

Who Goes There? (Filmed as The Thing)

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"Who Goes There?" is the novella that formed the basis of John Carpenter's film "The Thing." John W. Campbell's classic tells of an antarctic research base that discovers and thaws the ancient, frozen body of a crash-landed alien -- with terrifying results!

Who Goes There? (Filmed as The Thing) Details


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Bernie says

This is a novella written by a man who was arguably the greatest editor of science fiction ever. In reading it, you have to consider both the author and the time in which it was written. This is a man who worked with short fiction, for the most part in the pulp magazines of the 1930's and up. It was a time of the "bug-eyed" monster in sci-fi. Every alien was out to destroy mankind and they were all horrendously ugly. By today's cultural standards, this book may seem archaic with most of the characters heroic macho men of great stature and strength. But at the time, that's what the reader expected, the reader being mostly teenage boys. The plot, of necessity, must move along rapidly once it gets going. It's a bullet train, not a local commuter. The alien is well thought out and the science behind it is at least somewhat plausible, even today. If you've seen and liked the John Carpenter movie, you'll like this book. If you have not, watch it after reading the book. You'll have a better appreciation of both.

Paul says

Pulpy in its prose, "Who Goes There?" is interesting to see in light of the two films it spawned: Howard Hawks' "The Thing From Another World," later remade by John Carpenter as "The Thing." It's tone resonates more in the earlier film, but Carpenter used more of the plot points. As such, the original material lacks some of the creeping dread and claustrophobia found in the more well-known "The Thing," from 1982.

Scott Brillon says

I would love to give this 5 stars if only because this is the source for two of my favorite films-the 1951 Howard Hawks "The Thing from Another World" and John Carpenter's superb remake "The Thing"-, but I just can't. It's a story with great ideas, but there's just things I can't absolve-like one of the crew's suddenly knowing information about the creature from a dream or the poor characterization (you can barely tell one character from the other except MacCready who is described laughably as a "bronze god")to long dialogue passages of exposition.

Still, I love the story. I love the ending that is vastly different from any of the filmed versions. IT's a good old-fashioned sci-fi story from the Golden Age. Enjoy!

Sarah Fazio says

I love this novella, the movie that was made from this book is amazing, and as a child the only two movies that scared me were "The Thing" and "The blob". The only gripe I have with this book, although its not the worst problem a book can have, is that it is too short. I feel this book could have been twice or maybe three times as long, there are so many details that could have been covered, and the ending feels a little rushed. Overall I will give this book a 5 out of 5.

Michael John Faulkner says

Nice short atmospheric tale

Aaron says

John Carpenter's THE THING is one of my favorite movies, so as I "absorbed" this novella I was really happy to see a lot of character names & plot points that were recognizable in both works. The antarctic base of the novella is larger and the plot moves along faster, not able to dwell much on the horror it presents. The movie is a much smaller group operating in a more confined space, with lots of slow shots and build up to its famously graphic creature effects. Both have an indistinct 20th Century vibe, with the novella definitely feeling earlier 20th Century and the film having a few giveaway pieces of tech shown in brief shots of MacReady's computer & Nauls' roller skates & music. I'm dwelling a lot on the film but this novella was really good, conceptually horrifying to the uninitiated. I wish the author had taken the time to really dig into the paranoia.

Ringman Roth says

This story is not quite 5 stars, but close enough that I forgave its minor flaws. I actually read this before seeing the John Carpenter movie, believe it or not. I can definitely see why it worked so well as a film. It feels very modern with its dark and gritty atmosphere. When I read it, I actually thought it was written in the 60's or 70's, but it was written back in 1938! The ending details show its age a little, but still a surprising read that was fortunate to get so much attention for a short story in a sci-fi mag. Its just a shame that most people will never have read the story before seeing the movie, as I can imagine the experience of reading it afterwards would be much too influenced by the movie visuals.

Ursula Johnson says

Old Fashioned Sci-fi, Tense and suspenseful.

Having been familiar with the film's, it was a nice treat to read the original written version. Tense and suspenseful without being crass or gory, this is a page turning quick read that many will enjoy, I know I did. It may be dated, but it's still great. I read this book using immersion reading while listening to the audio book version. Narrator Steve Cooper's gravely voice fits this perfectly.
