



The Sky Is Falling

Lester del Rey

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Dave stared around the office. He went to the window and stared upwards at the crazy patchwork of the sky. For all he knew, in such a sky there might be cracks. In fact, as he looked, he could make out a rift, and beyond that a . . . hole . . . a small patch where there was no color, and yet the sky there was not black. There were no stars there, though points of light were clustered around the edges, apparently retreating.

The Sky Is Falling Details

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From Reader Review The Sky Is Falling for online ebook

Dotti Enderle says

I listened to a Libravox recording of this, narrated by Karen Savage. She did an amazing job.

Chris Aldridge says

Fairly interesting at first, mix of sword and sorcery with dozy pc repairman. Plenty of mad ideas some borrowed from history, mixed with dated attitudes and confusing threats from wizard factions. Ultimately unsatisfying for me, as I wanted a scientific solution to his impossible problem but I just got a cop out.

Dirk Grobbelaar says

I've always wanted to read a book where one of the characters is named *Bork*, people are built around mandrake roots, and the earth is surrounded by an egg-shell. No, really...

This is by far one of the most bizarre and absurd books I have ever read. Just for that it gets an extra star. What was the author on when he conceived all this? It's really quite entertaining, if you can ignore most of the weirdness. There's some amusing wordplay as well, although it will likely be considered pretty lame by today's standards. There is a plot, of sorts, but it's pretty surreal and nonsensical all round. Or is it? I suppose that is open to interpretation. The weird thing is: this doesn't have the feel of a spoof or parody. It's actually pretty serious. Lester Del Rey was a bit of a big shot writer back in the day, but I doubt that it was on account of this.

People who die on Earth can be "summoned" or "conjured" or "resurrected" (take your pick) on a different world by using their true names. Of course their bodies are long gone so they are rebuilt from scratch using the aforementioned mandrake root technique. In special cases, they are allowed to retain their souls, but this allowance is rare so mostly they're just zombies. This world exists in a universe governed by rules *VASTLY* different to the physical world we are used to and magic is prevalent, Astrology takes precedence over Astronomy etc. Thing is, even the magic system is bizarre, and it is failing. The sky in this world is broken (literally) and, well, about to fall. So, these "resurrections" are taking place in an attempt to find someone with the knowledge and skill to help prevent this. Even Einstein makes an appearance. An incorrect true name is used to summon a computer expert instead of his famous engineer uncle and he is tasked with fixing the sky, "or else...". The only problem is: he doesn't even know where to start. Squabbling between different factions, kidnappings, fantastic creatures, violence and wholesale destruction spice up the proceedings.

Sound weird? It is! Very!

...but, it's quite short and in the end I probably enjoyed it more than I should be confessing to.

Eran says

Fun and original. A world where science and superstition (from magic to old astrology) are reversed and a person from our modern world to deal with the end of the magic-world when the sky are literally falling. I especially enjoyed the part where the sun is falling.

Al Lock says

What if you were suddenly transported to a world where magic was how the world worked? Where the sun and planets revolved around the Earth? And where you must save the world from catastrophe? That is the position which Dave Hanson finds himself in.

Lester Del Rey has written a great yarn, although it really doesn't get going until the last third of the book. Is the symbol real?

Flower Ali says

i am not a fan of fiction, but it was good

Mike says

Lester Del Rey is one of the authors I pretty much always enjoy. Although I don't always have a lot of patience with the unflagging optimism of some sic-fi writers of the early to mid 20th century, Del Rey always manages to transcend the genre, with a lot of clever ideas and humor. This story falls into the science-fantasy genre, I guess, because the protagonist is drawn into a parallel world where magic is real and works according to strictly logical rules. Aleister Crowley would probably approve of the theory of magic that is slowly revealed.

The plot is pretty much exactly what the title says: in this magical world, the sky is falling down. The universe of this world pretty much follows the archaic/occult ideas of astrology, alchemy, and so forth. The sky is a dome, with fixed stars and a relatively tiny sun (3 miles wide and 1000 miles up). Apart from the hazard posed by chunks of falling sky, the disruption to the movement of heavenly bodies also causes magic to begin to fail, as the astrological conjunctions and correspondences that fuel the science of magic are being ruined. A struggle erupts between those who want to repair the sky (and maintain the current world-order) and those who believe the cracking dome is in fact an egg-shell, and hope for a new world to emerge when this one "hatches".

Del Rey dos a great job of making his bizarre world seem coherent and even logical, despite the strange goings-on.

The LibriVox recording I listened to was particularly well done, though I can really understand why this book would be in the public domain.

Charles says

This was a wonderfully charming book. Funny in places and suspensful in others. It's a kind of sword & planet work without the swords and with magic instead. A modern Earthman is killed and wakes up again on a world where magic works and the clockwork universe is breaking apart. He is ordered to fix it, but it turns out the wizards who brought him there thought he was his uncle, who was a famous engineer. The results are enjoyable.

Debbie Zapata says

I have read Del Rey titles without realizing that Lester Del Rey was the editor in chief of that publishing house. And as far as I can recall, I have never read a book written by Lester Del Rey until this one, but I will definitely be looking for more!

In *The Sky Is Falling* our hero Dave Hanson is a computer technician, and a good one. He goes to work for his uncle David Arnold Hanson on a huge project that will change the weather patterns of the world. But there is an accident, and that is when Dave's unusual adventure begins.

This is an intelligent story, with a lot going on: old magic mixes with new technology, old beliefs battle with new knowledge, and the collapse of the sky triggers a radical shift in philosophy not only for Dave but for everyone in his world. Is he really the only one for whom nothing is impossible? Only Dave and Rumpelstiltsken know for sure; and they are not telling. Neither am I: you will have to read this nifty story yourself to find out.

Irene says

No sé muy bien por qué elegí este libro justo al acabar *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark* de Carl Sagan. Lo escogí sin saber muy bien de qué iba, pero tenía ganas de leer algo de Lester del Rey, de quien había oído hablar en multitud de ocasiones pero a quien no había tenido el gusto de leer aún. Y no me ha defraudado en absoluto, aunque quizá lo disfruté más porque tenía aún fresco en mi mente el genial discurso de Sagan: de golpe me encuentro en un mundo de magia, donde la astrología se considera una ciencia y en el que la bóveda celeste es, literalmente, una bóveda. Y para muestra, un botón:

The middle-aged man with the small mustache bent over the chart near his feet. "Hmm", the man said in the voice of the first speaker. "Mars trines Neptune. And with Scorpio so altered ... hmm. Better add two cc. of cortisone to the transfusion."

Más cercana al terreno de la fantasía que de la ciencia ficción (en mi humilde opinión), la historia bien podría referirse a los antiquísimos inicios del planeta Gallifrey de Doctor Who (salvando las distancias, por supuesto). Su lectura ágil nos mantiene enganchados, descubriendo poco a poco la irracional realidad de ese extraño mundo; acompañamos a su protagonista, con el que compartimos dudas y con quien poco a poco vamos descubriendo las respuestas. Una novela que también podría considerarse de aventuras, pero que, pese a su originalidad, no ha conseguido calar hondo en mí. En cualquier caso la recomiendo como puente entre

otras lecturas más complicadas o densas.

Justin Ulmer says

Surprisingly entertaining. At first, this story was confusing and disorienting. I even thought I was reading Secret of Mana fanfiction at one point. That being said, del Rey did a great job making the nonsense rules of this story world believable and that in itself is impressive. On top of that, the story and circumstances therein were amusing and engaging. I half expected there to be a punchline at the end, but I'm glad there wasn't. A short read that I would easily recommend.

Ben Shelef says

Cute.

A quick read, entertaining. A literary one-night stand, kind of. I can't believe I just said that.

Oh well.

Simeonberesford says

A book from the golden age of science fiction. The golden age of sf famously being when you are twelve. That is about when I first read it.[return]This slim volume was probably first published as a novella in a pulp zine. A computer expert find himself reincarnated in a world where magic works and The sky is falling. It is so old that it is assumed that all Computers are analog and mechanical. Just as well, the skills of a modern computer expert would be useless. It seemed cramped on rereading it now. Del Rey was I am sure capable of better than this.

Arwa says

3.5. So entertaining to listen to.

Jessica says

This was a brilliant story that left a big smile on my face and a longing for more. Interesting setting that raises a lot of questions but leaves you with the answers you need without answering half of them. I will be on the lookout for more from this author.
