



Rude Mechanicals

Kage Baker, J.K. Potter (Illustrator)

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The year is 1934, the scene is a Wood Near Athens -- temporarily relocated to the environs of the Hollywood Bowl, as German theater impresario Max Reinhardt attempts to stage his famous production of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. Fortunately for Reinhardt, he has immortal assistance in the person of Literature Specialist Lewis, a cyborg working undercover for Dr. Zeus Incorporated, masters of time travel. Lewis is tasked with preserving Reinhardt's promptbooks for future Company profits at auction. Unfortunately for Reinhardt, there are complications... For Joseph, Lewis's fellow cyborg, is on the case as well, attempting to salvage a botched mission of his own. It involves the lost treasure of the Cahuenga Pass, a missing diamond, a third-century pope, burglary, disguises, car chases, and a legendary Hollywood party spot. All of which interact, more or less disastrously, with Lewis's mission and Reinhardt's Shakespearean extravaganza. Will the show go on?

Rude Mechanicals Details

Date : Published April 25th 2007 by Subterranean Press

ISBN : 9781596060876

Author : Kage Baker , J.K. Potter (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 114 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Time Travel, Fiction, Steampunk, Science Fiction Fantasy, Historical

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From Reader Review Rude Mechanicals for online ebook

CV Rick says

This is a cute, funny story, as it was intended. Set in the golden age of hollywood, Baker placed two cyborgs in the role of Laurel and Hardy and then the antics begin. I laughed and laughed - no more can be asked from such a story. The author didn't try to make pronouncements about the ethics of mechanical people, time travel, or interfering in the lives of humans, she just wrote a slapstick comedy and it worked.

Matthew says

This was not my type of science fiction novel. The majority of it was two guys chasing around 1930s Hollywood for a diamond. The author chose the wrong character as the protagonist. He spends a large percentage of the book driving the car and listening to what the other guy did outside of the car. All of the action is related to the reader in a second-hand manner.

Kat Hooper says

Originally posted at Fantasy Literature: <http://www.fantasyliterature.com/reviews/rude-mechanicals-by-kage-baker/>...

I love pretty much everything that Kage Baker wrote — her concise to-the-point style, the ironic way she looks at the world, and her wry subtle sense of humor suits me perfectly, more so than any other author I know save Jack Vance. I'm sure that if I'd ever met Ms. Baker while she was living that she would have been one of my favorite people on Earth. I say this because I feel the need to warn anyone reading this review that I'm unlikely to ever think any of Kage Baker's stories are bad... So do with that what you will.

Rude Mechanicals is a novella set in Baker's well-known futuristic COMPANY world. The Company is a group of cyborg time-travelers who work for Dr. Zeus. He sends travelers back in time to fetch or hide objects that will be valuable when they're "found" and sold by the Company in the future. In Rude Mechanicals, two familiar travelers, Joseph and Lewis, are on two separate quests that overlap and eventually converge in Hollywood in 1934.

Lewis, an expert in literature, is acting as assistant to Max Reinhardt who is preparing his famous stage production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Hollywood Bowl amphitheater. Lewis is supposed to secretly replace Reinhardt's stage notes with a forgery and steal the original notes so they can be sold in the future by the Company. Lewis spends his evenings creating the forgery. Joseph is trying to retrieve the Hope Diamond which he lost on a previous mission. When the diamond ends up in Hollywood in 1934, Joseph's mission gets tangled up with Lewis's and chaos ensues as they chase the diamond through Hollywood streets, famous parties, an elementary school, a Shakespearean play, and even a pornographic movie set.

Anyone who loves Kage Baker, Hollywood history, or madcap adventure will enjoy Rude Mechanicals. You don't need to have read the rest of the COMPANY novels — it can stand-alone. In fact, if you're new to Kage Baker, it's a great way to quickly determine whether you might enjoy her work. It's not her best, but.... it's Kage Baker.

I listened to the audio version of *Rude Mechanicals* which was read by author and audiobook narrator Mary Robinette Kowal. You can download a free copy at Subterranean Press's website. I would have preferred a male narrator for this book since it follows two of Baker's male characters, but Robinette Kowal gets the tone just right and, hey, it's hard to beat free.

Hester says

Two weeks ago, I got bitten by a spider and got a bulls-eye rash that looked like Lyme disease. Telehealth Ontario told me to go to the hospital to check it out, but when I went to KGH, a student of mine had been waiting for stitches for five hours. I lent him the book I packed and went off to Hotel Dieu, which is a block from the library. I picked up this book, which was perfect for a wait at the hospital. It was a fun, frothy farce in the spirit of a *Midsummer Night's Dream* with my two favorite Baker characters, Joseph and Lewis. The only problem was that it was too short. I finished the book before I got to see the doctor.

Tom Loock says

Joseph and Lewis in Hollywood in 1934 - a most unusual Company-novella, essentially a tour de farce ... still, an enjoyable quick read.

Amy says

Fascinating novella with characters from the Company universe. I loved the film history look at Max Reinhart's "Midsummer Night's Dream." I've since rented the DVD only to see some the visuals Baker spent so much time describing.

ETA: Looking at some other reviews of this... yeah, I can see how if you weren't already familiar with the Company that this isn't something you'd dig. Start of with "In the Garden of Iden" first. If you like that, proceed.

Trever says

Short but thoroughly enjoyable. It's basically a madcap slapstick caper comedy as two cyborgs from a time travel organization attempt - repeatedly - to heist a temporal MacGuffin from the site of an LA theater troupe putting on "Midsummer Night's Dream". I wasn't familiar with the characters or the concept (This is apparently part of a series) but got into it quickly enough and laughed more than a bit... It was good enough to send me off looking for more in this series. Recommended!

Althea Ann says

Company men Joseph and Lewis are on assignment in 1940s Hollywood, tasked with finding a legendary lost jewel, the Tavernier Violet. (No, it wasn't really cut into the Hope Diamond.) Against a backdrop of a German director attempting to put on a production of 'A Midsummer's Night's Dream,' the two men chase the diamond through an increasingly-absurd set of rapidly-changing circumstances, in a madcap caper.

Tasha says

Thank the tiny baby Jesus it's over.

Jeremy Preacher says

Rude Mechanicals is the first book I've listened to on audio in a very long time. It might be the first book I've *ever* listened to on audio, come to think of it. (I read very fast, and generally find the pace of audiobooks infuriating.) But the narrator is Mary Robinette Kowal, of whom I am generally fond, and when she mentioned in an interview that she'd particularly enjoyed narrating it, I checked it out. (Easy to do, because it's free and online!)

Man, now I want *all* of the Company stuff in audio form. This is exactly the sort of Company piece I like - set in a distinct period (early Hollywood, which Baker always does well,) featuring Lewis and Joseph, who fared particularly well when voiced, and written as pure farce. It's almost *too* much farce, with one slapstick episode following another, but didn't quite overstay its welcome. The secondary plot, involving the staging of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is funny in its own way, but also sad, with that lingering sense of mortality contrasted with the immortal nature of art that characterizes all of the Preserver stories.

Now, of course, I want to hunt down the print copy, but the audiobook was top-notch and I'm happy to have found it.

Cindywho says

This novella was a fun story of Hollywood, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and diamond retrieval. The cyborgs Lewis and Joseph figure prominently in other Company novels. I picked up the audio version for free online (<http://subterraneanpress.com/index.php...>) and the reading by Mary Robinette Kowal (I recently enjoyed her book, *Shades of Milk and Honey*) is a little screechy, but not uncharmingly so.

Wealhtheow says

Joseph and Lewis, immortal cyborgs from the fantastic Company series, have a gleeful romp together through 1930s Hollywood. I would recommend this book if you have already read the full Company series and are jonesing for another fix, but keep your expectations low--it's only 114 pages long and there is very little substance.

Kaethe says

Baker uses a real incident as the basis for a screwball story set in Hollywood, featuring Lewis and Joseph. Max Reinhardt is staging *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Hollywood Bowl, and things get weird.

Library copy

Fantasy Literature says

I love pretty much everything that Kage Baker wrote — her concise to-the-point style, the ironic way she looks at the world, and her wry subtle sense of humor suits me perfectly, more so than any other author I know save Jack Vance. I'm sure that if I'd ever met Ms. Baker while she was living that she would have been one of my favorite people on Earth. I say this because I feel the need to warn anyone reading this review that I'm unlikely to ever think any of Kage Baker's stories are bad... So do with that what you will.

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Jim Mcclanahan says

Read this very short work in almost no time. It features cyborgs Facilitator Joseph and Preserver Lewis in a tale which gives no hint of the drama awaiting them in the later Company novels. It was a lightweight farce based on a live Hollywood performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The details of the story do not impact at all on any other Company novel. It was entertaining and breezy. My only real complaint is that the two cyborgs seem mortally afraid of being caught by mortals skulking around in search of a jewel. But that can be explained (although it wasn't) by the built in fear of injury, etc. that affect all of Dr. Zeus' creations. On the plus side, we get to see some indication of Ms. Baker's affinity for the classics, even one that is parodied.
