

The Golden Age of Pirates meets the Golden Age of Science Fiction

Explore the 85th anniversary of L. Ron Hubbard's "Typewriter in the Sky," a pioneering recursive sci-fi novel set in the pirate-filled Caribbean of 1640.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, August 20, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The "[Golden Age of Pirates](#)," particularly celebrated in the Caribbean, is often associated with the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The "Golden Age of Science Fiction and Fantasy" of the mid-20th century celebrated this period, with at least this one particular tale, "Typewriter in the Sky" by [L. Ron Hubbard](#).



A Pirate is holding a copy of "Typewriter in the Sky" at the San Diego Comic Con.

August, or in this case, ARRR-Gust, is also known as International Pirate Month, with myriad events and celebrations in the Caribbean.

"Typewriter in the Sky," celebrating its 85th anniversary and originally published in Unknown Magazine in 1940, is the tale of a 20th-century piano player who is transported back in time by his writer friend from the West Village, New York to the West Indies. He is embroiled in a desperate battle fighting for his life as the notorious Miguel de Lobo in the Spanish Main of 1640.

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*John Goodwin, President
Galaxy Press*

In the summer of 1932, Hubbard captained a voyage to the Caribbean aboard the Doris Hamlin, the last of the four-masted schooners, where the old 18th-century haunts of renowned pirates such as Edward Teach, more famously known as Blackbeard, were researched. It was from this research that Hubbard authored the 1936 essay

"Yesterday, You Might Have Been a Pirate," on the history of the pirate and what brought him

into existence, and four years later, penned his 1940 story, "Typewriter in the Sky."

The history of the pirate, also known as the buccaneer, is vastly different than what we have been led to believe. In his essay, "Yesterday, You Might Have Been a Pirate," Hubbard explains that in the 17th and 18th centuries, brutal naval and merchant marine conditions fueled piracy. Sailors faced relentless floggings with cat-o'-nine whips, often tipped with copper wire or lead pellets. Minor infractions like failing to salute earned 15 lashes; graver offenses, up to 100—fifty lashes frequently fatal. Scurvy killed many due to poor food and water, with no effort to address known vitamin C deficiencies. Crowded ships offered no comfort, pay was withheld, and press gangs forced men into service. Desperate to escape, sailors fled to piracy, seeking freedom from this relentless hardship.

And so Hubbard's later stories, like "Under the Black Ensign" and "Typewriter in the Sky," can ring with such authenticity.

Hubbard's story, "Typewriter in the Sky," is a pirate adventure story and became the first recursive science fiction story. [Read www.galaxyexpress.com/typewriter-in-the-sky-and-the-birth-of-recursive-fiction for more information.] It is also a science fantasy novel where pianist Mike de Wolf becomes trapped in his friend's pirate novel, hearing a typewriter's clatter with each plot twist, questioning his reality. In an April 2016 interview, Mike Resnick (1942-2020), science fiction's most award-winning short story author, stated, "The 'Typewriter in the Sky' is my favorite of [Hubbard's]. It was the first recursive science fiction, a term that came into the field about four or five years ago, meaning science fiction about science fiction. There are a few early examples of it. Frederick Brown's 'What Mad Universe.' But the first one was L. Ron Hubbard's 'Typewriter in the Sky.' And there haven't been that many; there have been about five or six novels and no more than about twenty-five recursive stories."

President Galaxy Press, John Goodwin, publisher of the fiction works of L. Ron Hubbard, stated, "Making such foundational stories as 'Typewriter in the Sky' known to younger generations is so rewarding. They learn that many of the stories they are familiar with, whether book, television, or movie, have their roots in the Golden Age of Science Fiction and Fantasy." Similar books to the metafictional "Typewriter in the Sky" include "The Cosmic Puppets" (1957) by Philip K. Dick, "Six Characters in Search of an Author" (1921) by Luigi Pirandello, and The Dark Tower series by Stephen King. Movies similar include "Stranger than Fiction" (2006), "The Purple Rose of Cairo" (1985), and "Pleasantville" (1998). While television shows such as "FlashForward" (2009) and "Westworld" (2016–2022) are similarly themed to "Typewriter in the Sky."

To read "Yesterday, You Might Have Been a Pirate," visit www.galaxyexpress.com/yesterday-you-might-have-been-a-pirate/

For more information on "Typewriter in the Sky," visit www.galaxyexpress.com/original-publications/typewriter-in-the-sky-part-1-1940-november/

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