

Exploring genre over time

I set my bedroom to wake me early.

It was World Peace Day. And today I was going to spin into the Web and access GulliverZone.

Maybe you spun in too. Maybe we even met. Everybody seemed to be there!

I thought my biggest problem was going to be having the most unpopular girl at school and my dumb little brother, tagging along with me.

How wrong can you be!

I'd never have gone into GulliverZone – in fact I think I'd have saved my bed that morning – if I'd known how close I would have come to never getting out again.

The Web Stephen Baxter 1997

The world was to be destroyed! Not just the Earth. The whole universe had to go – the Sun, the Moon, the stars, space, time, life.

It all came as a great shock. First there was the news that our universe was not alone; there were other universes. The others lay beyond our space and time; that's why we hadn't known about them. They were all different; they each had their own spaces and times and laws of nature. They belonged to an organization called the Federation of Universes. We were members too, though until now, no one had thought to tell us.

Rule 184930/56/f in the Federation's Rules Book states: *Universes must be kept up-to-date*. That was the problem. Our universe had been around for 15,000 million Earth years; it had now passed its sell-by date. There was nothing for it, declared the Federation; it had to be 'replaced'. In plain talk it meant the universe had to be destroyed to make way for a brand new model.

World of 1001 Mysteries Russell Stannard 1993

"Oh the Good Time has come at last!"

It was twilight and Janice and Honora packed steadily in their summerhouse, singing songs, eating little and talking to each other when necessary. But they never glanced at the window where the night gathered deep and the stars came out bright and cold.

"Listen!" said Janice.

A sound like a steamboat down the river, but it was a rocket in the sky. And beyond that – banjos playing? No, only the summer-night crickets in this year 2003.

The Wilderness Ray Bradbury 1952

"In going downstairs the first time I found an unexpected difficulty because I could not see my feet; I stumbled twice and there was unaccustomed clumsiness in gripping the banister. By not looking down, however, I managed to walk on the level passably well."

"My mood, I say, was one of exaltation. I felt as a seeing man might do, with padded feet and noiseless clothes, in a city of the blind. I experienced a wild impulse to jest, to startle people, to clap men on the back, fling people's hats astray and generally revel in my extraordinary advantage."

The Invisible Man H.G. Wells 1897