



THE SPACE OPERA MEGABUNDLE: 5 Pulp Science Fiction Novels

Edmond Hamilton, Rog Phillips, Dwight V Swain, Paul Fairman, Noel Loomis

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When people think about science fiction, they are likely to picture far-future spaceships hurtling through the interplanetary void, carrying people from world to world or locked in combat, battling each other with iridescent beams of force. Of course, there are other types of science fiction: cyberpunk, steampunk, utopian, dystopian, stories of robots or clones menacing our claim to individuality, near-future projections of current trends, time travel, alien invasion, alternate universes and history—and so many more. But what do people tend to picture first whenever science fiction is mentioned? Spaceships traversing the stars. Warfare of cosmic proportion.

This subgenre of science fiction is called “space opera” has always been its most important, and popular, story trope - in novels, television series, movies, anime, etc. If you just can’t get enough good space opera—here are five genuine time-tested novels carefully selected from the birthplace of space opera: the pulps of the 1930s, ‘40s and ‘50s. Each is filled with the wonders of the far future, with ships so fast they literally rip holes in space, with captains and mechanics, daring men and courageous women, conflict on distant planets and cosmic battles with worlds at stake.

Dwight V. Swain was one of the best and most popular authors of space opera in the pulp magazines of the fifties. Swain's space opera stories were so well loved that his magazine publisher commissioned him to write twelve full space operas over the next six years. In 1955, when at the height of his powers as a master of the field, Swain described his life as “darn close to ideal. Half the time I teach writing at the University of Oklahoma; the other half I freelance. But every once in a while the yen to whack out fiction grows too strong and I come up with such a yarn as [The Weapon from Eternity.]”

For most of his life Edmond Hamilton and space opera were synonymous. He was one of its founders. It was his emphasis on titanic weapons capable of destroying whole planets—and that made the saving of worlds, solar systems and universe one of the defining characteristics of space opera. From *Across Space* in 1926 to 1968’s *World of the Starwolves*, science fiction readers knew who to turn to for poetic, deeply-felt space opera. Edmond Hamilton was the Star King.

Hugo finalist Rog Phillips (the writer Robert Silverberg called “the master”) wrote *The Cosmic Junkman* in 1953. An amazingly off-trail space opera far ahead of his time, *The Cosmic Junkman* is hailed by *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* as a “pioneering story” that “creatively explored themes and techniques later used ... by Philip K Dick.”

Nine Worlds West, *Jack of Planets*, and *The World Burners* are just a few of the space operas that Paul W. Fairman was remembered for in the mid 1950s. But *Secret of the Martians*, which begins in the office of the Chief of Interplanetary Security and ends in a battle royale in the deserts of the red planet, is likely his best. Noel Loomis was one of the pioneers of the original paperback novel when paperbacks began their rise in the early 1950s. A prolific author of genre fiction of all types, he is best known in science fiction for the two-book sequence *City of Glass* and *The Iron Men*, set on a desolate, deserted, far-future Earth. *The Man with Absolute Motion* is set in a distant time when the energy level of the universe is declining rapidly, and the protagonist is sent on a mission to find a source of power to reinvigorate reality as he knows it. The book has a 4.5-star rating at Goodreads, where D.C. Farmer rated it as “Amazing. One of the first science fiction books I read and still one of my absolute favorites. There’s a very Ian Fleming-like air to this story, as well as enough aliens to shake a stick at. I would thoroughly recommend this as a great yarn.”

We invite you now to join the five voyages recorded here. We don’t think you will regret your trips

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