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Extra Innings

by Bruce E. Spitzer, Alan Rinzler (Editor)



Bill Hall's review

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bookshelves: baseball, fiction

Read in May, 2012

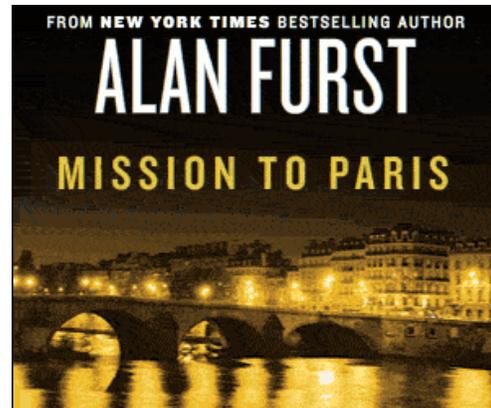
I grew up passionate about a couple of things--science fiction and the great game of baseball, especially its rich history. So this made Bruce Spitzer's "Extra Innings" impossible for me to resist. The premise lies in fact: we know that the son of Ted Williams, one of the game's all-time greats, had his father's head cryogenically frozen after his death in 2002 in hopes that science would reach the point where he could be revived someday.

That day arrives in "Extra Innings." It is 2092, and not only is medical science able to repair the brain damage caused by strokes late in Williams' life, or in this case FIRST life, it's also able to reattach said head to a donor body (from a brain-dead 25 year old) and restore his famous 20-10 vision in the bargain.

Spitzer paints a vivid and believable picture of the world of the late 21st century, in some ways very much like our own, in others radically different. The grand game of baseball is now played internationally and robots have replaced human pitchers. Fenway Park is still the home of the Red Sox (though it's now situated on Fenway Island due to global warming and fans arrive in water taxis). The newly-revived Ted takes a pass on returning to the game he loved at first, preferring his other great love, fishing. Before too long, he's unable to resist another chance at a World Series title, though that pursuit is interrupted once again when the U.S. Marine Corps comes calling in need of pilots in time of war. There's even a love interest along the way.

It's clear that Spitzer has read deeply in the Williams literature, and the man in these pages rings true to the image of the fiercely competitive, intensely loyal, rugged individual who patrolled the Green Monster for nineteen seasons. This story packed an emotional punch I did not expect, and I don't want to be guilty of any spoilers; I will say I finished "Extra Innings" with both a smile on my face and a lump in my throat. "Extra Innings" will stay with me for a long time to come.

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