

*“For Us The Living:
The Legacy for Heinlein's Children”*

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The Dean of Science Fiction; The Grand Master; the titles given to Robert Heinlein reflect his creativity and skill. I was enthralled by the unique *The Puppet Masters* when I read it in early high school. But at that point, I didn't have the sense to seek out more of Heinlein's works. A few years ago, when I came across *The Cat Who Walks Through Walls*, I was hooked. Slowly but surely, more of his works found their way into my collection. When I had a dozen or so, I realized I was a Heinlein addict.

Having only read those that I owned and a handful from the library, I was still only a quarter of the way through Heinlein's catalog of works. I sought out more at yard sales, eBay, and local bookstores, trading for other books when I was short on cash. After reading many of Heinlein's works, I became interested in the man himself.

I found a few books and essays about Heinlein's life and works in various libraries, but the most interesting find was on the web. I found numerous pages mentioning "Heinlein's Children". This may be puzzling at first, as Heinlein had no children of his own. It seems that a generation that grew up reading Heinlein's works regarded him as a father figure. He fueled the imaginations of many, with descriptions of spaceships that one can carry with them, rocket planes, and starships. And his stories showed an open-minded, forward-thinking, reachable future.

Granted, some of his works have ideas that are, to this day risqué, and many must have been outlandish when published originally. Through his works, Heinlein advocated racial, cultural, and sexual equality and freedom. Even though there is conflict in many of his works, and he had been in the military, he covertly, in some of his novels, and overtly, in his essays, opposed the destructiveness of war. All in all, he was a positive role model for his young readers.

Through the years, Heinlein saw some of his visions of the future come true. He was in awe at the first man to walk on the moon. Sadly, he was not able to see the first private space flight and the first rocket plane flight, both within the last two years. The fact that the US has a spaceport in California would have made him proud, and he would probably be stunned by the proposed \$480 million spaceport in the United Arab Emirates.

We, "Heinlein's Children," who are lucky enough to witness these events are luckier still, because of the posthumous publication of *For Us The Living*. Although clumsy in some aspects, Heinlein's first novel, rejected for publication in 1939, gives devout readers a glimpse at his future history. We get a hint of who his characters will evolve into, his famous technology is prevalent, and there are ideas here that will grow into his later novels. Best of all, we finally have something the he has left for us, the living.