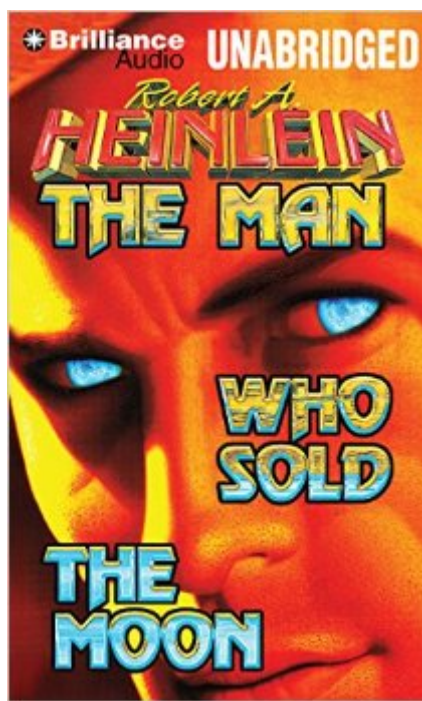


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The Man Who Sold The Moon



Synopsis

Today the moon tomorrow the stars The Man Who Sold the Moon: A landmark volume in Heinlein's magnificent Future History series. D. D. Harriman is a billionaire with a dream: the dream of Space for All Mankind. The method? Anything that works. Maybe, in fact, Harriman goes too far. But he will give us the stars....

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The stories in this book belong to Heinlein's Future History series, and most editions of this book reproduce the two page chart of that future, detailing the social, scientific, and political changes that would happen in the next seven hundred years or so. "Life Line" was Heinlein's first published story, and it was immediately evident that he brought a new focus to field of science fiction, for although this story has a neat gadget, a machine that can predict the exact day and hour of a person's death, all the emphasis of the story is on how such a device will impact individuals and society as a whole, rather than on the 'golly gee whiz' of the device itself. Certainly not his best story, as it is too short and the characters are not fully fleshed out, but it started a revolution. "Let There be Light" deals with two scientists who figure out a way to transform sunlight into electricity at near 100% efficiency and extremely cheaply, but who find they can't sell it due to pressure from the existing power generation companies. The two main characters are near stereotypes, and the attitude of the male towards his female counterpart may strike many as extremely chauvinistic, an attitude that was quite prevalent in Heinlein's writing from this period. But it should be kept in mind that this was the general

American attitude towards women at this point in our history. Of more interest is the apparent 'conspiracy' of the power companies to bury this invention. Heinlein's explanation for their actions brings this into focus as a natural reaction of companies attempting to protect their source of income - and in doing so exposes one of the real problems with unfettered capitalism.

The Man Who Sold the Moon, the first entry in Heinlein's Future History, assembles six of Heinlein's earliest short stories from the late 1930s and 1940s. All but one of these stories deal either directly or indirectly with the moon and the means of getting there. Certainly, most of the scientific ideas Heinlein espouses here are obviously dated and untenable, but that really doesn't matter to me. The excitement over the idea of leaving the confines of earth and traveling to the moon and planets is downright infectious and stimulating. Mankind set foot on the moon a year before I was born, but Heinlein's stories really convey the passion and desire that yesterday's dreamers must have felt about an idea that was patently absurd to many people in 1950. This amazing spirit, willful determination, and lifelong obsession to reach the moon are revealed most powerfully in the person of D.D. Harriman. Harriman is the proverbial man who sold the moon, a man whose presence and influence is felt throughout the entire book. The title story, almost the size of a novella, is an account of Harriman's bold plans and even bolder strategies for getting to the moon. His wheelings and dealings for funds make for an enjoyable read; he has endless ideas for promoting the project and securing funds from any number of sources. Here he is the embodiment of commercialism and steadfastness, but then, in "Requiem," we see the human side of his character. This story is a touching tribute of sorts to Harriman-stripped of all business guises, we see Harriman the dreamer, the little boy who looked up at the moon at night and swore that some day he would set foot on its surface. "Requiem" is a more than appropriate title for this tribute to Harriman and his vision.

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