

Dangerous Dan's Book Review #5 September 2008: Dancers at the End of Time



Dangerous Dan is back and ready to recommend another yarn.

Sometimes, after you've just finished killing a man with a horse shoe because you were out of bullets for instance, you need to read something light and funny to make you forget about all the carnage you've wrought. Michael Moorcock's Dancers at the End of Time Trilogy certainly fits the bill. It's available as a collection or as individual books: An Alien Heat, The Hollow Lands, and End of All Songs.

First off, I will refrain from making jokes like "I'm always in the mood for Moorcock" or "Ladies demand Moorcock." But just imagine how funny it would be if I didn't.

Many of you will recognize Michael Moorcock from his Eternal Champion series, most notably the Elric novels. While his Dancers at the End of Time series falls within the Eternal Champion saga, it's much closer to Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. Who knew old Moorcock had it in him?

As you all know, Dangerous Dan is rougher than Dollar Tree toilet paper. That's what kept me from reading something with the word Dancers in the title for far too many years, which is sad because the Dancers books made me smile wider than two for one night down at the Golden Garter. The bit that really tickled my innards and made me pay attention was this quote from the first book, An Alien Heat:

What follows, then, is the story of Jherek Carnelian, who did not know the meaning of morality, and Mrs. Amelia Underwood, who knew everything about it.

Couple a winning quote like that with the fact that Jherek has sex with his own mother on the second page and you can see why I just had to read all of them in the space of four days. As the quote says, Jherek Carnelian, one of the decadent denizens of the end of time, falls in love with stuffy Victorian age time traveller Mrs. Amelia Underwood and follows her back in time to prove his love. Hilarity

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ensues, coupled with the ongoing mystery of why Jherek's friend Lord Jagged continuously pops up in the same eras as Jherek and pretends not to recognize him. There's also the unstoppable end of the multiverse as we know it but that's on the back burner most of the time. Here's another quote just to show you how hilarious these books are:

"Do you plan to have any children, Mr. Underwood?"

"Unfortunately." Mr. Underwood cleared his throat. "We have not so far been blessed..."

"Something wrong?"

"Ah, no..."

"Perhaps you haven't got the hang of making them by the straightforward old-fashioned method? I must admit it took me a while to work it out. You know," Jherek turned to make sure Mrs. Underwood was included in the conversation, "finding what goes in where and so forth."

As you can see, if you're easily offended, these aren't the books for you. However, if you're a twisted soul who likes mannerly british humor coupled with incest, perverse sex acts, drug use, time paradoxes, and the end of time as we know it, saddle up, enjoy the ride, and try not to get sprayed with bodily fluids along the way.

Now for the formality of rating these books. The trilogy as a whole gets a 4.5. As for the books on their own, I'd give An Alien Heat and The Hollow Lands both 5 out of 5, while End of All Songs I'd only rate a 3. It mostly serves to tie up loose ends and could probably have been condensed and added to The Hollow Lands.

That's it for me. Until next time, keep your powder dry and your ladies well paid.

- DD

