

Science fiction's
roll of honor...

THE NEW HUGO WINNERS

ISAAC ASIMOV

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**THE NEW HUGO
WINNERS**

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ISAAC

ASIMOV

THE NEW HUGO WINNERS

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The most prestigious awards in their field, the Science Fiction Achievement Awards were nicknamed in honor of Hugo Gernsback, the founding editor of the world's first science fiction magazine, Amazing Stories.

Initiated at the World Science Fiction Convention in Philadelphia in 1953, and a continuous event since 1955, the Hugos are presented in twelve categories: best Novel, Novella, Novelette, Short Story, Nonfiction Book, Professional Editor, Dramatic Presentation, Professional Artist, Fan Writer, Fan Artist, Semi-Professional Magazine, and Fanzine.

The winners are determined by members of the annual World Science Fiction Convention.

INTRODUCTION

Back in 1962 I published my very first science fiction anthology. It was *The Hugo Winners*, and the idea came first, I believe, to the science fiction writer Avram Davidson (who ~~was~~ **was** a Hugo winner and saw no reason not to have his story anthologized). He suggested the notion to his agent, Robert P. Mills, who decided that the anthology would need an editor who was well known in the field but who had *not* won a Hugo, and he thought of me.

Why not? The stories had already been selected by the voting readers themselves, and even the order was prescribed. There would be very little work, and as everybody knows, I am dedicated to the principle of "very little work." So I did the anthology, and it was my very first.

In one way it was good, for in order to make the book my own by doing *something* to get credit for, I wrote a longish, chatty introduction and longish, chatty headnotes. That proved to be so much fun that I have seized ever since every possible occasion to talk to readers about myself and my stories.

I never lie to my readers, however, so I'm going to tell you that in another respect the anthology made me unhappy. I hated writing for permissions. I hated the arithmetic of dividing royalty checks and the time-consuming labor that involved mailing them out to various authors and agents. I hated the *bookkeeping*. So I didn't rush to do other anthologies, and over the next sixteen years I edited only eight altogether (virtually nothing, weighed against my usual scale of production of anything that interests me). What's more, two of them were additional Hugo Winner anthologies, for the world science fiction conventions did not cease and neither did the awarding of Hugos. Of course, having learned from my first attempt, I was shrewd enough to stick my publishers with the bookkeeping in the later anthologies, but I still didn't enjoy anthologizing and I still didn't rush to do it.

And yet I have done five of the Hugo Winner anthologies, and here, if you are interested (or even if you are not), are the statistics:

Hugo Winners (1962) 9 stories

Hugo Winners, Volume Two (1971) 14 stories

Hugo Winners, Volume Three (1977) 15 stories

Hugo Winners, Volume Four (1985) 13 stories

Hugo Winners, Volume Five (1986) 9 stories

The total is sixty stories, including every Hugo Winner (except the novels, of course) awarded between 1955 and 1982.

Frankly, I had had enough, and I rather made up my mind that I wouldn't do any more. I had aged a year or two in the quarter century since I had begun. I no longer knew, with any great intimacy, the flood of dazzling new writers who had entered the field and were garnering awards—not the way I knew the few old-timers who had shared the field with me when the world and we were young.

However, Martin H. Greenberg told me severely that I could not do that. The Hugo Winners volumes, he said, were important items to the lore and history of the field and transcended my personal desires for ease and comfort, so I would have to continue.

At this point, let me digress and tell you about Martin H. Greenberg. He is a tall, ferociously hardworking and intelligent academic. He's Dr. Greenberg, actually, and he is a professor of political science. He is also a lifelong science fiction reader, and back in the late 1970s he thought he would leaven his writings with some collections of science fiction that would illuminate his field of political science. So the time came when he wanted some stories of mine, and he wrote to ask about them.

Now you have to understand that Martin Greenberg is *not* a very uncommon name. As it happened, back in the early 1950s there had been a Martin Greenberg who was the owner of Gnome Press and who had published four of my very early books. What's more, he had published a couple of anthologies that had included a couple of my stories. The only trouble was that I had not seen eye-to-eye with Martin Greenberg, and we had broken off relations in a friendly way. (I never fight with anybody.) However, I didn't want to resume relations.

So I wrote a very cautious letter to this person who had written for anthology permissions, saying, "Before we discuss the granting of

permissions, are you the Martin Greenberg who, back in the early 1950s, . . ."

He replied quickly, saying that he was only a grade-school boy in the early 1950s and that his name was Martin *Harry* Greenberg. To which I replied that of course he could have permission to anthologize my stories, but he had better use his middle name, or at least his middle initial, on his books.

As a result of this epistolary exchange, Marty and I (I called him "Marty the Other" for a few years) became close friends, and almost at once he suggested that I join him in an anthology. I discovered that Marty loved writing for permissions, adored figuring out who gets what out of the payments, grew ecstatic over the process of mailing out checks to all and sundry. He would do *all* of that, and gloat over it.

Well!

Our first anthology came out in 1978, and I have now done well over a hundred, almost all of them with Marty, and usually with a third person involved as well (mostly Charles G. Waugh, a professor of psychology in Maine). Marty doesn't work exclusively with me, and he has put out well over three hundred anthologies. He is undoubtedly the most prolific (and the *best*) anthologist who has ever lived—and I mean in any field, not just science fiction. Right now, I think that he may be the outstanding personality in the field who is not and has never been an actual science fiction writer. He wins awards, he gets the nod as guest of honor now and then, and, in general, is loved by one and all.

So you can well imagine that when Marty views with concern and disapproval my intention of retiring from the Hugo Winners anthology business, and gives me all that high-flown malarkey about serving the field and the anthologies' being historical monuments, I am forced to listen and even to get to be a little ashamed of myself.

However, neither am I an utter idiot. I looked him right in the eye and said, "All right, Marty. I'll do it. I'll prepare the Hugo Winners' sixth anthology. But you'll have to do it with me."

I insisted, and here we are, together again—and we have a fair division of labor. I write the introduction. I write the headnotes. He does the work. It couldn't be better.

Besides, he is twenty-one years younger than I am. If things go as they ought to go, he will be able to carry on these volumes after I

have departed to the great word processor in the sky (it used to be a typewriter, as I recall). And he can train others, who can train others, so that for as long as Earth and the human species lasts, volumes of Hugo Winners will come out periodically.

It might, of course, be a publishing problem to make readers understand that volume 125,874 is a new volume and not a reprint of the very similarly titled volume 125,873, but that will have to be dealt with after my time, I think.

—Isaac Asimov

1983
Forty-first Convention
Baltimore

***Souls*, by Joanna Russ**

***Fire Watch*, by Connie Willis**

***Melancholy Elephants*, by Spider Robinson**

When I first entered the science fiction writing field, it was largely the domain of young men. The sixty stories in the first five volumes of this series of Hugo Winners were written by thirty-four writers, of whom only six were women: Anne McCaffrey, Ursula K. Le Guin (who appeared twice), Alice Sheldon (who wrote under the pseudonym of James Tiptree, Jr., and who also appeared twice), Jeanne Robinson (in collaboration with her husband, Spider Robinson), Joan D. Vinge, and C. J. Cherryh.

Yet among the nine stories in this sixth volume, three women are represented, one of them twice. Considering that women writers are, as nearly as I can tell, still in a minority in the field, that speaks all the more highly for their quality.

And you'll see what I mean instantly if you read "Souls" by Joanna Russ. It is a true tour de force. It has to hold the science fiction reader tightly bound to the pages of the tale, even though it seems almost all the way through to be a piece of historical fiction, and with strong religious overtones. Don't get me wrong; it's a very good piece of historical fiction, and yet it is not the sort of thing you would expect to seize a science fiction reader's attention and extort from him or her a Hugo vote. Yet it does, and if you haven't read it before, you will now have the pleasure of seeing why.

I hate to try to analyze a story, because I'm never sure that I'm qualified to do so. (I can't even figure out what's what about my own stories.) Still, I can't help but point out that there seems to me to be something strongly Shavian about this story. As in the case of George Bernard Shaw's plays, we are treated primarily to intricate conversation in which the reader is forced to look at the world, and at the men and women in it, with new eyes. It is a story in which neither an abbess nor a Viking raider speaks as you would expect, and everything they say is interesting.

It makes me feel my own deficiencies. My stories tend to be told very largely through dialog (and the reviewers get pettish over the fact sometimes, though the readers don't seem to), but my dialog is much more prosaic than Joanna's is. Too bad for me.

Incidentally, women often complain that men, in their writing, rarely manage to have strong women but are satisfied with giving them supporting roles. This is changing, I think, but if you want an example of a strong woman, just consider Abbess Radegunde.

—Isaac Asimov

Souls

by Joanna Russ

*Deprived of other Banquet
I entertained myself—*

—Emily Dickinson

This is the tale of the Abbess Radegunde and what happened when the Norsemen came. I tell it not as it was told to me but as I saw it, for I was a child then and the Abbess had made a pet and errand boy of me, although the stern old Wardress, Cunigunt, who had outlived the previous Abbess, said I was more in the Abbey than out of it and a scandal. But the Abbess would only say mildly, "Dear Cunigunt, a scandal at the age of seven?" which was turning it off with a joke, for she knew how harsh and disliking my new step-mother was to me and my father did not care and I with no sisters or brothers. You must understand that joking and calling people "dear" and "my dear" was only her manner; she was in every way an unusual woman. The previous Abbess, Herrade, had found that Radegunde, who had been given to her to be fostered, had great gifts and so sent the child south to be taught, and that has never happened here before. The story has it that the Abbess Herrade found Radegunde seeming to read the great illuminated book in the Abbess's study; the child had somehow pulled it off its stand and was sitting on the floor with the volume in her lap, sucking her thumb, and turning the pages with her other hand just as if she were reading.

"Little two-years," said the Abbess Herrade, who was a kind woman, "what are you doing?" She thought it amusing, I suppose, that Radegunde should pretend to read this great book, the largest and finest in the Abbey, which had many, many books more than any other nunnery or monastery I have ever heard of: a full forty then, as I remember. And then little Radegunde was doing the book no harm.

"Reading, Mother," said the little girl.

"Oh, reading?" said the Abbess, smiling. "Then tell me what you are reading," and she pointed to the page.

"This," said Radegunde, "is a great D with flowers and other beautiful things about it, which is to show that *Dominus*, our Lord God, is the greatest thing and the most beautiful and makes everything to grow and be beautiful, and then it goes on to say *Domine nobis pacem*, which means *Give peace to us, O Lord*."

Then the Abbess began to be frightened but she said only, "Who showed you this?" thinking that Radegunde had heard someone read and tell the words or had been pestering the nuns on the sly.

"No one," said the child. "Shall I go on?" and she read page after page of the Latin, in each case telling what the words meant.

There is more to the story, but I will say only that after many prayers the Abbess Herrade sent her foster daughter far southwards, even to Poitiers, where Saint Radegunde had ruled an Abbey before, and some say even to Rome, and in these places Radegunde was taught all learning, for all learning there is in the world remains in these places. Radegunde came back a grown woman and nursed the Abbess through her last illness and then became Abbess in her turn. They say that the great folk of the Church down there in the south wanted to keep her because she was such a prodigy of female piety and learning, there where life is safe and comfortable and less rude than it is here, but she said that the gray skies and flooding winters of her birthplace called to her very soul. She often told me the story when I was a child: how headstrong she had been and how defiant, and how she had sickened so desperately for her native land that they had sent her back, deciding that a rude life in the mud of a northern village would be a good cure for such a rebellious soul as hers.

"And so it was," she would say, patting my cheek or tweaking my ear. "See how humble I am now?" For you understand, all this about her rebellious girlhood, twenty years back, was a kind of joke between us. "Don't you do it," she would tell me and we would laugh together, I so heartily at the very idea of my being a pious monk full of learning that I would hold my sides and be unable to speak.

She was kind to everyone. She knew all the languages, not only ours, but the Irish too and the tongues folk speak to the north and south, and Latin and Greek also, and all the other languages in the world, both to read and write. She knew how to cure sickness, both

the old women's way with herbs or leeches and out of books also. And never was there a more pious woman! Some speak ill of her now she's gone and say she was too merry to be a good Abbess, but she would say, "Merriment is God's flowers," and when the winter wind blew her headdress awry and showed the gray hair—which happened once; I was there and saw the shocked faces of the Sisters with her—she merely tapped the band back into place, smiling and saying, "Impudent wind! Thou showest thou hast power which is more than our silly human power, for it is from God"—and this quite satisfied the girls with her.

No one ever saw her angry. She was impatient sometimes, but in a kindly way, as if her mind were elsewhere. It was in Heaven, I used to think, for I have seen her pray for hours or sink to her knees—right in the marsh!—to see the wild duck fly south, her hands clasped and a kind of wild joy on her face, only to rise a moment later, looking at the mud on her habit and crying half ruefully, half in laughter, "Oh, what will Sister Laundress say to me? I am hopeless! Dear child, tell no one; I will say I fell," and then she would clap her hand to her mouth, turning red and laughing even harder, saying, "*I am* hopeless, telling lies!"

The town thought her a saint, of course. We were all happy then, or so it seems to me now, and all lucky and well, with this happiness of having her amongst us burning and blooming in our midst like a great fire around which we could all warm ourselves, even those who didn't know why life seemed so good. There was less illness; the food was better; the very weather stayed mild; and people did not quarrel as they had before her time and do again now. Nor do I think, considering what happened at the end, that all this was nothing but the fancy of a boy who's found his mother, for that's what she was to me; I brought her all the gossip and ran errands when I could, and she called me Boy News in Latin; I was happier than I have ever been.

And then one day those terrible, beaked prows appeared in our river.

I was with her when the warning came, in the main room of the Abbey tower just after the first fire of the year had been lit in the great hearth; we thought ourselves safe, for they had never been seen so far south and it was too late in the year for any sensible shipman to be in our waters. The Abbey was host to three Irish priests who

turned pale when young Sister Sibihd burst in with the news, crying and wringing her hands; one of the brothers exclaimed a thing in Latin which means "God protect us!" for they had been telling us stories of the terrible sack of the monastery of Saint Columbanus and how everyone had run away with the precious manuscripts or had hidden in the woods, and that was how Father Cairbre and the two others had decided to go "walk the world," for this (the Abbess had been telling it all to me, for I had no Latin) is what the Irish say when they leave their native land to travel elsewhere.

"God protects our souls, not our bodies," said the Abbess Radegunde briskly. She had been talking with the priests in their own language or in the Latin, but this she said in ours so even the women workers from the village would understand. Then she said, "Father Cairbre, take your friends and the younger Sisters to the underground passages; Sister Diemud, open the gates to the villagers; half of them will be trying to get behind the Abbey walls and the others will be fleeing to the marsh. You, Boy News, down to the cellars with the girls." But I did not go and she never saw it; she was up and looking out one of the window slits instantly. So was I. I had always thought the Norsemen's big ships came right up on land—on legs, I supposed—and was disappointed to see that after they came up our river they stayed in the water like other ships and the men were coming ashore in little boats, which they were busy pulling up on shore through the sand and mud. Then the Abbess repeated her order—"Quickly! Quickly!"—and before anyone knew what had happened, she was gone from the room. I watched from the tower window; in the turmoil nobody bothered about me. Below, the Abbey grounds and gardens were packed with folk, all stepping on the herb plots and the Abbess's paestum roses, and great logs were being dragged to bar the door set in the stone walls around the Abbey, not high walls, to tell truth, and Radegunde was going quickly through the crowd: Do this! Do that! Stay, thou! Go, thou! and like things.

Then she reached the door and motioned Sister Oddha, the door-keeper, aside—the old Sister actually fell to her knees in entreaty—and all this, you must understand, was wonderfully pleasant to me. I had no more idea of danger than a puppy. There was some tumult by the door—I think the men with the logs were trying to get in her way—and Abbess Radegunde took out from the neck of her habit

her silver crucifix, brought all the way from Rome, and shook it impatiently at those who would keep her in. So of course they let her through at once.

I settled into my corner of the window, waiting for the Abbess's crucifix to bring down God's lightning on those tall, fair men who defied Our Savior and the law and were supposed to wear animal horns on their heads, though these did not (and I found out later that's just a story; that is not what the Norse do). I did hope that the Abbess, or Our Lord, would wait just a little while before destroying them, for I wanted to get a good look at them before they all died, you understand. I was somewhat disappointed, as they seemed to be wearing breeches with leggings under them and tunics on top, like ordinary folk, and cloaks also, though some did carry swords and axes and there were round shields piled on the beach at one place. But the long hair they had was fine, and the bright colors of their clothes, and the monsters growing out of the heads of the ships were splendid and very frightening, even though one could see that they were only painted, like the pictures in the Abbess's books.

I decided that God had provided me with enough edification and could now strike down the impious strangers.

But He did not.

Instead the Abbess walked alone toward these fierce men, over the stony riverbank, as calmly as if she were on a picnic with her girls. She was singing a little song, a pretty tune that I repeated many years later, and a well-traveled man said it was a Norse cradle-song. I didn't know that then, but only that the terrible, fair men, who had looked up in surprise at seeing one lone woman come out of the Abbey (which was barred behind her; I could see that), now began a sort of whispering astonishment among themselves. I saw the Abbess's gaze go quickly from one to the other—we often said that she could tell what was hidden in the soul from one look at the face—and then she picked the skirt of her habit up with one hand and daintily went among the rocks to one of the men, one older than the others, as it proved later, though I could not see so well at the time—and said to him, in his own language:

"Welcome, Thorvald Einarsson, and what do you, good farmer, so far from your own place, with the harvest ripe and the great autumn storms coming on over the sea?" (You may wonder how I knew what she said when I had no Norse; the truth is that Father