellow SF lovers and 'escape' from the day-to-day problems. He also hears that a Glatun has been invited to attend (they are still around – but doing almost no trading, since Earth doesn't have anything they really need). When he meets this alien, he is stunned to discover that the Glatun know all about

him and his webcomics. In fact, there are many Glatun fans of his webworks.

One thing leads to another, and this new contact is exploited by Tyler. He tries to interest the Glatun – a small-time trading captain – in increasing trade with Earth (with him specifically). The Glatun don't need Earth commodities, nor do they want Earth metals – because they don't want to anger the Horvath (even though they are militarily far superior to the Horvath). Tyler talks this Glatun into trying various Earth foodstuffs. Even though the first Glatuns already tried and found nothing compatible, he is convinced by Tyler to meet him to test out some things he'll present him with before he leaves the planet. The Glatun agrees on one condition: he wants an original Tyler sketch.

At the meeting, Tyler brings everything he can think of. One item just knocks the Glatun for a loop: Maple syrup. It is like an aphrodisiac for them – an elixir that is going to make them all rich. In exchange for this 'secret' foodstuff, Tyler begins trading for both money and Glatun technology. One item he gets in exchange is a physical upgrade – technology is implanted in him to enhance him physically and mentally.

Slowly but surely, the Maple Syrup brings back fantastic dividends for Tyler and Earth. The Glatun have discovered something that they have a great urge for, and Tyler is accumulating both an incredible amount of wealth and much needed technology which he puts to use to begin taking the fight to the Horvath.

It's also worthwhile reading the Intro – how Ringo got his initial idea – from a Web comic called "*Schlock Mercenary*" (www.SchlockMercenary.com) by Howard Tayler who also adds an intro to the book.

Live Free or Die is the first of three books in the *Troy Rising* series – the 4th book has not been written yet, since John Ringo's started a new series (about Zombies, also from Baen books, and very interesting).

Live Free or Die is written very well. I enjoyed it tremendously. There is humour in it, and a lot of bravado I can relate to: The little man taking on the Giants – including not only the alien Horvaths, but also Earth bureaucrats and politicians (and also the apathetic Glatuns). Sometimes you just have to cut the red tape and move forward 'dramatically'.

The sheer temerity of Tyler takes him into direct confrontation with the Horvaths. In order to do so, he needs a lot of luck, a lot of money, and sheer guts. He is the right man at the right time. The book deals with both the bureaucracy of running a revolt against the oppressor and the initiative and brilliant imaginative ways to fight them. It begins with enhancing our communication technology, and then the building of "Troy": a thousand trillion ton battleship created by hollowing out a giant ball of metal by use of solar powered lasers – all human technology on a massive scale. Of course he also relies on innovative use of some of the Glatun technology, but it's human know-how and imagination that saves the day. You just have to read the book to take in the innovative creations of the hero and his co-conspirators.

There is an abundance of technology in the book, as well as militaristic content. However, even if you don't like the 'hard-core' SF, all-in-all John Ringo is a very entertaining and thorough writer. I highly recommend his writing (having read some other books of his).

From February 2000:

BOOK REVIEWS: *Star Rider* by Doris Piserchia (1974), 220 pages and *Mistwalker* by Denise Lopes Heald (1994), 321 pages

By Miriam Loulu

Most Science Fiction stories deal with radical changes in technology rather than physiological changes in people.

It is interesting to note that in many stories the degree of technical advancement is not always consistent and we find FLT (faster-than-light travel) together with a description of computers like the ones used today (as opposed to the computers of the past or what computers might become in the future). But when it comes to people it is almost always assumed that humans are going to be the same as they are today, although space travelers may have “deep space tans”. However there *are* some books that try to predict how humans would mutate to suit the environments of other planets. Here and there you can even find a book where this mutation is a real part of the story and not just thrown in to provide ambience. Two books of this sort are *Star Rider* and *Mistwalker*.

In *Star Rider* by Doris Piserchia, the human race has evolved both physically and mentally into a new race altogether. Humans have what amounts to a symbiotic relationship with dogs (also evolved physically and mentally) which allows them to hop around the universe. The problem is that these “jaks” (“Jakalowar”) are the type of people who have always pushed back the frontiers --- and they are running out of frontiers. Challenges keep them alive as a race. Challenge, change or both is necessary to prevent the race from dying out. The book is written from the viewpoint of a young heroine and has only a small amount of romantic interest. She is uneducated and her story-telling style reminds one of cowboys, Annie Oakley and various other stories of the Wild West. The book is full of action and humor, as well as having some interesting things to say about human societies.

Mistwalker, by Denise Lopes Heald, concerns the way humans have adapted and mutated to suit the environmental conditions of a specific planet. This story also reminds one of the Wild West. The inhabitants of the planet Ver Day live off of the land with little technology, very much as the pioneers in America lived. However, unlike the pioneers, this is voluntary in order not to ruin the native ecology. But people are moving out of the two overcrowded cities into the wilderness and, as in the Gold Rush days, they don't care about the environment. So change is coming to the frontier and more changes are needed in order to adjust to this fact.

The word “Green” is given several meanings: 1) the people where the heroine lives are like the political parties called “Green” that exist today because they are interested in saving the environment; 2) they are also green in color due to a local food. In addition to the environmental issues, this story concerns two sorts of prejudice. The green skinned people are prejudiced both against newcomers and against non-green people. This is directly connected to the environmental issues. The prejudice against non-green skinned people is the usual one of “we” and “them”, especially when a non-“greenie” is usually from off planet. The prejudice against newcomers includes the people from the two cities on the planet, and a newcomer may live in the wilderness for three years and still be a “newbie”. A newcomer is disliked because most “newbies” aren't tough enough to measure up to the local standards. Since the “newbie” does not know how to behave in the difficult and often dangerous conditions in the wild

parts of this jungle-like planet he may be a danger both to himself and to others. But they are *especially* disliked because it is emotionally dangerous to like (not to mention to love!) someone who will not survive long.

Again the story is told by an uneducated heroine --- this time a mature one. There is, of course, a young man, and the romance between them is an important part of the story. The heroine obviously has no intention of falling in love with a "newbie", no matter how good he seems to be at surviving. And the hero has some political problems of his own that he doesn't really want to saddle anyone else with. Add to this the

mistwalkers themselves – a native life form with a degree of intelligence that hasn't been investigated. The story has humor, action, romance and imagination. One of the interesting aspects of the ambience is the combination of foods we recognize with local foods, and the language differences, especially slang terms, used by the local people compared with that used by the off planet people.

I recommend both books. Some of you may be asking yourselves, "Yes, but what actually *happens* in these two stories?" I have no intention of spoiling your reading pleasure by telling you any more.

For Comments: 13 Pinsker St., Rehovot 76308. Email: asheer@netvision.net.il. Tel: Aharon Sheer 08-947-1225

Editor: Aharon Sheer. Logo by: Miriam Loulu

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כל הזכויות שמורות למחברים וליוצרים, כפי שצוינו.