

## = Tops in Science Fiction =

Tops in Science Fiction was a science fiction magazine which was launched in 1953 . The publisher , Love Romances Publishing , created it as a vehicle to reprint stories from Planet Stories . It was unsuccessful and only lasted for two issues . Although it contained no original stories , it did print some original artwork , including some of Kelly Freas 's early work . A British reprint edition appeared in the mid @-@ 1950s .

## = = Publication history = =

The early 1950s saw dramatic changes in the world of U.S. science fiction publishing . At the start of 1949 , all but one of the major magazines in the field were in pulp format ; by the end of 1955 , almost all had either ceased publication or switched to digest format . Despite the rapid decline of the pulp market , several new science fiction magazines were launched in pulp format during these years ; Tops in Science Fiction was one of the last of these . The publisher , Love Romances Inc . , also published Planet Stories , and Malcolm Reiss , Planet 's editorial director , decided to try to take advantage of the backfile of stories and artwork from Planet 's 14 years of publication . He may have been inspired by the example of Fantastic Story Magazine , which was published by Standard Magazines as a vehicle to reprint their extensive backfile of science fiction . If so , he was evidently not aware that by 1953 Fantastic Story was not doing well financially .

The first issue was dated Spring 1953 , and was edited by Jack O 'Sullivan . The cover , by Alexander Leydenfrost , was reprinted from a 1942 issue of Planet Stories . The fiction included " Black Friar of the Flame " by Isaac Asimov , and " The Million Year Picnic " , by Ray Bradbury ? the first of his " Martian Chronicles " stories . Interior art included some of Kelly Freas ' earliest work . The issue was only modestly successful , and on the advice of his distributor , who told Reiss that they were having trouble getting the magazine distributed , Reiss decided to switch to the digest format for the second issue : digests were starting to become more popular than the pulps , which would be almost completely gone from the market within only a couple more years . The second issue was dated Fall 1953 ; the cover , by Freas , illustrated " Lorelei of the Red Mist " , by Bradbury and Leigh Brackett . Freas also did the interior illustrations for the story , and later commented that he was delighted by the results but felt he was " never quite able to repeat it . A hex , of course . " Interior artists for the second issue also included Emsh ; the fiction included stories by Fredric Brown and Horace Gold . However , this issue received only limited distribution , and Reiss decided against continuing with the magazine .

## = = Bibliographic details = =

Tops in Science Fiction 's two issues were dated Spring and Fall 1953 ; the first in pulp format , and the second a digest . There was a single volume of two numbers . The publisher was Love Romances Publishing , based in Stamford , Connecticut . The magazine was priced at 25 cents for the pulp issue , and 35 cents for the digest issue . Both issues were 128 pages long . The first issue was edited by Jack O 'Sullivan ; the second by Malcolm Reiss .

A British reprint edition appeared , with three 128 @-@ page digest editions published by Top Fiction Ltd . These were released in Autumn 1954 , Winter 1955 and Summer 1956 , though none of them were dated . The first two reprinted stories from the first U.S. issue ; the third reprinted material from the second U.S. issue . They were each priced at 1 / 6 .