



Trillions

Nicholas Fisk

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Trillions were hard, bright, tiny things which suddenly arrived, millions and millions and millions of them, one windy day in a village called Harbourn town.

No one could explain them, much less why they had suddenly arrived. Were they a blessing, as their beauty suggested, or a deadly, inexplicable threat? A boy with a microscope was just as likely to come up with the answer as all the acknowledged experts in any known kind of science, so somehow it seemed natural for two 'ordinary' boys, Scott and Bem, to join forces with an ex-spaceman against the frightening efforts of the ruthless General Harman to destroy the Trillions, no matter what the cost.

This tense and highly original book is by the author of six other exciting favourites, 'Space Hostages', 'Grinny', 'Time Trap', 'A rag, a bone and a Hank of Hair' and 'Wheelie in the Stars'.

Trillions Details

Date :

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Author : Nicholas Fisk

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From Reader Review Trillions for online ebook

James Lark says

What a beguiling and sophisticated book this is. I read Nicholas Fisk voraciously as a child and when I saw this in a charity shop (with the evocative 1980s reprint cover, not the unappealing and frankly misleading new one) I snapped it up.

I do remember finding it a bit obtuse when I was younger and no wonder - the substance of the book is all themes and ideas, with characters and story sketched out with a minimum of fuss. That is, on the whole, a strength, and actually the characters are no weaker for it, especially Scott Houghton who comes over as fully formed even though details about his family and day to day life are pretty much ignored (we are told he keeps bees, but we never see him doing it).

Which means we are thrown right into the situation, and again what-it-means is a lot more important than what-happens. In effect that turns into an exploration of how the world responds to the unknown, and for a book that is over 50 years old it is managing to remain remarkably prescient - there are strong resonances with the current European migrant crisis, the power of corporations over communities and the continuing belief that nuclear weapons are a sensible resource. And if the polarity between pacifism and military might seems a little simplistic in the personification of Icarus and The General, then we are left with a far more complex picture in Scott, whose final action rejects both perspectives for something more nuanced. The sinister understatement with which The General leaves the story and the ambiguous ending are more disturbingly unresolved than most children's books would dare to be.

Indeed, although this is a slim volume and written with an efficient style, there is little about it that is childish. The young protagonist is more grown up than the adult characters and the book doesn't dodge weighty concepts. There are so many memorable moments: Scott learning to communicate with the Trillions, his nocturnal visit to their source, the chilling message they eventually leave him... It's no wonder its dreamlike (or occasionally nightmarish) quality left such a big impression on me. A rewarding book to revisit.

rachelish Slater says

Love everything about this book - I hesitate to say the concept's unique, because nothing is, but it's like nothing else I've ever read and I love it for that. Once again Fisk's children are 100% real and flawed and just fab.

Mark Speed says

I read this as a first edition, which I still have somewhere. A cracking read for any child, it's the story of what happens when humans encounter an alien species or life-form that we don't understand.

Sometimes it takes a child's-eye view to make sense* of things. Children trust and explore, where adults want to destroy. I have very fond memories of this novel, and I'm sure it influenced me. It's a timeless story,

and I think any child would enjoy it. I wonder if ET owes something to it in terms of an idea?

*And I mean make *sense*.

flajol says

I first read this when I was 10 years old. It was one of the first books I borrowed from my high school library, and the first time I was aware of reading a science fiction story. I liked it enough then to go on to read more of Fisk's books, and to devour the SF sections of the school and public libraries. I came across it yesterday in a charity shop, and at 50c I couldn't refuse! Let's see if I enjoy it as much now as I did then.

Hmm. Best left as a fond memory, I think.

Mark Lawrence says

I remember this book from my childhood, I may have been 9 or thereabouts and it was given to me at school if I recall correctly.

My memories are very positive (I gave the book a 4* on the basis of them) but it turns out that I never actually read past the first 3 chapters.

The first three chapters are pretty good because the idea at the heart of this book - tiny crystals raining down from space and demonstrating the ability to move together and mimic things - is pretty damn cool.

Basically this is alien nano-technology imagined in 1973.

Sadly the rest of the book is deadly dull, written in the very dry style of 60's and 70's sci-fi and all about 'THE IDEA' rather than the characters.

It turns into essentially a desiccated discussion of what the trillions are for/about, set against the background of a cartoon-y / semi-satire imagining of the global response.

For no discernible reason the global response focuses on the small town where the trillions first landed (it's happening everywhere though), and manifests through one cardboard general, with the government wholly absent.

The characters are paper-thin. Four children, introduced at length, are thereafter just talking heads, with three quickly relegated to the sidelines. The focus, a 13 year old boy, repeatedly and inexplicably entertains a 40 year old government advisor/ex-astronaut in his bedroom for remedial level theorising about the trillions.

Nuclear weapons are deployed without the word 'radiation' being used once and any contamination effects are symbolised by the dropping dead of a few birds. Everyone else is fine.

The ending is unexciting and unsatisfying.

Basically I'm giving the second star because the initial idea is great. The 9 year-old me made the right decision by stopping after 3 chapters.

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Mary JL says

I am in the middle of this books so I will review when finished. So f
Progress report: It has not improved. I will probably finish, as it is a short book. One problem about reviewing children's books is I am an adult. The idea is fairly good for this book--strange crystal creature appear everywhere on earth, the characters are only average. But, no doubt, when I was 10 I woul have loved it.

This was written in 1971; does show how much sf for children has improved nowadays.

Finished. I am reluctantly giving it a 2 star rating at the idea was clever and there are good bits here and there. However, there are so much better Sf books out there for children..

yengyeng says

The first book I read featuring aliens from outer space! It was fascinating.

Sophie Duncan says

Read this book as a kid and loved it. Thought-provoking.

Björn Marl says

An old childhood favorite of mine. Rereading it after such a long time is quite a trip down memory lane for me.

The book still holds up, even though i perceive some elements quite different now. It does lack a bit of depth, but i can fogive that.

K.C. Shaw says

Bad writing, bad science (even for 1971), poor characterizations, and a tedious, nonsensical plot. I had a longer review but it didn't post, but that covers it all. I was disappointed because I've read other books by Fisk and enjoyed them. This is not one of his winners.

Steven Walters says

My dad used to take me to the Library almost every weekend. I remember one weekend at the downtown Los Angeles library. I stopped running around the facility and made my way to the children's book section.

This is the book I picked up. I remember reading it non stop and still remember it fondly.

We have millions, We have billions, We have Trillions!

Damian Cummings says

Like so many others writing a review for this, I read this at school. Will it hold up to my memory of it being a great book? Or should I stop before I ruin another one (Narnia!)...

Hmmm, my memory was combining two books into one- now what was that other book?

Jane Wynne says

I read this when I was about 10 and it made such an impression on me. Reading it 40 years on was interesting as when it was written the nuclear age was upon us and nuclear weapons were considered for use.

We now know the damage they do so it seems a naive story in retrospect. Glad to read it again though, interesting.
