

# Captain Future

**Captain Future** is a science fiction hero – a space-traveling scientist and adventurer – originally published in a namesake pulp magazine from 1940 to 1951. The character was created by editor Mort Weisinger and principally authored by Edmond Hamilton. There have subsequently been a number of adaptations and derivative works, most significantly a 1978-79 Japaneseanime adaptation (キャプテン・フューチャー), which was dubbed into several languages and proved very popular, particularly in Spanish, French, German and Arabic.

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## Origins

Although sometimes mistakenly attributed to science fiction writer Edmond Hamilton, who indeed authored most of the Captain Future stories, the character was created by Better Publications editor Mort Weisinger during the 1939 World Science Fiction Convention<sup>[1]</sup>

The original character was published by Ned Pines' Thrilling/Standard/Better publications company. A different Captain Future was published in Pine's Nedor Comics line.

## Published stories

The stories were published in the pulp magazines from 1940 to 1951, featuring bright-colored cover illustrations by Earle K. Bergey and two other fellow pulp artists. The adventures mostly appeared in Captain Future's own magazine but later

Captain Future	
<b>Publisher</b>	Thrilling Publications
<b>First appearance</b>	<i>Captain Future</i> (Winter 1940)
<b>Created by</b>	Mort Weisinger
In story information	
<b>Real name</b>	Curtis Newton
<b>Supporting characters</b>	Simon Wright
	Grag
	Otho
	Prof. Simon Wright
	Joan Randall
	Marshall Ezra
	Gurney
	Ul Quorn
Captain Future	
<b>Publisher</b>	Thrilling Publications
<b>Schedule</b>	Quarterly
<b>Genre</b>	Science fiction
<b>Publication date</b>	Winter 1940 – Spring 1944
<b>Number of issues</b>	17
Creative team	
<b>Writer(s)</b>	Edmond Hamilton
	Joseph Samachson
	Manly Wade Wellman
<b>Editor(s)</b>	Mort Weisinger (1940-1941)
	Oscar J. Friend (1941-1944)
Television	
<i><b>Captain Future</b></i> (キャプテン・フューチャー)	Toei Animation
	1978
	Portrayed by: Taichirou Hirokawa

stories appeared in *Startling Stories*. Captain Future is Curtis Newton, a brilliant scientist and adventurer who roams the solar system solving problems, righting wrongs, and vanquishing futuristic supervillains.

Kyaputen  
Fyūchā)

The series contains a number of assumptions about the solar system which are outlandish by modern standards but which still seemed plausible, at least to the general public, in the time the stories were written. All of the planets of the solar system, and many of the moons and asteroids, are suitable for life, and most are already occupied by humanoid extraterrestrial races. The initial adventures take place in the planets of the solar system but later stories (after the character invents the "vibration drive") take the hero to other stars, other dimensions and even the distant past and almost to the end of the Universe. For example, they visit the star Deneb, which is the origin of Earth humans, as well as many other humanoid races across the Solar System and beyond.

## Plot



Iconic Captain Future cover from *Startling Stories* January 1950, painted by Earle K. Bergey

The series was originally set in 1990; as the series progressed, Hamilton quickly stopped using exact dates (except as "in the past" as in the voyages of the astronauts who first landed on most of the other planets of the Solar System), sticking with a series continuity. In later stories, if the date was asked or revealed, it was done so discreetly.

The series begins when scientist Roger Newton, his wife Elaine, and his brilliant fellow scientist Simon Wright leave planet Earth to do research in an isolated laboratory on the moon. Simon's body is old and diseased and Roger enables him to continue doing research by transplanting his healthy brain into an artificial case (originally immobile—carried around by Grag—later equipped with lifter units). Working together, the two scientists create an intelligent robot called Grag, and an android with shape-shifting abilities called Otho. The criminal scientist Victor Corvo (originally: Victor Kaslan<sup>[2]</sup>) arrives on the moon and murders the Newtons.

The deaths of the Newtons leave their son, Curtis, to be raised by the unlikely trio of Otho, Grag, and Simon Wright. Under their tutelage, Curtis grows up to be a brilliant scientist and as strong and fast as any champion athlete. He also grows up with a strong sense of responsibility and hopes to use his scientific skills to help people. In the first adventure, he offers his services to the President of the System.

The publicity-shy Curtis takes the alias *Captain Future*. Simon, Otho and Grag are referred to as the *Futuremen* in subsequent stories.

Other recurring characters in the series are the old space marshal Ezra Gurney, the beautiful Planet Patrol agent Joan Randall (who provides a love interest for Curtis) and James Carthew, President of the Solar System whose office is in New York City. A young boy called Ken Scott was exclusive to the anime.

Captain Future faces many enemies in his career but his archenemy is Ull Quorn, who is the only recurring villain in the series and appears in two different stories. He is part Martian—therefore called the *Magician of Mars*—but also the son of Victor Kaslan, who murdered the Newtons. Quorn is a scientist whose abilities rival those of Captain Future.

## Stories

*Captain Future*, *Startling Stories* and *Amazing Stories* Magazines

- 01 *Captain Future and the Space Emperor* Edmond Hamilton (Winter/40) [reprinted with the same title]
- 02 *Calling Captain Future* Edmond Hamilton (Spring/40) [reprinted with the same title]
- 03 *Captain Future's Challenge* Edmond Hamilton (Summer/40) [reprinted with the same title]
- 04 *The Triumph of Captain Future* Edmond Hamilton (Fall/40) [reprinted as *Galaxy Mission*]

- 05 *Captain Future and the Seven Space Stones* Edmond Hamilton (Winter/41)
- 06 *Star Trail to Glory* Edmond Hamilton (Spring/41)
- 07 *The Magician of Mars* Edmond Hamilton (Summer/41) [reprinted with the same title]
- 08 *The Lost World of Time* Edmond Hamilton (Fall/41)
- 09 *Quest Beyond the Stars* Edmond Hamilton (Winter/42) [reprinted with the same title]
- 10 *Outlaws of the Moon* Edmond Hamilton (Spring/42) [reprinted with the same title]
- 11 *The Comet Kings* Edmond Hamilton (Summer/42) [reprinted with the same title]
- 12 *Planets in Peril* Edmond Hamilton (Fall/42) [reprinted with the same title]
- 13 *The Face of the Deep* Edmond Hamilton (Winter/43)
- 14 *Worlds to Come* Joseph Samachson as William Morrison (Spring/43)
- 15 *Star of Dread* Edmond Hamilton (Summer/43)
- 16 *Magic Moon* Edmond Hamilton (Winter/44)
- 17 *Days of Creation* Joseph Samachson as William Morrison (Spring/44) [reprinted as *The Tenth Planet*]
- 18 *Red Sun of Danger* Edmond Hamilton (*Startling Stories* Spring/45) [reprinted as *Danger Planet*]
- 19 *Outlaw World* Edmond Hamilton (*Startling Stories* Winter/46) [reprinted with the same title]
- 20 *The Solar Invasion* Manly Wade Wellman (*Startling Stories* Fall/46) [reprinted with the same title]
- SS01 *The Return of Captain Future* Edmond Hamilton (*Startling Stories* January/50)
- SS02 *Children of the Sun* Edmond Hamilton (*Startling Stories* May/50)
- SS03 *The Harpers of Titan* Edmond Hamilton (*Startling Stories* September/50) [reprinted as part of *Doctor Cyclops*]
- SS04 *Pardon My Iron Nerves* Edmond Hamilton (*Startling Stories* November/50)
- SS05 *Moon of the Unforgotten* Edmond Hamilton (*Startling Stories* January/51)
- SS06 *Earthmen No More* Edmond Hamilton (*Startling Stories* March/51)
- SS07 *Birthplace of Creation* Edmond Hamilton (*Startling Stories* May/51)
- Side Story: *Treasure on Thunder Moon* Edmond Hamilton (*Amazing Stories* APR/42) (While not a *Captain Future* story per se, this short story featured the 'final' adventure of the survivors of the crews of several early explorers prominently listed in the Future novels—Gorham Johnson, Mark Carey, Jan Wenzel and others—marking this solidly as a 'side-story' to the Future series. The Futuremen themselves visit the Thunder Moon in the course of *Captain Future's Challenge*)

Notes: Numbers #14-17 were credited to the newly created house name "Brett Sterling"; Numbers SS01-07 were short stories taking place a few years later in 'continuity'. Several issues were reprinted in paperback in the 60s, as noted above (one had a Frank Frazetta cover, several had Jeff Jones art, and several reprinted covers from the German SF series Perry Rhodan [including the *Doctor Cyclops* reprint book]). With Popular pulps, *Winter* was the first season/quarter of the year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall). All stories have now been reprinted as ebooks in a number of formats.

## Characters

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### Captain Future

was born on the moon as Curtis Newton (short: Curt).

### Prof. Simon Wright

a human brain living<sup>[3]</sup> in a transparent case

### Grag and Otho

Grag, a seven-foot-tall robot; Otho, a white-skinned android; Grag the robot and Otho the synthetic man had a friendly rivalry in the stories. Grag was big and strong and not very bright, while Otho was quick-witted and a master of disguise. Later on, they even got somewhat annoying pets, another standard in pulp storytelling.

### Joan Randall

an agent at the Planetary Police on earth. Romance was hinted at between Curt and the beautiful Joan Randall, but nothing very explicit ever took place.

### Marshall Ezra Gurney

another agent at the Planetary Police

### Ul Quorn

son of Victor Corvos who murdered Captain Future's parents.

## Adaptations and other derivative works

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## Anime

In 1978, one year after Hamilton's death, Toei Animation of Japan produced a *Captain Future* (キャプテン・フューチャー *Kyaputen Fyūchā*) anime television series of 53 episodes, based on 13 original Hamilton stories. Despite the differences in cultural references and medium, the animated series was true to the original in many ways, from the didactic scientific explanations to the emphasis on the usefulness of brains as opposed to brawn.

The series was translated in several languages and distributed globally. The four episodes comprising the series' second story arc were dubbed into English and released on video by ZIV International in the early 1980s as *The Adventures of Captain Future*. In the late 1980s, Harmony Gold dubbed the series' initial four-part story as an edited "TV movie" simply entitled *Captain Future*, but with alterations regarding some character names<sup>[4]</sup> (different from those in Hamilton's stories - whether for licensing law or other reasons, remains a broad field for speculation). A Blu-ray Box in Japanese only was released in September, 2016 (Box 1) and November, 2016 (Box 2).<sup>[5]</sup> A German "Limited Collectors Edition" Blu-ray Box was released in December 2016, featuring not only the remastered Japanese uncut version (with German subtitles) but also the heavily cut German version.<sup>[6]</sup>

While only eight episodes in total were dubbed into English, the series met huge success particularly in France, where the title and lead character's name were changed to "Capitaine Flam", in Italy with the translated title of "Capitan Futuro", in Latin America and Spain with the title "Capitán Futuro", in Taiwan with the title "太空突擊隊" ("Space Commando"). The Arabic-language version has the title of فارس الفضاء (Faris al-Fadha'a, or "The Knight of Space") and was broadcast many times during the 1980s.

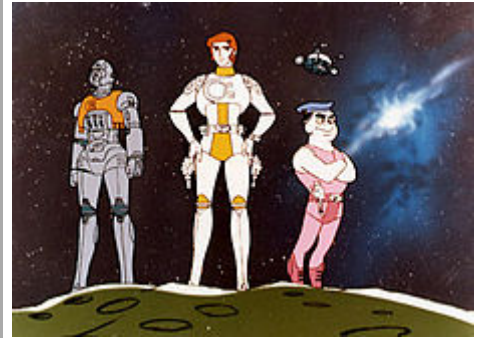
The series was also broadcast in Germany, where it appeared under its original title. However, this version was cut by about a quarter of the original length, which mainly affected violent scenes or those considered "expendable" for the storylines.

The original incidental music was composed by Yuji Ohno, while the English-dubbed version had a new soundtrack composed by Mark Mercury. Mercury's work survived on the Latin American version, but a new opening was added for it, composed by Shuki Levy and sung by Chilean performer Juan Guillermo Aguirre (aka "Capitán Memo")<sup>[7]</sup>

For the German version, a completely new soundtrack was created by German composer Christian Bruhn. To this day, the soundtrack is considered cult for giving the series the right feeling, and not only the theme song is still used as background music in many magazines and other shows. A soundtrack CD was released in 1995, and a remix called "The Final" by Phil Fuldner entered the top ten of the German and Swiss single charts in 1998. The German publisher Bastei-Verlag released a Captain Future comic series with original adventures.

## Episodes

### Captain Future



Screenshot from the anime series

キャプテン・フューチャー  
(*Kyaputen Fyūchā*)

**Genre** Adventure, science fiction

#### Anime television series

**Directed by** Tomoharu Katsumata

**Written by** Masaki Tsuji  
Takeo Kaneko  
Fumio Kannami

**Music by** Yuji Ohno

**Studio** Toei Animation

**Licensed by** ZIV International  
Harmony Gold

**Original network** NHK

**Original run** November 7, 1978 –  
December 18, 1979

**Episodes** 53

1	恐怖の宇宙帝王 (Captain Future and the Space Emperor)	宇宙帝王現わる
2		炎の海の牢獄
3		天翔ける砦の奇蹟
4		衛星ヌーンの決戦
5	時のロスト・ワールド (The Lost World of Time)	SOS1億年前
6		聖なる星クウムの謎
7		太陽系創世記
8		遥かなり50億年の旅
Special episode	謎の宇宙船強奪団 (Star Trail to Glory)	華麗なる太陽系レース (The Super Solar System Race)
9	挑戦！嵐の海底都市 (Captain Future's Challenge)	破壊王の陰謀
10		海底の罠
11		戦慄の海悪魔
12		破壊王の謎
13	輝く星々の彼方へ！ (The Quest beyond the Stars)	惑星に空気がなくなるとき
14		悲劇の暗黒星
15		見張りのおきて
16		甦える惑星
17	透明惑星危機一髪！ (The Magician of Mars)	ウル・クオルンの挑戦
18		暗闇族のすむ地底
19		惑星ただ一人
20		透明惑星の幻人間
21	太陽系七つの秘宝 (Captain Future and the Seven Space Stones)	銀河に眠る神秘の石
22		銀河サーカスの死闘
23		キャプテンフューチャー死す！
24		未知のミクロ宇宙
25	暗黒星大接近！ (Calling Captain Future)	渦巻く墓標
26		吠える大氷流
27		怪獣狩人は語る
28		幻の星、幻の文明
29	宇宙囚人船の反乱 (The Face of the Deep)	囚人船ハイジャックさる！
30		銀河からの大脱走
31		ゼロからの出発
32		星くずのスペースマン
33	魔法の月の決闘 (The Magic Moon)	キャプテンフューチャー募集！
34		恐怖のスペース・ロケーション
35		幻影の惑星

36		放たれた最終兵器
37	彗星王の陰謀 (The Comet King)	消えた宇宙船
38		彗星の支配者
39		アルルスの正体
40		悪夢の世界・四次元
41	脅威！不死密売団 (The Triumph of Captain Future)	不死密売シンジケート
42		不死帝王の挑戦
43		生と死の幻影
44		永遠の都の決斗
45	惑星タラスト救出せよ！ (Planets in Peril)	よみがえれ伝説の英雄
46		グラッグ奪回作戦
47		ひとりぼっちの地獄刑
48		英雄カフルの謎
49	人工進化の秘密！ (The Star of Dread)	宇宙遺跡の謎
50		半獣人の謎
51		死都の対決
52		光と闇の彼方へ

## "The Death of Captain Future"

*The Death of Captain Future* (*Asimov's Science Fiction*, October 1995) is a novella by Allen Steele about a man named Bo McKinnon who collects "ancient pulp magazines" and acts out an elaborate fantasy life based on the Captain Future stories. It won the 1996 Hugo Award for Best Novella. In the story, as in the real world, Captain Future is a fictional pulp character. *The Exile of Evening Star* (*Asimov's Science Fiction*, January 1999) continues and concludes the storyline; it includes many quotes from the original magazine novels.

Steele's novel *Avengers of the Moon* (2017) features Captain Future as its protagonist, and has all the main characters from the original pulp fiction stories.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Feature film

In March 2010, it was announced that German Director Christian Alvart (*Pandorum*, *Case 39*) secured the film rights for Captain Future and is working on a live-action adaptation in 3D.<sup>[9]</sup>

In 2015, a short trailer of a CGI version of Captain Future by Prophecy FX was leaked.<sup>[10]</sup> The trailer was said to be a study for a yet-undisclosed project. In March 2016, Chris Alvart confirmed in an interview with RocketBeansTV to have acquired the design rights from TOEI Animation so that the movie will have the look and feel of the animated series.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Other appearances

- The Japanese TV series *Captain Ultra*, a placeholder series between two actual Ultraman series, was more or less a live-action adaptation of the *Captain Future* series (which has remained popular in Japan as well). The characters were all present, even if the names were changed.
- In the TV series *The Big Bang Theory*, a Captain Future magazine cover is featured as a wall poster beside the entrance door in Leonard's and Sheldon's apartment.

- Also, in *Cat Planet Cuties*, Episode 9 features a well known song from the anime television series of Captain Future. The Cat Planet Cuties series is now being dubbed to English.<sup>[12]</sup>
- In the Pre-Crisis DC Comics, a character named Edmond Hamilton was featured as an minor adversary of Superman. This character, as a result of his homonymy with the science fiction author and his most famous work, took up the identity of Colonel Future and ended up battling Superman despite having heroic intentions.<sup>[13]</sup> This character is a homage to the real Edmond Hamilton and his work in DC Comics.

## See also

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- Captain Comet

## References

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1. Allan Steele, *The Death of Captain Future* (with introduction and author's note) in *The Space Opera Renaissance* ed. David G. Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer 2006, p.556-586
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13. *Superman* #378 (December 1982)

## External links

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- The Site of Captain Future (in French)
  - Haffner Press, publisher of The Collected Captain Future hardcover books
  - Edmond Hamilton on Captain Future
  - Robert Weinberg's Captain Future page
  - Futuremania - The Captain Future Fan Site (German)
  - Captain Future bibliography at the Internet Speculative Fiction Database
  - Captain Future (anime) at Anime News Networks encyclopedia
  - Captain Future Convention 2010 (20th Birthday Party of Curtis Newton Captain Future) (in Japanese)
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