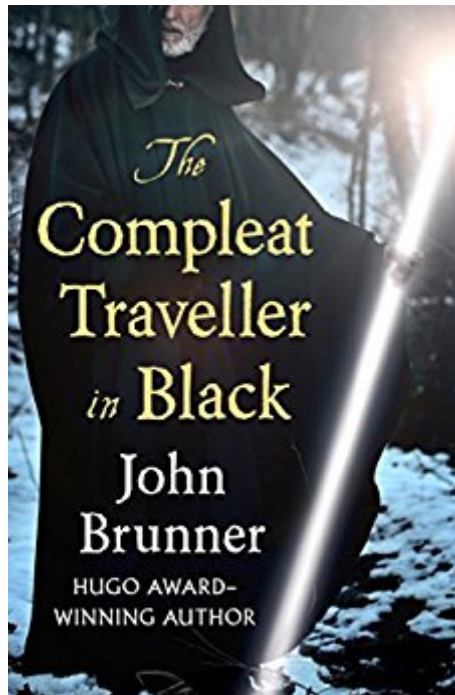




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The Compleat Traveller In Black



Synopsis

In *The Compleat Traveller in Black*, six linked tales, comprising one of Brunner's rare ventures into fantasy, relate the legend of a man with many names, who travels the world with a staff made of light and performs his eternal duty by bringing order to a world filled with chaos. What he dispenses is always asked for but not always welcomed by the recipients. And the world becomes, step by slow step, a better place for those who remain. For each generation, there is a writer meant to bend the rules of what we know. Hugo Award winner (Best Novel, *Stand on Zanzibar*) and British science fiction master John Brunner remains one of the most influential and respected authors of all time, and now many of his classic works are being reintroduced. For readers familiar with his vision, this is a chance to reexamine his thoughtful worlds and words, while for new readers, Brunner's work proves itself the very definition of timeless.

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Customer Reviews

The Traveler in Black lives in a world of wild magic, and he seems to be one of the great immortal powers. But his power is very limited. He can grant wishes -- the wishes of other people, not his own.

And he does, but usually not the way they expect. And he does it when they are not expecting it. I am sure you have heard: "Be careful what you wish for. You might get it." The Traveler in Black is the personification of that statement. Still, while he seems very impersonal, he also comes across as a GOOD person. The ones who suffer as a result of his granted wishes deserve it. And as to leaving the world a better place -- he leaves the world a place with less magic. Every time he grants a wish, some great source of magic disappears. The final story helps explain his long journey. The Traveler in Black has lived in my imagination for a long time now. He is a presence you cannot forget, unique in fantasy. Ages ago I introduced him into my Dungeons and Dragons game. It was interesting to say how carefully players started making sure they did not phrase stupid things as wishes, and how often they still failed in doing so.

...but it's worth it. This book is simply and elegantly written, and ended up being an unexpected pleasure that I looked forward to coming back to each time I got a few moments to read. Themes of reason vs chaos, existentialism, social evolution, divinity, the nature of religion, and the very question of what it is to be the sort of "real" we recognize all make appearances in a way that's fantastical without feeling like hard fantasy. In addition, no scene is more grotesque or lingered upon than it has to be - in fact, for me, it was that measured, understated style that gave the story its elegance and made it so easy to read. If you're not in a hurry or aren't looking for a page turner - and would instead like a thoughtful stroll through another world - then I highly recommend this book.

The best way I can describe this book is to take a premise by Neal Stephenson, add in China Mieville's vocabulary, and put it all together with writing crafted with the elegance and precision of Kate DiCamillo's *The Tale of Despereaux*. The eponymous Traveller in Black walks the world from time to time, slowly bringing order to a world in chaos, and in each place he stops he is bound to grant those he encounters their innermost desires. More often than not, to their detriment. It is a heavy read, so be prepared to shut out distractions and chew on the narrative. It's totally worth it.

The Traveler in Black is a collection of stories that span the great transition from a world of magic, chaos, and random chance to a world of law and natural order. The Traveler is tasked with facilitating this transformation, yet is constrained to bring it about through the agency of human action - by empowering wishes. There's a saying that the gods curse us by answering our prayers, and there's a certain amount of ironic justice in these tales. Who he is, why he does what he does is the mystery underlying the larger story, one that comes to a fitting conclusion in the last story. An

entertaining read by a master author.

Kind of an odd ball in terms of Brunners' overall production, this is kind of a fantasy rather than science fiction. That said, it starts from a great premise and runs to a totally satisfying conclusion.

Probably my favourite of John Brunner's books. Was delighted to find it available.

just finished my first time through this piece. much more to think about. not sure quite how to feel - other than feel stimulation of the mind

Loved this. Not sure if I had ever read this work, but I like the concept, and the way wishes are fulfilled. Clever.

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