



British Summertime

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Alison Parmeter can read anything—body language, expressions, the shape of a city. Squadron Leader Leyton is a pilot from a utopian future. He's dropped back in time, but it's startlingly different from anything he learned in history lessons. Jocelyn, his navigator, is a head without a body, captive in a world she can't trust. This group must map out a quest for Alison's best friend, who was stolen by the Golden Men, who some call Angels. This quest reaches back to the New Testament, and forward to the end of time.

British Summertime Details

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Author : Paul Cornell

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From Reader Review British Summertime for online ebook

Nathan says

"A dense, thoughtful, idiosyncratic recursive time travel story that spans several histories of the world. Improbably, the author pulls it off. The writing is slightly more opaque than I usually like, but the sheer level of imagination and inventiveness, not to mention the writerly balls it took to even write this thing, are most impressive. Good characters, too. Only one moment that stuck out as implausible, no mean feat considering all the fantastic goings-on. Definitely recommended."

Lesley Arrowsmith says

Very clever time travel SF, with the most desireable future being basically Dan Dare's. One main character is even called "the pilot from the future". Good women characters, and realistic religion - and set in Bath, which makes a nice change of location (London isn't the only city in the UK after all). But how the main characters suffer!

Michael McNally says

I really like Paul Cornell's work with Doctor Who and his most recent novel, "London Falling" so "British Summertime" was a bit of a disappointment. The pacing felt odd at times, and it was difficult to gain any traction in the story - some of the inventiveness in the telling detracted from the actual readability. That said, it wasn't a bad book and had some interesting ideas about time travel and timelines.

Philip says

Another book I'd really like to finish but cannot concentrate on because of my awful job. I'll revisit this book later.

Ray Duncan says

I went looking for this book after reading two excellent Paul Cornell short stories, "The Copenhagen Interpretation" and "One of our Bastards is Missing." It turned out to be an odd mix of space opera, time travel, alternate history, Ian McLeod politics, and CS Lewis-like religious allegory. Complicated time loops are not the least of it. It will be interesting to see what this author will come up with in the future, besides Dr Who scripts.

Tim Hicks says

Wonderful setup, disappointing rollout.

I really liked Cornell's Shadow Police series, but to be fair they were written years later. Looking at the rest of his work, including Doctor Who etc., I see an author who, were he a fighter, would be all wild haymakers rather than scientific jabs and ripostes. That's what we have here.

You can't fault Cornell for lack of boldness. Alien civilization, time travel, the Crucifixion, disembodied heads, an obvious Dan Dare takeoff, ... lots of fun there.

But, as with nearly every time travel story ever written, the tale bogs down with the need to tie all the loops off and resolve all the impossibilities. Cornell does that, but I just didn't find it satisfying.

I never really bought the premise of the Golden Men. Not could I accept that with all their powers, (view spoiler) That last part felt like the work of an author who was really tired of bringing all the loose ends together and just wanted to get the blasted thing done and off to the publisher.

All in all, too much [impossible thing happens] --> [explained by handwaving], all very Doctor Who and probably easier to accept on TV than in a book. I mean, really, I doubt that the Weeping Angels would work in a book either, but didn't we all watch that one from behind the sofa?

Nathan Alderman says

A strange but ultimately compelling blend of sci-fi action-adventure, socialist polemic, and sincere affirmation of Christian faith, Paul Cornell's time-twisting tale gets top marks for originality. A 20-year-old woman with the power to read the emergent patterns of reality finds herself allied with a square-jawed, timelost space pilot and his hilariously, awesomely British navigator (a cheerily disembodied head) to battle a nefarious quartet of devils in angels' clothing. Unless these Golden Men -- the living embodiment of greed itself -- are stopped, they'll alter history to replace the pilot's paradisical future with a ruinous hell of capitalism run amok. I found this book weirder and less accessible than Cornell's top-flight work on "Doctor Who," and the mix of Cornell's open-hearted, deeply admirable take on Christianity and his apparently vehement disgust with capitalism is a bit difficult to wrap one's head around. I can't say I entirely agree with his philosophy, or at least the economic parts of it. But the book's plenty entertaining all the same; Cornell's use of Christian symbology in his imagery and plot is quite clever, and the book's remarkable closing chapters establish a dizzying and dazzling array of temporal loops to make all the storyline's loose ends fit.

Roy says

Very good imagery. Unique story mixing religion, economics, time travel, and two main characters:

- a woman with an amazing ability to deeply read situations who ends up working setting odds for a bookie and sees the end of the world coming
- a man from another future timeline where things are better

The story weaves a complicated time travel theme with all of the above from the time of Jesus to the future and sorts it out in the end. I read this book twice separated by a few months and enjoyed it just as much the second time.

Watch out for the angels...

Claudia says

This was close to five stars...one of those books I couldn't stop reading. A fascinating mix of good vs. evil; sci-fi time travel and the coming of age of a young woman who has empathic abilities and a degree in math and ends of working for a bookie.
