

## OLAMOT (=Worlds): Apr. 5-6 Sci-Fi/Fantasy Con, Tel Aviv

חדשות האגודה – ינואר 2026 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy 2026

תל אביב: מועדון הקריאה יעסוק בספר "חיי קסם" מאת דיאנה ווין ג'ונה, ויתקיים 19.02.26 ב19:30 בדירה בתיא. לקבלת המיקום יש להירשם במייל של דפנה קירש ([dafna1485@walla.co.il](mailto:dafna1485@walla.co.il)), ובדף האירוע בפייסבוק.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1041913523811981>

ירושלים: המועדון יעסוק בספר: "הקברים של אטואן" מאת אורסולה לה גווין, ויתקיים בבית פרטי. לפרטים על המפגשים של מועדון הקריאה, ניתן להצטרף לקבוצת הפייסבוק או ליצור קשר במייל עם המרכזת, גלי אחיטוב, [sal.maple@gmail.com](mailto:sal.maple@gmail.com), ולהצטרף לוואטסאפ המועדון.

לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף לרשימת התפוצה או בדף האגודה בפייסבוק. כל האירועים של האגודה מופיעים בלוח האירועים (שפע אירועים מעניינים, הרצאות, סדנאות, מפגשים ועוד)

Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site: <http://www.sf-f.org.il>

### This month's roundup:

- Special Wartime Issue (#29) – Evil Still Reigns on Many Fronts
- Monsters, Monsters, and more Monsters (part III): Dracula, Frankenstein, and M3GAN/2.0
- Our usual tidbits from the Web

## Special Wartime Issue #29

### Evil Still Reigns on Many Fronts

870 days have gone by since the October 7<sup>th</sup> massacres and kidnappings. Although all the living hostages as well as the last of the dead hostage bodies have been returned, the war is not over yet.

The greatest enemy of peace in the region – the fanatical regime in Iran – and its many allies (Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Houthis in Yemen, Islamic Jihadist militias in Iraq and elsewhere) are still active and rattling their battle swords. They continue to call for the destruction of Israel and the USA.

Facing them are tiny Israel (the main target), and an unprecedentedly large array of American military forces that US President Trump has amassed in the region. His plan is to force the Iranian fanatics to give up their dream of creating nuclear weaponry and arming (and using) thousands of drones and ballistic missiles with deadly destructive devices. This showdown, initiated by Trump, is due to the indiscriminate murder of over 30000 Iranians who had been protesting against their own regime.

In the upcoming days, it will be decided if the Iranian regime will change its policies for the benefit of its people, will try to attack US forces and Israel, will be attacked by the USA and/or Israel, some other scenario.

May the good guys stay safe, and may the bad guys fail hard! – Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

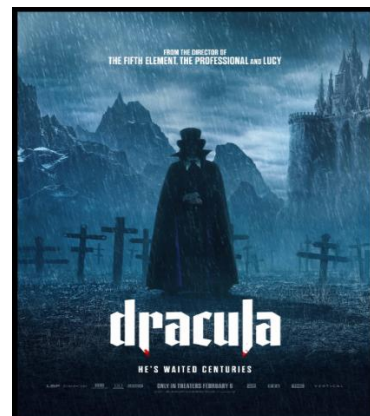
# Monsters, Monsters, and More Monsters (part III)

More 'Monster' films! This time, we'll take a look at new takes on two classic ant-heroes, and a new player in the field that is a cross between a well played out horror film genre and the potential dangers of AI.

## Dracula A Love Tale (2025)

We don't usually review fantasy, but I couldn't help myself with this retelling and remodelling of Bram Stoker's classic tale of horror. There are mixed reviews on the Luc Besson's "**Dracula: A Love Tale**". Some smashed/bashed it to smithereens. Others praised it to the extreme – and every which-way in between. I suppose it's because there have been so many versions of the tale, that there is so much to compare with.

The title itself presents the viewer with the exact genre of what he/she is to expect: a romantic adventure of sorts. The main protagonist, of course, is the villainous/anti-hero Dracula, the monster that stalks people in the night, and turns its victims, usually young women, into horrors unto themselves.



In short, I enjoyed the movie. More reviews (pro and con) can be found on 'Rotten Tomatoes' here:

See: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/dracula\\_2025\\_2/reviews/all-audience](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/dracula_2025_2/reviews/all-audience).

## Frankenstein (2025)

Guillermo del Toro's "Frankenstein" is an important and welcome addition to the long list of movies based on Mary Shelley's book – probably the first 'sci-fi' book ever – and the 'myth' of the creature. One of the best retellings I've seen.

Unlike the Dracula story that is mostly about Darkness vs. Light (except, maybe with the love story version), the Frankenstein story by Mary Shelley has so many more layers to it: Scientific experimentation taken to the extreme, ego, fear of the unknown, reaction to that fear by mob violence, the creature's loneliness, etc.

The Dracula story is about the man (Count Dracula) turned monster. At first, the Frankenstein story is about the ego of a man – Dr. Frankenstein – whose genius creates a monster. Not realising that he is playing at being God, he gives life to body parts that he patches together, regardless of the consequences to the newly recreated lifeform, nor to the society that will need to accept him. He then becomes a 'father' to the creature, teaching him to speak and 'act normal'. Then the focus of the story turns to the creature itself.

At the heart of Shelly's story, the key question is alluded to: who is the real monster?

Del Toro's film version of the book, has on the promotional film poster the motto: "**Only Monsters Play God**"...



This month, I participated in a lecture/presentation "*Clay Bodies and Human Hearts: The Golem as Zombie in Yiddish Folklore*" presented in English by PHD student Marissa Herzig. It concerned the legend of a clay creature – the Golem – given life by Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague, and other similar stories.

Interestingly enough, Dr. Frankenstein used specific body parts to create his male creature (Question1: Did he also include the male sexual organs? Q2: Did he/could he have at once, mixed female parts with male parts?). The Golem is typified as being 'male' or male-like, but all it is after all, is vivified mud, unlike Dr Frankenstein's creature.

It has often been noted, that many elements of the Frankenstein story by Shelly, are similar to those in the Golem stories and legends.



Some of the stories, however, deal with 'female' Golems (what makes them female?). I also don't quite get how the Golem(s) can be considered Zombies – but that is a discussion for another time... Anyhow, it was a very interesting lecture that can be seen here:

<https://www.committeeforyiddish.com/events/past-lectures/the-golem-as-zombie-in-yiddish-folklore-with-marissa-herzig>

Here is more food for thought:

<https://variety.com/2025/film/global/frankenstein-guillermo-del-toro-film-shelley-book-compared-1236572421/>

## M3GAN (2022) + M3GAN.2.0 (2025)

The monster in the story is **M3GAN** (pronounced "Megan"). The film is about a robot toddler/child-sized doll built to be a companion for lonely kids. The robot-toy's built-in AI develops to a serious level of self-awareness, and the toy becomes hostile toward anyone who comes between it and its human companion. This reaches the level of terror that we would not want in our household, including murdering the neighbourhood dog and significantly threatening everyone but the child companion.

In many ways, the story seems to mirror similar ones with murderous ventriloquist dolls or marionettes (see "**10 Killer Doll Movies That Will Terrify You**": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMvrquOG1h4> ).

To get a better understanding of what the story is about, you can read up on it in Wikipedia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M3GAN>), or in an excellent review – with spoilers – that is actually quite critical of the movie (<https://amazingstories.com/2023/02/movie-review-m3gan-spoilers/>) – although I found it entertaining.

Apparently, the production concept is to start a franchise of follow-up movies, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> one being "**M3GAN 2.0**" (2025), which takes everything to a new level. The story offers the treacherous toy a chance to repent for its bad behaviour and save the day against an even more dangerous robot.

The 'monster' in this film is the lack of regulation of AI, and the stupidity of the military to develop an uncontrollable dangerous AI based killer-robot.

See more here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M3GAN\\_2.0](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M3GAN_2.0)



### M3GAN 2.0



# Fun from the Web

**World's first glimpse inside nature's hardest-hitting bird**

<https://newatlas.com/biology/woodpeckers-hammers-grunt-drill/?ref=thefuturist>

**'Exosuit' artificial muscles could help astronauts explore the moon and Mars**

<https://www.space.com/space-exploration/human-spaceflight/new-exosuit-with-artificial-muscles-could-help-astronauts-explore-the-moon-and-mars>

**Robotics Company Builds Straight-Up Terminator**

<https://futurism.com/robots-and-machines/robot-xpeng-terminator?ref=thefuturist>

**Archaeological breakthrough contradicts the timeline of human civilization**

<https://www.the-express.com/news/science/190829/archaeology-breakthrough-seafaring-stone-age-paleolithic?ref=thefuturist>

## MOVIES/TV

**Denis Villeneuve's sci-fi movies ranked, worst to best**

<https://www.space.com/entertainment/space-movies-shows/denis-villeneuves-sci-fi-movies-ranked-worst-to-best>

**DC movies: Supergirl, Clayface, Man of Tomorrow, Batman Part II & beyond**

<https://www.space.com/entertainment/space-movies-shows/upcoming-dc-movies>

**Amazon says 'indeed' to a new 'Stargate' show for Prime Video**

<https://www.space.com/entertainment/space-movies-shows/amazon-says-indeed-to-a-new-stargate-show-for-prime-video>

**16 upcoming sci-fi shows to be excited for in 2026**

<https://www.space.com/entertainment/space-movies-shows/16-upcoming-sci-fi-shows-to-be-excited-for-in-2026>

**Watch 'Shimmer,' Gorgeous and Poignant Sci-Fi Short With Oscar Aspirations**

<https://gizmodo.com/watch-shimmer-a-gorgeous-and-poignant-sci-fi-short-with-oscar-aspirations-exclusive-2000681710?ref=thefuturist>

**30 years ago, 'Simpsons' introduced us to iconic alien invaders Kang & Kodos**

<https://www.space.com/entertainment/space-movies-shows/30-years-ago-the-simpsons-treehouse-of-horror-special-introduced-us-to-kang-and-kodos-the-series-iconic-alien-invaders>

## GAMES

**'Mars First Logistics', a physics-based delivery game. Build your own rovers**

<https://www.space.com/entertainment/space-games/mars-is-the-ultimate-sandbox-in-mars-first-logistics-a-physics-based-delivery-game-where-you-build-your-own-rovers>

**Best sci-fi strategy games, ranked**

<https://www.space.com/entertainment/space-games/best-sci-fi-strategy-games-ranked>

## BOOKS

**'The Second World' shows how humanity makes mistakes in futuristic society**

<https://www.space.com/entertainment/space-books/the-second-world-shows-how-humanity-makes-mistakes-in-futuristic-society>

**Darth Vader returns in the new 'Star Wars' novel 'Master of Evil'**

<https://www.space.com/entertainment/space-books/darth-vader-returns-in-the-new-star-wars-novel-master-of-evil-and-weve-got-a-sneak-peek-exclusive>

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Also (archived issues from 2014+) at: <http://fanac.org/fanzines/CyberCozen/>

And at: <http://efanzines.com/CyberCozen/index.htm>

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