

= Marvel Science Stories =

Marvel Science Stories was a U.S. pulp magazine which published a total of fifteen issues in two separate runs , both edited by Robert O. Erisman . The publisher for the first run was Postal Publications , and the second run was published by Western Publishing ; both companies were owned by Abraham and Martin Goodman . It appeared in August 1938 , and carried stories with more sexual content than was usual for the genre , including several stories by Henry Kuttner , under his own name and also under pseudonyms . Reader reaction was generally negative , with one reader referring to Kuttner 's story " The Time Trap " as " trash " . The magazine was cancelled after the April 1941 issue , but when a boom in science fiction magazines began in 1950 , the publishers revived it . The first issue of the new series was dated November 1950 ; a further six issues appeared , with the last issue dated May 1952 . In addition to Kuttner , contributors to the first run included Arthur J. Burks and Jack Williamson ; the second run published stories by Arthur C. Clarke , Isaac Asimov , Jack Vance and L. Sprague de Camp , among others . The quality of the second incarnation of the magazine was better than the first , but it was unable to compete with the new , higher @-@ quality magazines that had appeared since the magazine 's first series .

= Publication history =

Although science fiction (sf) had been published before the 1920s , it did not begin to coalesce into a separately marketed genre until the appearance in 1926 of Amazing Stories , a pulp magazine published by Hugo Gernsback . After 1931 , when Miracle Science and Fantasy Stories was launched , no new science fiction magazines appeared for several years . In 1936 Abraham and Martin Goodman , two brothers who owned a publishing company with multiple imprints , launched Ka @-@ Zar , an imitation Tarzan magazine with some borderline sf content . It lasted for three issues , with the last issue dated January 1937 . In addition to this marginal science fiction magazine , in 1937 the Goodmans began publishing several " weird @-@ menace " pulps . These were a genre of pulp magazine known for incorporating " sex and sadism " , with story lines that placed women in danger , usually because of a threat that appeared to be supernatural but was ultimately revealed to be the work of a human villain . The Goodmans ' titles were Detective Short Stories , launched in August 1937 , and Mystery Tales , which published its first issue in March 1938 . These were followed up by Marvel Science Stories , edited by Robert O. Erisman , which was not intended to be a weird @-@ menace pulp , but an sf magazine . The influence of the " sex and sadism " side of the Goodman 's portfolio of magazines was apparent , however : authors were sometimes asked to add more sex to their stories than was usual in the science fiction field at the time .

The first issue contained " Survival " by Arthur J. Burks as the lead novel ; this was well received by the readers , and was free of any taint of sex . The first couple of issues contained several stories that did little to offend readers , but they also contained two stories by Henry Kuttner , who was selling regularly to the Goodman 's other publications . Erisman and the Goodmans had asked Kuttner to spice up his submissions to Marvel Science Stories . He obliged with " Avengers of Space " in the first issue , which included " scenes of aliens lusting after unclothed Earth women " , in the words of sf historian Mike Ashley ; and " The Time Trap " in the second issue . Reader reaction was strongly negative : a typical letter , from William Hamling , later to become a publisher and editor of science fiction magazines in his own right , commented , " I was just about to write you a letter of complete congratulations when my eyes fell upon Kuttner 's " The Time Trap " . All I can say is : PLEASE , in the future , dislodge such trash from your magazine " . In addition to these two stories published under Kuttner 's name , there were two more stories in the same two issues by him under pseudonyms which were equally offensive to readers such as Hamling .

After five issues , the title was changed to Marvel Tales ; at the same time the number of stories advertised as " passionate " or containing " sin @-@ lost " or " lust @-@ crazed " characters sharply increased . Though some of the stories contained little to match the titillating blurbs , there were some that did , with " women entrapped , burned and otherwise maltreated , and whips cracking into use with uninventive frequency " , according to sf historian Joseph Marchesani . The magazine

ceased publication with the April 1941 issue , but in 1950 the Goodmans saw an opportunity to revive it when a new boom in science fiction magazines got under way . Erisman was still working for the Goodmans , and was listed as editorial director of the new version of the magazine , but much of the editorial work was done by Daniel Keyes , who was credited as " Editorial Associate " on the 1951 issues . The first issue of the new incarnation of Marvel Science Stories was dated November 1950 . After two issues Erisman switched the magazine to a digest format , but the final issue , dated May 1952 , was once again a pulp . The post @-@ war issues contained stories by well @-@ known writers , including Arthur C. Clarke , Isaac Asimov , Richard Matheson , William Tenn , Jack Vance , and Lester del Rey , but the stories were of only average quality . Erisman and Keyes were able to improve on the material published in the pre @-@ war Marvel Tales , but the field had grown more sophisticated since those days , and the writers who sold to Marvel Tales were now publishing their best work elsewhere .

= = Bibliographic details = =

There were nine issues in the first sequence , in one volume of six numbers and a second volume of three numbers . All issues in the first run were in pulp format and were priced at 15 cents . The first four issues were 128 pages ; the next five were 112 pages . The title was Marvel Science Stories for five issues , then Marvel Tales for two issues , and then Marvel Stories for the last two issues of the first run . The publisher for the first series was listed as Postal Publications of Chicago for the first four issues , and as Western Publishing of New York and Chicago ; in both cases the owner was Martin and Abraham Goodman . The intended schedule was bimonthly but this was never achieved . The editor was Robert O. Erisman .

The second incarnation of the magazine lasted for six issues on a more regular quarterly schedule , starting in November 1950 . The price was 25 cents and the page count was 128 pages for all six issues ; the first two issues and last issue of this sequence were in pulp format , and the three from May 1951 to November 1951 were in digest format . The title returned to Marvel Science Stories for the first three issues of this series , and to Marvel Science Fiction for the last three issues . The publisher was listed as Stadium Publishing of New York ; as with the first series Martin and Abraham Goodman were the owners .

There was a British reprint of the February 1951 issue , published by Thorpe & Porter and dated May 1951 . Science fiction bibliographer Brad Day lists five other British reprints of the second series of Marvel Science Stories , but no copies are recorded by more recent bibliographers . In 1977 the Goodmans launched a digest science fiction magazine titled Skyworlds , which has been described by Mike Ashley as " without any shadow of a doubt , the worst " of the 1970s crop of science fiction magazines ; the fiction it contained was almost entirely reprinted from the second series of Marvel Science Stories .