



Planet of the Apes

By Pierre Boulle

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Planet of the Apes By Pierre Boulle

Before you see the movie, read the original novel!

First published more than thirty-five years ago, Pierre Boulle's chilling novel launched one of the greatest science fiction sagas in motion picture history, from the classic 1968 movie starring Charlton Heston and Roddy McDowell, through four sequels and two television series . . . and now the newest film adaptation directed by Tim Burton.

In the not-too-distant future, three astronauts land on what appears to be a planet just like Earth, with lush forests, a temperate climate, and breathable air. But while it appears to be a paradise, nothing is what it seems.

They soon discover the terrifying truth: On this world humans are savage beasts, and apes rule as their civilized masters. In an ironic novel of nonstop action and breathless intrigue, one man struggles to unlock the secret of a terrifying civilization, all the while wondering: Will he become the savior of the human race, or the final witness to its damnation? In a shocking climax that rivals that of the original movie, Boulle delivers the answer in a masterpiece of adventure, satire, and suspense.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

If you've seen the progressively cheesier *Planet of the Apes* movies of 1968-1973, you may be shocked to learn the first movie was adapted from an intelligent, ironic, and literate novel. You'll be less surprised when you learn the original novel *Planet of the Apes* was written by Pierre Boulle, author of *The Bridge over the River Kwai*.

In the novel *Planet of the Apes*, the three Frenchmen making the first interstellar journey discover a remarkably Earth-like world orbiting Betelgeuse--Earth-like, with one crucial difference: The humans are dumb beasts, and the apes are intelligent. Captured during a terrifying manhunt, locked in a cage, and ignorant of the simian language, Ulysse Merou struggles to convince the apes that he possesses intelligence and reason. But if he proves he is not an animal, he may seal his own doom.

Like the first movie, the novel *Planet of the Apes* has a twist ending, but a twist of a different--yet equally shocking--sort. --Cynthia Ward

From Booklist

Boulle's classic 1963 novel differs in several ways from the 1968 movie and its various spinoffs. While the bare-bones story is familiar—astronaut travels to a planet populated by intelligent apes, is captured, fights to prove that he is a thinking creature—the novel is richer in detail and parallels to human culture. Boulle's apes live in cities, wear human-style clothing, drive automobiles. Technologically, they are in pre-spaceflight mode (although they have sent vessels into orbit, with humans as pilots—just like we did with monkeys, back in the 1950s and '60s). As in the '68 movie, Boulle's humans are essentially wild animals, unclothed and uncivilized—which is why our hero, French journalist Ulysse Mérou, poses such a problem for his captors: intelligent humans, capable of speech and advanced thought, are not supposed to exist. Many familiar ape characters are here—Zira, Cornelius, Nova, Zaius—but they are subtly different: for example Zaius, the orangutan scientist, is less buffoonish, and more menacing, than you might be expecting. The novel is paced more slowly than the movie, too: the film is a sci-fi movie with philosophical undertones, but the novel is more like a fable, an overt morality tale posing as science fiction, weighted more toward dialogue than action. It should be considered essential reading not just for fans of the movie, but for all science-fiction readers. --David Pitt

Review

"A scintillating mix of sci-fi adventure and allegory" Los Angeles Times "In 1963, at the most glacial moment of the Cold War, Frenchman Pierre Boulle wrote a novel called *Planet Of The Apes* - a drastic warning about where mankind's apparent desire to destroy itself might lead" The Mirror "Boulle called on his own experiences as a prisoner of war in South-east Asia during the Second World War, using the relationship between man and apes as a metaphor for the treatment handed out to prisoners by brutish Japanese guards" Daily Express "It's like a good myth or fairy-tale that stays with you... Part of the strength of this material is its disruptive, questioning nature. Who came first? Where are we going?" -- Tim Burton "The subtext is strongly anti-slavery, anti-racist and anti-war" Observer

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mark Hernandez:

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Roxie Lloyd:

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