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*Abraham Merritt*

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**Abraham Merritt : The Metal Monster** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Metal Monster:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. "It's Alive!"By Paul CampAbraham Merritt's *The Metal Monster* (*Argosy*, 1920; 1946) is a sequel of sorts to *The Moon Pool* (1919). The narrator of the earlier novel returns, and damned if he doesn't end up in another lost world, this time in the Trans- Himalayan mountains. *Monster* doesn't have quite the color or dazzle of *Pool*, but I believe that it deserves a bit of attention because it is the most *science fictional* of Merritt's lost world novels. Most of Merritt's novels-- *The Moon Pool* (1919), *The Face in the Abyss* (1931), *Dwellers in the Mirage* (1932), *The Ship of Ishtar* (1949)-- are unabashed fantasies. But the creature in *The Metal Monster* could be explained in scientific rather than mythical terms. The monster in question is a kind of hive-mind: cubes, spheres, pyramids, and tetrahedrons of metal "given volition, movement, cognition-- thinking" (37). These molecules of metal can assemble into bridges, fighting machines, flying cars, X-ray machines, robots, and a mechanical serpent. The human scientists captured by the creature certainly attempt to explain it in scientific terms: "If Jaques Loeb is right, that action of iron molecules is every bit as conscious a movement as the least and the greatest of our own... the iron does meet Haeckel's three three tests-- it can receive a stimulus, it does react to a stimulus and it retains memory of it" (108). Our heroes admit that the creature's intelligence is a bit harder to explain, but that it nevertheless exists. And it has other characteristics of living organisms: "[The crystals of metal] bud-- give birth, in fact-- to smaller ones, which increase until they reach the size of the preceeding generation" (110-111). There is even a suggestion that the metal monster reached our planet by traveling through space like a cluster of spores. Certainly it has long range plans to wipe out the competitive race of man. The monster of *The Moon Pool* was defeated largely by old magic. The monster of *The Metal Monster* has an Achilles heel, but the arrow that slays it is more scientific than magical in nature. But the novel is not purely science fictional. There are, almost in tension, barbarian warriors, traitorous eunuchs, and Norhala. Norhala is technically a priestess for the iron Emperor. But in practice, she is a goddess. She is beautiful, with fiery red hair. And I think that it is fair to say that she is neither deceptive nor evil. But she is imperious, powerful, and demanding. She has no real understanding of human feelings or foibles, she expects total obedience, and she is capable of ruthless vengeance. This leads to some bloody fights and spectacular battles. Hugo Gernsback reprinted *The Metal Monster* in 1927 in *Science and Invention* under the title *The Metal Emperor*. Gernsback being Gernsback, he probably told himself that the value of the story was the "science" in it that would educate American youth, turning them into little technocrats. Most of Gernsback's readers knew better. Perhaps a few words should be said about Merritt's attitude toward *The Metal Monster*: He was not happy with it (Moskowitz, 1963). But that dissatisfaction caused him to do several rewrites, and so in some ways it is a little better

crafted than several of his other novels. Reference: Moskowitz, Sam (1963). "The Marvelous A. Merritt". In *Explorers of the Infinite: Shapers of Science Fiction*. Westport, Conn: Hyperion P, 1963. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Even Merritt was not happy with this book. By Paul F. Brooks. A. (Abraham) Merritt (1884-1943) is known to experienced readers of fantasy and science fiction for his eight novels of which the "Metal Monster" was his second. First published as a serial in a pulp fiction magazine in 1920 author Merritt refused to have it published in book form until 1941. In the introduction to my Hippocampus Press edition the reader is informed that "Merritt was dissatisfied with it's writing and revised and reshaped the story and cut 10,000 words from the text". Undaunted I have read the "restored edition" and I can well appreciate the author's dilemma. After all I was warned, even the author was dissatisfied with the story. Dr. Walter T. Goodwin, fresh from his adventures in the South Pacific- see Merritt's "The Moon Pool", travels to the Trans-Himalayan region where he discovers "awesome beings of living metal". The author spends over 200 pages attempting to describe these metal beings that suck energy from the sun. The prose is just mind numbing, for example: "Out from the star shapes was hurled the bolts of emerald and of purple! Out from the crosses whirled and linked saffron and scarlet flame! Forth from the disks flew the blasting globes! The crater was threaded with their lightings- the lightings of the Metal Peoples was brodered with them, was a pit woven with vast and changing patters of electric flames!" The plot can be summarized in one sentence: Dr. Goodwin and his companions are captured by the Metal People, observe and comments upon inexplicable events and escape to tell their story to the world. One very curious aspect of this story takes place at the very beginning. A. Merritt imports himself into the story as a minor character. He is introduced to Dr. Goodwin as a writer who will chronicle the events of the mysterious journey to the Trans-Himalayan region. I cannot recommend this book to any but diehard Merritt fans. I found the story uninteresting, difficult to understand and over stuffed with esoteric phrases and description. New readers should instead seek out Merritt's "Dwellers in the Mirage", "The Moon Pool", "Ship of Ishtar" or "Face In the Abyss". 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. ANOTHER WINNING FANTASY BY A. MERRITT By s.ferber Abraham Merritt's second novel, "The Metal Monster," first saw the light of day in 1920, in "Argosy" magazine. It was not until 1946 that this masterful fantasy creation was printed in book form. In a way, this work is a continuation of Merritt's first novel, "The Moon Pool" (1919), as it is a narrative of America's foremost botanist, Dr. Walter T. Goodwin, narrator of that earlier adventure as well. As Goodwin tells us, he initially set out on this second great adventure to forget the terrible incidents of the first; if anything, however, the events depicted in "The Metal Monster" are at least as mindblowing as those in the earlier tale. While Goodwin had encountered underground civilizations, frogmen, battling priestesses and a living-light entity in the earlier tale, this time around he discovers, in the Trans-Himalayan wastes of Tibet, a surviving Persian city, a half-human priestess, AND an entire civilization made up of living, metallic, geometric forms; an entire city of sentient cubes, globes and tetrahedrons, capable of joining together and forming colossal shapes, and wielding death rays and other armaments of destruction. As in the earlier tale, Goodwin is joined in his epic adventure by a small group of can-do individuals that he meets in the most unlikely, godforsaken areas of the world. This time around, it's a brother-and-sister team of scientists, as well as the son of one of Goodwin's old science buddies. The sense of awe and wonder so crucial to good adventure fantasy is of a very high order in this book. Goodwin Co., in one of the book's best set pieces, explore the living city of metal, and witness the life forms feeding off the sun, reproducing, and preparing for war. Later on, Merritt treats us to a titanic battle between the metal folk and the lost Persians, as well as an hallucinatory cataclysm at the novel's end. Indeed, much of the book IS hallucinatory, with the metal shapes coalescing and morphing like crazy Transformers gone wild. A book by A. Merritt would be nothing without his hyperstylized, lush purple prose, and in this tale, his gift for somewhat prolix prose is given full vent. At times these incessant descriptions wear a bit thin, and at others they paradoxically fail to stir up pictures in the reader's mind eye. (I defy anyone, for example, to say that he/she was able to fully visualize Goodwin Co.'s initial nighttime entry into the city of the metal people.) For the most part, though, these descriptions are amazing. Just take this one small sample. Whereas other writers might simply say that Goodwin entered a chamber with multicolored lights, here's what Merritt gives us: "...a limitless temple of light. High up in it, strewn manifold, danced and shone soft orbs like tender suns. No pale gilt luminaries of frozen rays were these. Effulgent, jubilant, they flamed--orbs red as wine of rubies that Djinn of Al Shiraz press from his enchanted vineyards of jewels; twin orbs rose white as breasts of pampered Babylonian maids; orbs of pulsing opalescences and orbs of the murmuring green of bursting buds of spring, crocused orbs and orbs of royal coral; suns that throbbed with singing rays of wedded rose and pearl and of sapphires and topazes amorous; orbs born of cool virginal dawns and of imperial sunsets and orbs that were the tuliped fruit of mating rainbows of fire...." Almost like prose poetry, isn't it? With writing like this, a well-thought-out plot, exotic settings and some great action sequences, "The Metal Monster" does indeed live up to its rep as a fantasy classic. There ARE some unanswered questions by the book's end, but that only adds to the aura of cosmic mystery that Merritt has built up. The book is a winner, indeed.

When Dr. Walter T. Godwin sets out to study a rare flower in Tibet, he has no idea of what adventures await him. Meeting old friends in the secluded Himalayas, he quickly finds himself fleeing from the descendents of a lost Persian Empire city right into the domain of a seemingly omnipotent metal intelligence. This extraterrestrial metal intelligence

is made up of a collective composed of living cubes, pyramids and spheres. Even stranger, the intelligence seems to work through a human woman of great beauty, Norhala. This metal intelligence is beyond anything that Godwin and his compatriots can even understand--is humanity about to be replaced as the ruler of the Earth?

Actually, [The Metal Monster] contains the most remarkable presentation of the utterly alien and non-human that I have ever seen. -- H. P. Lovecraft, letter to James F. Morton, 6 March 1934 [Selected Letters IV, p. 390]It's vintage stuff, for die-hard enthusiasts... yoursquo;ll applaud Hippocampus... Add it to your shelf of Golden Age classics. -- MeViews by Lisa DuMondThe Hippocampus edition presents it in as complete a form as possible... a highly imaginative, pioneering science romance... -- Sci-Fi Dimensions, August 2002 ( ed by John C. Snider)The Hippocampus version reprints the original 1920 serial edition, the one Lovecraft read. Read it... -- Lost Civilizations Uncovered, June 2002 ( ed by Jason Colavito)About the AuthorAbraham Grace Merritt (January 20, 1884ndash;August 21, 1943) mdash; known by his byline, A. Merritt mdash; was an American editor and author of works of fantastic fiction.Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.In this great crucible of life we call the world - in the vaster one we call the universe - the mysteries lie close packed, uncountable as grains of sand on ocean's shores. They thread, gigantic, the star-flung spaces; they creep, atomic, beneath the microscope's peering eye. They walk beside us, unseen and unheard, calling out to us, asking why we are deaf to their crying, blind to their wonder.

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