



The Twilight Zone Companion

Marc Scott Zicree

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The Twilight Zone has captivated, teased and haunted the imaginations of countless millions of viewers from its 1959 debut through its 156 subsequent episodes and many years of steady rebroadcast.

The Twilight Zone Companion, a 1983 American Book Award nominee, is the complete show-by-show guide to one of television's all-time greatest series. Zicree's account of the series from inception to cancellation, through syndications and subsequent offshoots and remakes, is fascinating reading for even the most casual fan. Coverage of each episode includes a plot synopsis, Rod Serling's narrations, critical commentary, behind-the-scenes stories and anecdotes from the original artist who created the series, a complete list of cast and credits, and over 200 production photographs.

This second edition also has an addendum covering the *Twilight Zone* movie and the CBS program from the 1980s.

The Twilight Zone Companion Details

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From Reader Review *The Twilight Zone Companion* for online ebook

Aaron VanAlstine says

Back in the early 80s I lived in a house with some friends and we enjoyed many late evenings watching “The Zone.” One of my roomies had this book and it became a fixture during those hazy beer & pizza nights. A great reference on individual episodes, it also contains a lot of background information on the actors. I recently found the audiobook version and so I decided to give it another “read.”

Each episodic chapter begins with Rod Serling’s opening narration, a brief synopsis of that episode, and the closing narration. The chapter’s main body describes the human story behind the episode with input from the writers, producers, and actors. Vastly more comprehensive books on the *Twilight Zone* have been published in recent years, but this has the benefit of the author’s access to many of the show’s writers and producers. It’s not for everybody, though; you really have to be familiar with the show (and be a fan) to enjoy reading about every episode.

Rebecca McNutt says

Well-written, simplistic yet detailed and very informative; I've been a long-time fan of *The Twilight Zone* for years and I still learned some new trivia after reading this guide! Definitely something that every fan of this brilliant television program should read.

Ted says

Almost as freaky as the show.

Conal Cochran says

The *Twilight Zone* was one of my gateway drugs into appreciation of the horror genre, and back when I was getting into it, I read this book dozens of times. The only problem with the book is that the quality sort of oscillates depending on the author's interests, and not necessarily with the importance of the episode--thus something seminal like "Occurrence at Owl Creek" gets the shaft.

Still, it's an engaging and well-illustrated resource, and is especially good when talking about the early days of television and teleplay writing.

Trisha Drape says

This is the most worn-out book I own; it is referred to often throughout the years, and I actually have read it

cover to cover. Most importantly, it was essential in my quest for finding and watching every single Twilight Zone episode every aired. It took a few years, but I accomplished the goal a year ago (a strange and misunderstood goal, I know). But the various writers who contributed to The Twilight Zone and, of course, Rod Serling, are among the most creative storytellers ever.

Claire says

i don't want to sound like a teenager (i never want to sound like a teenager, but look at me, 18 years old and writing in all lowercase because it's popular and i like the way it looks and it's honestly easier to type this way), but this book sucked.

i am a super mega ultimate twilight zone fan. i specifically remember joining my father for parts of a twilight zone christmastime marathon on the syfy channel at the age of 5 or 6 or 7, specifically specifically the episodes time enough at last (i'm still crying tbh) and living doll ("i am talking tina, and i am going to kill you"), and watching as many as i could find for years to come. (does that sound dramatic? it feels dramatic.) a summer or two ago i made it a plan to watch/rewatch every single episode, and i finally succeeded earlier this year. i've seen a lot of the two reboots, am concerned about the upcoming reboot, and have listened to parts and pieces of the radio dramas, too. never seen the movie from the 80s, but i know the horror stories about the deaths of those poor child actors and it has marred my interest.

i love talking about the philosophy behind episodes, the ups and downs of the writing (serling>beaumont for dialogue, but serling=beaumont for plot, most of the times), i've memorized opening and closing monologues, i can sing the instrumental theme song loud and proud, i know fun facts about actors (burgess meredith and jack klugman each have 4 episodes to their name, the most of any recurring actors on the show; ida lupino was the only person to star in an episode, the sixteen-millimeter shrine, and direct an episode, the masks, and also the only woman to direct an episode, etc. etc. etc.), and backstories, political messages and social contexts to many an episode. so, yes, i consider myself pretty well versed in the twilight zone.

in addition to some interesting enough biographical and historical information about the making of the show, zicree relates the monologues and summarizes each episode, following up with a commentary or analysis of some or all aspects of that episode, which isn't really ever a commentary or analysis. many episodes are waved aside with a single sentence along the lines of "decent acting, bad writing, good special effects" (coincidentally many of the heavier political episodes are dismissed this way), followed by six paragraphs to the next episode detailing just how hard it was to find the right special effect (a thing about machines, the lonely). next, there may be a testament to a specific actor's performance (eye of the beholder, or one of the meredith episodes), right after a paragraph on the network's reaction to a potentially politically incorrect episode (the encounter). i completely understand that each episode may have different highlights and low points, but it's not fair to judge each on only one or the other. at times i question if he really saw an episode, like when he claims the main character in living doll, the brusque stepfather, is meant to be sympathized with, or when he decides that at the end of the new exhibit that the murderous wax figures are to be trusted when they convince the main character that he was the killer right before killing him.

this book was frustrating and arrogantly written. this man does not share any of the passion that i have for this show, and i'm an 18-year-old Texan living decades after the show and the era has ended. i did learn some interesting facts to add to my library of twilight zone trivia, though, so 2 stars for trying.

Tara says

A must read for any diehard Twilight Zone fan. Filled with fun little tidbits and lots of background information, it really fleshes out the show.

Lou Salvaggio says

Good to just rifle through. Just saw an episode and what to know if that dashing young buck was a youthful Robert Duvall? Just whip out this book...that's what I did. Best part is I found this in the trash by my job.

Tom Harold says

This book is pretty fantastic, far better than I had predicted. I thought it would amount to no more than a recounting of episodes, but there is a great deal of background concerning the show, Serling himself, and the other writers involved. Numerous episodes feature particular notes related to the writing, music, or filmography involved. This is a great resource for any fan of the show.

I began this review before I finished the book, and now that I am done my opinion has not changed. The amount of research Zicree must have performed to bring all of this information together seems staggering. It's an amazing wealth of knowledge on one of television history's classics. Note: If you're just getting into the writing that went on behind the scenes, this is not a bad place to pick up on significant names on which to follow up.

Brenda says

This book has tons of errors. For years I thought this to be the Bible of all things Twilight Zone, but recently I acquired a book titled "Thw Twilight Zone: Unlocking the Door to a Television Classic" by Martin Grams and WOW! Someone finally gave the TV series justice.

Don't get me wrong. Zicree's book is a nice read, but no facts. "Four O'Clock" and "Mr. Garrity and the Graves" is left to one paragraph of commentary and opinion. Information regarding "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" is so wrong regarding the cost and the reason why they used a French film for a Zone episode.

What you don't know may not hurt you, but once you see the Grams 818 page book, you'll see what I mean by Zicree's book is laden with errors. Why read about a TV show when there are mistakes?

By the way, broadcast date for Long Distance Call is inaccurate in the Zicree book. Yeah, it has errors!!

John says

"You're travelling through another dimension, a dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind; a

journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination. That's the signpost up ahead -- your next stop, the Twilight Zone!"

Rod Serling.

It was fun to revisit "The Twilight Zone" and learn about the characters and background that went into each of the 156 episodes. "The Twilight Zone" was Rod Serling's brilliant creation which persuasively played on human fears, prejudices and dreams. For the most part Serling did not deal in the macabre but nevertheless introduced a metaphysical horror that was quite chilling. Lasting five seasons and starting in 1959 the Zone was pioneering work for the new black and white television medium; many were hooked and I was fascinated.

Dottie says

Who was that in the episode when...? When was that episode on? Where does that episode fit into the whole? What was that episode called? These answers and the answers to most questions on this landmark series will be found here.

Alexei Russell says

Well organized and put together. The author's personal position as a Hollywood insider certainly added a degree of legitimacy to the work, in general. However, the work is seriously marred by the fact we read mostly about Marc Zicree's personal opinions and anecdotes and very little about the actual twilight zone episodes. Indeed, some episodes have no more than a paragraph devoted to them, all of which is merely the author's opinion of the episode. Very unsatisfying. This deficiency is not helped by the fact that Mr. Zicree seems to passionately hate at least 50% of all twilight zones made, and whether or not his criticisms are valid, it is NOT what a die hard Twilight Zone fan wishes to pay money to read about. They wish to relive the pleasure of the episode by learning more indepth details, which they may not have known about, had they not read your book. Rather than expend ten pages on your withering dissection of a particularly reviled twilight zone episode, Mr. Zicree, perhaps we could have trivia about the actors, details about how the production of said episode went (including all relevant bloopers or mix-ups) or something else, similar, which would appeal to actual Twilight Zone fans. For a true fan, the excessively long passages devoted to negative criticism are so distracting they make the reading almost unbearable. Surely, you are aware that fans would prefer trivia or other snippets of information, which really are not all that hard to research, particularly for an insider, like yourself. True fans, such as I describe here, were your target market, Mr. Zicree, so either you need to hire a better marketing consultant, or you dropped the ball, as far as appropriate book concept goes. It's my understanding Mr. Zicree had a veritable monopoly on the Twilight Zone manual market for many years and that's likely why it was so popular, in the 80s and 90s. Luckily, nowadays, there are many competing works that cover the subject in a way much more appealing to those of us who actually like the Twilight Zone.

CaliGirlRae says

One of my favorite reference guide for one of my fave spec antho shows of all time. I love that this shows

and describes all the episodes including the opening and closing narration by Serling. I wish there was more objective commentary and behind the scenes as the author tends to give his opinion a bit too much (which shifts it away from a true companion guide). But all in all a good resource that every T-Zone fan should have on their shelf.

Evan says

My grandfather gave me this book, too. I used to watch The Twilight Zone when i would visit him and drink coke and eat toast and bread & butter sandwiches. I didn't read it for a few years (seems to be a running theme), but not for as long. Now i own the entire DVD collection and it's one of my favorite TV shows, ever. Thanks grandpa!
