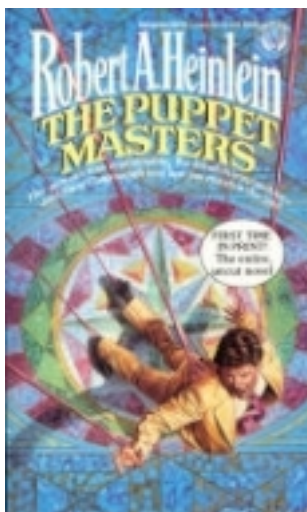


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**Robert A. Heinlein**

**The Puppet Masters**



Title: The Puppet Masters

Author: Robert A. Heinlein

Format: Mass Market Paperback

Language: English

Pages: 340

Publisher: , 0

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## Description

Earth was being invaded by aliens and the top security agencies were helpless: the aliens were controlling the mind of every person they encountered. So it was up to Sam Cavanaugh, secret agent for a powerful and deadly spy network, to find a way to stop them--which meant he had to be invaded himself!

## Insightful reviews

Gilbert M.: When I was in the ninth grade I joined the Science Fiction Book Club and got my first five books for a dollar. One of those books was called "A Heinlein Trio" and the first of the stories was "The Puppet Masters" by Robert Heinlein. It was the second Heinlein book I read (the first was "Between Planets" which was serialized as a comic book in "Boy's Life" magazine) and it's a great example of Heinlein writing exciting stories built on themes he cared strongly about—the importance of the individual and the dangers of a society in which all members are expected to tow the same political and ideological line regardless of their self-interests and personal philosophies.

Heinlein published "The Puppet Masters" in 1951 after a rash of UFO sightings in the 1940s. Heinlein used the sightings as a springboard for an imaginative and disturbing tale of slug-like creatures capable of taking over the minds of any human (and many other creatures) that they touch. The enslaved human knows what it is doing, but lacks even the desire (much less the ability) to fight against the alien puppeteer. Heinlein's novel takes the struggle against the alien invaders from first contact, to insidious infiltration, to widespread invasion and finally to the epic struggle to free our planet in an exciting adventure story. Yet, as important and entertaining as these events are, they are not what make the novel great. Instead it is the exploration—never preachy—into why freedom of conscious is important as well as the fundamental relationships which make human life worth living that give this book its power.

As you would expect of a book written in the fifties, there is a dated feel to some elements of the book. For example, while Mary, Heinlein's heroine, is definitely an empowered and capable woman, many of her reactions and the condescending way in which she is often treated, will grate irritatingly on the modern reader. Similarly, Heinlein's vision of the late twenty-first century quite understandably fails to foretell many things we take for granted in modern life even while he foresees the growing importance of industries such as telecommunications. These faults don't harm the story if you keep in mind when the tale was written.

I highly recommend this book. 5 stars.

Kilian Metcalf: Vintage Heinlein. At heart a diatribe against totalitarianism, it uses the cover of an alien invasion to outline the difficulties of maintaining freedom in the face of an enemy determined to eradicate individual freedom. Written in the 1950s, the Cold War looms large in the background, but the struggle is relevant in any time period. Although he gets the details wrong, Heinlein is spot on when it comes to the power of media to influence our thinking.

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"Everything is just fine. I saw it on TV," is a threat to our individual freedom. Each of us has the responsibility to be informed, to take things with a grain of salt, to question and challenge the current thinking. I read and reread Heinlein because he holds out the hope that free people will win in the end against groupthink, against the dictators, no matter how efficient. It will be a struggle, but freedom wins in the end.

Mark: Alien invasion? Fifties paranoia? Mind control?

After a visit to the British Library's Out of this World Exhibition in London, I was suddenly reminded that I hadn't read this Heinlein for a long while.

And indeed I haven't read it in its 'uncensored' version, which was published in 1990 with the tale increased from about 60 000 words to 96 000.

So: it was time to revisit!

Puppet Masters is Heinlein's version of an alien invasion tale, written at a time when such tales were popular in film and in prose.

The tale itself is quite simple. Told in the first person, 'Sam' Nivens (not his real name) is working for the US secret service. This means different names, different places, different faces (as I find on the first page a blonde in bed with Sam, who wasn't there in my original version!)

He's assigned with a red-headed woman currently named Mary and his boss, 'the Old Man', who go to investigate a report of a crashed saucer in Des Moines. It is quickly claimed to be a hoax – a schoolboy prank reported by an overenthusiastic local news station, but there is clearly more to it. Mary, being the typical Heinlein heroine, notices she doesn't get a reaction from the adult males that she usually receives – the drooling is pretty much left to Sam.

Things develop as Sam and his colleagues quickly discover a secret invasion is going on that seems to suggest the future of the human race is at stake. Sam's job is to stop it.

Those of you who know 'Operation Annihilate' from Star Trek: the Original Series will get an idea of this story and realise how close these tales are. I'm surprised Heinlein didn't sue, frankly.

But back to the book. What we have here though is a B-movie plot written in the Heinlein way, with all the good and bad points it entails. There is the usual fabulous prose, the honed wise-cracking comments, the drip-feeding of all those little neat ideas that Heinlein does so well. The plot moves along at a great pace and there's a lot of tension and suspense along the way.

There's also the use of a typical strong red-headed Heinlein-gal, with all the 'Hey, sister' type comments that the Heinlein character usually has attached to it. These still jar a little, even allowing for the context of the times. Though Mary is fast, intelligent, strong, resourceful and more than capable, there is still a feeling that all she's there for is to serve the needs of our Hero, Sam. This is not by far the worst example of this by RAH – later novels do it much more – but it is more noticeable in this souped-up, more risqué version.

This is perhaps where I see a transition between the juveniles and say, Stranger in a Strange

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Land: this still has the excitement and the pace of the juveniles, but the addition of the posturing lecture seen in later books such as *Stranger*. That and the need to get naked.

Sometimes 'more' can mean 'less', and I'm reminded of that, as I was when I read the longer version of *Stranger in a Strange Land* – I'm in two minds to decide whether this longer *Puppet Masters* is one of those examples.

Despite this, the tale's an engaging one and must have shook things up a little when first published in 1951 – 60 years ago. There are parts that are quite good, for all of my complaints.

In summary, though, this is an interesting read: an alien invasion story with some intelligence that shows many of Heinlein's strengths, but a few of his weaknesses, and sadly more so in this longer version. It is definitely worth reading, though it has to be seen as a product of its time.

Paul: It took me a short time to get into this book, yet by means of the tip I used to be blissful I learn it and had a few appreciations for it. no longer undesirable for 1951, and the figuring out the tradition and international occasions at the moment make the booklet very acceptable for the age.

Badseedgirl: Like many of us of a definite age, my first adventure with *The Puppet Masters* was once now not the 1951 novel through Robert Heinlein, yet was once the 1994 motion picture starring Donald Sutherland. So I had expectancies while I began analyzing the novel. I've got written some time past approximately how tough I locate it to learn novels I've got obvious the motion picture of. I actually hate it. It colours my notion of what to anticipate from the e-book and that I don't like somebody else's imaginative and prescient of characters to disrupt my very own imaginative and prescient of them. thankfully (or unfortunately) the motion picture used to be diverse sufficient from the motion picture that I didn't suppose that approximately this novel. I did visualize "The outdated Man" as Donald Sutherland, even supposing Heinlein defined him thoroughly different. I'm simply human. I really had combined emotions approximately this novel. the radical was once written in 1951, and is determined in a few destiny time after international battle III (Fought with a Communist Russia/China). The references to the "red menace" made this novel believe very dated, as did the very superseded experience of modesty proven through the society. I think that the slugs may have had a truly demanding time hiding with the models worn via today's typical US citizen. even supposing judging via my Niece's posture, if rounded shoulders and undesirable posture used to be all it took to be accused of being ridden via a slug the total Millennial new release and such a lot of new release X will be goners! I did love the story. An alien species that was once thoroughly non-human is a excitement to read. I become tired of extraterrestrial beings with 2 eyes, legs, arms, humanoid shapes. tales with actually alien beings are infrequent while it comes down to it, and *The Puppet Masters* does it with flair. What I had genuine issues of is how ladies have been taken care of during this novel. Mary is brought as a member of the key govt organization who discovers the alien plot, and the way is she in a position to aid notice the alien plot, why through the use of sex. intercourse seems her simply development within the plot. as soon as she marries Sam, she turns into the

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main passive, weak, no longer there personality i've got ever had the displeasure to need to read. i would like my lady characters to have a few again bone, and in the event that they are utilizing sex, i would like it to be with strength and whole wisdom of the ability. Mary looked as if it would have this whilst she was once brought however it was once a sham obviously. This element of the radical left me very dissatisfied by way of the booklet via the end. I even have to assert i discovered the finishing to be very disappointing. the belief the Mary and Sam might so callously go away their first born baby in the world to take a 24 yr journey to area and his basically response to this used to be "It used to be not easy yet we'll have one other correct away" used to be either callous and cruel. At that time i believe humanity misplaced humanity is seek of vengeance. i didn't love it at all. 2.5 out of five stars

Jeff Yoak: as well as the entire qualities i like in such a lot of of Heinlein novels, the avatar, the characters, the lively plot, the good characters, etc., there's a stand-out characteristic that impresses me. we've ET parasites who connect themselves to people and take them over completely, dominating their will biologically. Having learn different comparable works and visible videos with related mechanisms you simply understand that at last the hero or heroes may be taken over and the plot can be resolved by means of these heroes having a special, indomitable will that might let them face up to and shop the day. moment selection is that the heroes are by no means grabbed. Heinlein's approach, performed honestly, is exclusive in my experience. The heroes are outstanding those who can stream mountains, in a way ordinary to him. They get grabbed they usually in truth and actually exert their amazing abilities at the a part of the undesirable men and he offers himself with the matter of resolving the placement even within the face of the real most sensible efforts of his vaunted heroes. That makes it targeted and a complete lot of fun. It additionally has the trope of battling for our easy freedom and human dignity. it is a tale of grand scope. I simply love the novel. 2013 re-read: I nonetheless love each second during this world.

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