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**Ender's Game (Card)**

Summary	Author Bio	Book Reviews	Discussion Questions	Full Version	Print
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***Ender's Game (Ender Wiggin Series #1)****Orson Scott Card, 1985**Tom Doherty Assoc. (Tor Science Fiction)**352pp.**ISBN-13: 9780812550702***Summary**

In order to develop a secure defense against a hostile alien race's next attack, government agencies breed child geniuses and train them as soldiers. A brilliant young boy, Andrew "Ender" Wiggin lives with his kind but distant parents, his sadistic brother Peter, and the person he loves more than anyone else, his sister Valentine. Peter and Valentine were candidates for the soldier-training program but didn't make the cut—young Ender is the Wiggin drafted to the orbiting Battle School for rigorous military training.

Ender's skills make him a leader in school and respected in the Battle Room, where children play at mock battles in zero gravity. Yet growing up in an artificial community of young soldiers Ender suffers greatly from isolation, rivalry from his peers, pressure from the adult teachers, and an unsettling fear of the alien invaders. His psychological battles include loneliness, fear that he is becoming like the cruel brother he remembers, and fanning the flames of devotion to his beloved sister.

Is Ender the general Earth needs? But Ender is not the only result of the genetic experiments. The war with the Buggers has been raging for a hundred years, and the quest for the perfect general has been underway for almost as long. Ender's two older siblings are every bit as unusual as he is, but in very different ways. Between the three of them lie the abilities to remake a world. If, that is, the world survives.  
*(From the publisher.)*

**Author Bio**

- Birth—August 24, 1951
- Where—Richland, Washington, USA
- Education—B.A., Brigham Young University; M.A., University of Utah
- Awards—(see below)
- Currently—lives in Greensboro, North Carolina

Any discussion of Orson Scott Card's work must necessarily begin with religion. A devout Mormon, Card believes in imparting moral lessons through his fiction, a stance that sometimes creates controversy on both sides of the fence. Some Mormons have objected to the violence in his books as being antithetical to the Mormon message, while his conservative political activism has gotten him into hot water with liberal readers.

Whether you agree with his personal views or not, Card's fiction can be enjoyed on many different levels. And with the amount of work he's produced, there is something to fit the tastes of readers of all ages and stripes. Averaging two novels a year since 1979, Card has also managed to find the time to write hundreds of audio plays and short stories, several stage plays, a television series concept, and a screenplay of his classic novel *Ender's Game*. In addition to his science fiction and fantasy novels, he has also written contemporary fiction, religious, and nonfiction works.

Card's novel that has arguably had the biggest impact is 1985's Hugo and Nebula award-winner *Ender's Game*. *Ender's Game* introduced readers to Andrew "Ender" Wiggin, a young genius faced with the task of saving the Earth. *Ender's Game* is that rare work of fiction that strikes a chord with adults and young adult readers alike. The sequel, *Speaker for the Dead*, also won the Hugo and Nebula awards, making Card the only author in history to win both prestigious science-fiction awards two years in a row.

In 2000, Card returned to Ender's world with a "parallel" novel called *Ender's Shadow*. *Ender's Shadow* retells the events of *Ender's Game* from the perspective of Julian "Bean" Delphinko, Ender's second-in-command. As Sam to Ender's Frodo, Bean is doomed to be remembered as an also-ran next to the legendary protagonist of the earlier novel. In many ways, Bean is a more complex and intriguing character than the preternaturally brilliant Ender, and his alternate take on the events of *Ender's Game* provide an intriguing counterpoint to fans of the original series.

In addition to moral issues, a strong sense of family pervades Card's work. Card is a devoted family man and father to five (!) children. In the age of dysfunctional family literature, Card bristles at the suggestion that a positive home life is uninteresting. "How do you keep good parents' from being boring?" he once said. "Well, in truth, the real problem is, how do you keep *bad* parents from being boring? I've seen the same bad parents in so many books and movies that I'm tired of them."

Critical appreciation for Card's work often points to the intriguing plotlines and deft characterizations that are on display in Card's most accomplished novels. Card developed the ability to write believable characters and page-turning plots as a college theater student. To this day, when he writes, Card always thinks of the audience first. "It's the best training in the world for a writer, to have a live audience," he says. "I'm constantly shaping the story so the audience will know why they should care about what's going on."

Card brought Bean back in 2005 for the fourth and final novel in the *Shadow* series: *Shadow of the Giant*. The novel presented some difficulty for the writer. Characters who were relatively unimportant when the series began had moved to the forefront, and as a result, Card knew that the ending he had originally envisioned would not be enough to satisfy the series' fans.

Although the *Ender* and *Shadow* series deal with politics, Card likes to keep his personal political opinions out of his fiction. He tries to present the governments of futuristic Earth as realistically as possible without drawing direct analogies to our current political climate. This distance that Card maintains between the real world and his fictional worlds helps give his novels a lasting and universal appeal.

### Extras

- Card has won numerous awards, including four Hugo Awards; four Locus Awards; two Nebula Awards; two Hamilton-Brackett Memorial Awards; World Fantasy Award; John W. Campbell Award (World Science Fiction Convention); Mythopoeic Society Award; Margaret A. Edwards Award (Young Adult Library Services Assn.); Whitney Award.
- When asked in a Barnes & Noble interview what book most influenced his life or his career as a writer, here is what he said:

*The Book of Mormon. Mark Twain was wrong. It isn't chloroform in print. But, like most books, it can't survive a hostile reading. My reading as a child was not hostile. I found the stories gripping and morally challenging. Though I was not conscious of the influence as I started writing, in retrospect the motifs and stylistic quirks I picked up from the Book of Mormon are obvious. I'd like to think it has influenced my life a great deal more than it has influenced my writing. (Author bio and interview adapted from Barnes & Noble.)*

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### Book Reviews

(*Audio version.*) For the 20th anniversary of Card's Hugo and Nebula Award-winning novel, Audio Renaissance brings to life the story of child genius Ender Wiggin, who must save the world from malevolent alien "buggers." In his afterword, Card declares, "The ideal presentation of any book of mine is to have excellent actors perform it in audio-only format," and he gets his wish. Much of the story is internal dialogue, and each narrator reads the sections told from the point of view of a particular character, rather than taking on a part as if it were a play. Card's phenomenal emotional depth comes through in the quiet, carefully paced speech of each performer. No narrator tries overmuch to create separate character voices, though each is clearly discernible, and the understated delivery will draw in listeners. In particular, Rudnicki, with his lulling, sonorous voice, does a fine job articulating Ender's inner struggle between the kind, peaceful boy he wants to be and the savage, violent actions he is frequently forced to take. This is a wonderful way to experience Card's best-known and most celebrated work, both for longtime fans and for newcomers.

### **Publishers Weekly**

(Audio version; *Grade 7 & up.*) The novel asks: What does it take to successfully lead men into battle? The buggers have invaded Earth twice. The last time mankind survived only because of the brilliance of Mazer Rackham, commander of the International Fleet. Years later, a third invasion is feared and a new commander is sought. Ender Wiggin is only six years old when he is plucked to succeed Rackham and sent to the space station Battle School. He is isolated, ridiculed, bullied, and persecuted-but he survives and thrives. Using his astonishing intelligence, the boy learns to be a top-notch soldier and, despite his youth and small stature, is quickly promoted up the ranks. By the age of 12, Ender learns the art of command and earns the respect and fear of his fellow soldiers. This audio version was created in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the novel and it's a gem. The audiobook is narrated by a full cast. Stefan Rudnicki is particularly good as Ender. Despite Ender's age, this is not a children's novel. Its profound themes (and mild profanity) call for intelligent teens who appreciate a complex novel. —*Tricia Melgaard, Centennial Middle School, Broken Arrow, OK*

***School Library Journal***

Ender is portrayed as just a pawn in the larger game..., and readers will alternately sympathize with his exploitation and cheer when he is able to make friends in spite of the tremendous forces working to isolate and dehumanize him. The political and philosophical material at the novel's end may get too heavy for some readers, but for the most part, this novel will deservedly reach a new generation through this new edition.

***Noral Piehl - Children's Literature***

Card has taken the venerable sf concepts of a superman and interstellar war against aliens, and, with superb characterization, pacing and language, combined them into a seamless story of compelling power. This is Card at the height of his very considerable powers—a major sf novel by any reasonable standards.

***Booklist***

**Discussion Questions**

1. Is childhood a right? Does a person robbed of a "normal" childhood have any possibility of stability as an adult? Does Ender have any chance of living "happily ever after"?
2. The Buggers communicate telepathically using no identifiable external means of communication. Was it inevitable that war would have to occur when two sentient species met but were unable to communicate?
3. Card has stated that "children are a perpetual, self-renewing underclass, helpless to escape from the decisions of adults until they become adults themselves." Does *Ender's Game* prove or disprove this opinion?

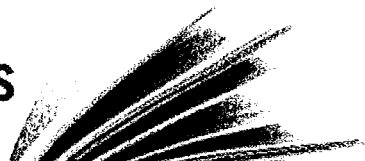
4. The government in Ender's world plays a huge role in reproductive decisions, imposing financial penalties and social stigma on families who have more than two children but exerting pressure on specific families who show great generic potential to have a "third" like Ender. Is government ever justified in involving itself in family planning decisions? Why or why not?
5. Is genocide, or in the case of *Ender's Game* where an entire alien race is annihilated, xenocide, ever justified? Was the xenocide of the buggers inevitable?
6. *Ender's Game* has often been cited as a good book to read by readers who are not fans of science fiction. Why does it appeal to both fans of science fiction and those who do not usually read science fiction?
7. Peter appears to be the personification of evil, but as Locke, acts as a good person. How does Card treat the concept of good versus evil in *Ender's Game*?
8. In their thoughts, speech, and actions Card describes children in terms not usually attributed to children. In the introduction to *Ender's Game* he states that he never felt like a child. "I felt like a person all along—the same person that I am today. I never felt that my emotions and desires were somehow less real than an adult's emotions and desires." Do contemporary teens feel this same way? Do only gifted children feel this way or is it a universal feeling?

(Questions from the author's website (<http://www.hatrack.com/>) .)

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### Full text biography:

#### Orson Scott Card

Birth Date : 1951

Known As : Green, Brian (American writer); Walley, Byron; Card, Orson S.; Bliss, Frederick; Gump, P.Q.; Kirkham, Dinah; Richards, Scott

Place of Birth: United States,Washington,Richland

Nationality : American

Occupation : Novelist

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### Awards:

John W. Campbell Award for best new writer of 1977, World Science Fiction Convention, 1978; Hugo Award nominations, World Science Fiction Convention, 1978, 1979, 1980, for short stories, 1986, for novelette *Hatrack River*, and 1988, for *Seventh Son*; Nebula Award nominations, Science Fiction Writers of America, 1979, and 1980, for short stories; Utah State Institute of Fine Arts prize, 1980, for epic poem "Prentice Alvin and the No-Good Plow"; Hamilton-Brackett Award, 1981, for *Songmaster*; Nebula Award, 1985, and Hugo Award and Hamilton-Brackett Award, both 1986, all for *Ender's Game*; Nebula Award, 1986, and Hugo Award and Locus Award, both 1987, all for *Speaker for the Dead*; World Fantasy Award, 1987, for *Hatrack River*; Hugo Award, and Locus Award nomination, both 1988, both for novella "Eye for Eye"; Locus Award, World Fantasy Award nomination, and Mythopoeic Society Fantasy Award, all 1988, all for *Seventh Son*; Locus Award, 1989, for *Red Prophet*; Hugo Award for nonfiction, 1991, for *How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy*; Israel's Geffen Award for Best Science Fiction book, 1999, for *Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus*; Grand Prix de l'Imaginaire, 2000, for *Heartfire*; Margaret A. Edwards Award for lifetime achievement, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), 2008; Whitney Awards, Lifetime Achievement Award, 2008.

### Personal Information:

Born August 24, 1951, in Richland, WA; son of Willard Richards (a teacher) and Peggy Jane (a secretary and administrator) Card; married Kristine Allen, May 17, 1977; children: Michael Geoffrey, Emily Janice, Charles Benjamin (deceased), Zina Margaret, Erin Louisa (deceased). **Education:** Brigham Young University, B.A. (with distinction), 1975; University of Utah, M.A., 1981. **Politics:** Moderate Democrat. **Religion:** Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon). **Avocational Interests:** Computer games and "feeding birds, squirrels, chipmunks, possums, and raccoons on the patio." **Addresses:** Home: Greensboro, NC. Agent: Barbara Bova Literary Agency, 3951 Gulf Shore Blvd. N, Ste. PH1B, Naples, FL 34103-3639.

### Career Information:

Write, editor, college teacher, and political activist. Mormon missionary in Brazil, 1971-73; operated repertory theater in Provo, UT, 1974-75; Brigham Young University Press, Provo, editor, 1974-76; *Ensign*, Salt Lake City, UT, assistant editor, 1976-78; freelance writer and editor, 1978--; Compute! Books, Greensboro, NC, senior editor, 1983; Lucasfilm Games, game design consultant, 1989-92; Southern Virginia University, Buena Vista, VA, distinguished professor of English, 2005--. Instructor at Brigham Young University, University of Utah, University of Notre Dame, Appalachian State University, Clarion West Writers' Workshop, Cape Cod Writer's Workshop, and Antioch Writers' Workshop. Has served as local Democratic precinct election judge and Utah State Democratic Convention delegate. Appeared in the short film *The Delivery*, 2008.

## Writings:

## SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

- *A Planet Called Treason*, St. Martin's Press (New York, NY), 1979, revised edition, Dell (New York, NY), 1980, published as *Treason*, St. Martin's Press (New York, NY), 1988.
- *Songmaster*, Dial (New York, NY), 1980, reprinted, Orb (New York, NY), 2002.
- *Unaccompanied Sonata and Other Stories*, Dial (New York, NY), 1980.
- (Editor) *Dragons of Darkness*, Ace (New York, NY), 1981.
- *Hart's Hope*, Berkley (New York, NY), 1983, reprinted, Orb (New York, NY), 2003.
- (Editor) *Dragons of Light*, Ace (New York, NY), 1983.
- (With others) *Free Lancers*, Baen (New York, NY), 1987.
- *Wyrms*, Arbor House (New York, NY), 1987, reprinted, Orb (New York, NY), 2003.
- *Folk of the Fringe* (short stories), Phantasia Press (Huntington Woods, MI), 1989.
- *The Abyss* (novelization of screenplay by James Cameron), Pocket Books (New York, NY), 1989.
- *Eye for Eye* (bound with *The Tunesmith* by Lloyd Biggle, Jr.), Tor (New York, NY), 1990.
- (Editor) *Future on Fire*, Tor (New York, NY), 1991.
- (With Kathryn H. Kidd) *Lovelock* (first novel in "Mayflower" trilogy), Tor (New York, NY), 1994.
- *Black Mist: And Other Japanese Futures* (novella), DAW (New York, NY), 1997.
- (Editor) *Future on Ice* (companion volume to *Future on Fire*), Tor (New York, NY), 1998.
- *Magic Mirror*, illustrated by Nathan Pinnock, Gibbs Smith Publisher (Salt Lake City, UT), 1999.
- (Editor) *Masterpieces: The Best Science Fiction of the Century*, Ace Books (New York, NY), 2001.
- (Editor, with Keith Olexa) *Empire of Dreams and Miracles: The Phobos Science Fiction Anthology*, foreword by Lawrence Krauss, Phobos Books (New York, NY), 2002.
- (Editor, with Keith Olexa) *Hitting the Skids in Pixeltown: The Phobos Science Fiction Anthology*, Phobos Books (New York, NY), 2003, (also with Christian O'Toole) Volume 2, 2003.
- (With Doug Chiang) *Robota: Reign of Machines*, Chronicle Books (San Francisco, CA), 2003.
- (Writing as Scott Richards) *Zanna's Gift: A Life in Christmases*, Forge Books (New York, NY), 2004.
- *Magic Street*, Del Rey/Ballantine Books (New York, NY), 2005.
- *Empire* ("Empire" series), Tor (New York, NY), 2006.
- *The Space Boy*, Subterranean Press (New York, NY), 2007.
- *Keeper of Dreams*, Tor (New York, NY), 2008.
- *Orson Scott Card's InterGalactic Medicine Show*, Tor Books (New York, NY), 2008.
- *The Stonefather*, Subterranean Press (New York, NY), 2008.
- *Hidden Empire* ("Empire" series) Tor (New York, NY), 2009.
- *The Lost Gate* ("Mithr Mages" series), Tor (New York, NY), 2011.
- *Hamlet's Father* (novella), Subterranean (New York, NY), 2011.
- *Earth Unaware*, Tor (New York, NY), 2012.
- *The Gate Thief* ("Mithr Mages" series), Tor (New York, NY), 2013.

Also author of novelette *Hatrack River*, 1986. Contributor to *The Bradbury Chronicles: Stories in Honor of Ray Bradbury*, edited by William F. Nolan and Martin H. Greenberg, New American Library (New York, NY), 1991. Contributor to numerous anthologies.

## "WORTHING CHRONICLE" SERIES

- *Capitol* (short stories), Ace (New York, NY), 1978.
- *Hot Sleep: The Worthing Chronicle*, Baronet (New York, NY), 1978.
- *The Worthing Chronicle*, Ace (New York, NY), 1983.
- *Worthing Saga*, Tor (New York, NY), 1990.

## "ENDER" SERIES; SCIENCE FICTION

- *Ender's Game* (also see below), Tor (New York, NY), 1985.
- *Speaker for the Dead* (also see below), Tor (New York, NY), 1986.
- *Ender's Game* [and] *Speaker for the Dead*, Tor (New York, NY), 1987.
- *Xenocide*, Tor (New York, NY), 1991.
- *Children of the Mind*, Tor (New York, NY), 1996.
- *First Meetings: In the Enderverse* (includes "Ender's Game," "The Polish Boy," and "Teacher's Pest"), Tor (New York, NY), 2003.
- *A War of Gifts: An Ender Story*, Tor (New York, NY), 2007.
- *Ender in Exile*, Tor (New York, NY), 2008.
- (Supervising editor) Jake Black, *The Authorized Ender Companion*, Tor Books (New York, NY), 2009.
- *Formic Wars: Burning Earth* (comic), Marvel Comics (New York, NY), 2011.
- (With Aaron Johnston) *Formic Wars: Earth Unaware*, Tor (New York, NY), 2012.
- (With Aaron Johnston) *Formic Wars: Earth Afire*, Tor (New York, NY), 2013.
- (With Aaron Johnston) *Earth Awakens*, Tor (New York, NY), 2014.

## "MAPS IN MIRROR" SERIES

- *Maps in a Mirror: The Short Fiction of Orson Scott Card* (includes stories originally published under

pseudonym Byron Walley), Tor (New York, NY), 1990.

- *The Changed Man*, Tor (New York, NY), 1992.
- *Flux*, Tor (New York, NY), 1992.
- *Cruel Miracles*, Tor (New York, NY), 1992.
- *Monkey Sonatas*, Tor (New York, NY), 1993.

#### "HEGEMON" OR "SHADOW" SERIES

- *Ender's Shadow*, Tor (New York, NY), 1999.
- *Shadow of the Hegemon*, Tor (New York, NY), 2001.
- *Shadow Puppets*, Tor (New York, NY), 2002.
- *The Shadow Saga*, Orbit (New York, NY), 2003.
- *Shadow of the Giant*, Tor (New York, NY), 2005.
- *Shadows in Flight*, Tor (New York, NY), 2012.

Also available in omnibus form, including *Ender's Shadow/Shadow of the Hegemon*, 2002; *Ender's Shadow/Shadow of the Hegemon/Shadow Puppets*, 2003; and *The Ender's Shadow Series Box Set*, 2008.

#### "TALES OF ALVIN MAKER" SERIES

- *Seventh Son*, St. Martin's Press (New York, NY), 1987.
- *Red Prophet*, Tor (New York, NY), 1988.
- *Prentice Alvin*, Tor (New York, NY), 1989.
- *Hatrack River* ("Tales of Alvin Maker" numbers 1-3), Science Fiction Book Club (Rantoul IL), 1989.
- *Alvin Journeyman*, Tor (New York, NY), 1995.
- *Heartfire*, Tor (New York, NY), 1998.
- *The Crystal City*, Tor (New York, NY), 2003.

Series books also available in omnibus form, including *Tales of Alvin Maker: Seventh Son, Red Prophet, and Prentice Alvin*, 1995, and *Alvin Wandering*, 1998.

#### "HOMECOMING" SERIES

- *The Memory of Earth* (also see below), Tor (New York, NY), 1992.
- *The Call of the Earth* (also see below), Tor (New York, NY), 1993.
- *The Ships of Earth* (also see below), Tor (New York, NY), 1993.
- *Earthfall*, Tor (New York, NY), 1994.
- *Homecoming: Harmony* (contains *The Memory of Earth*, *The Call of Earth*, and *The Ships of Earth*), Science Fiction Book Club (Rantoul IL), 1994.
- *Earthborn*, Tor (New York, NY), 1995.

#### "PATHFINDER" SERIES

- *Pathfinder*, Simon Pulse (New York, NY), 2010.
- *Ruins*, Simon Pulse (New York, NY), 2012.
- *Visitors*, Simon Pulse (New York, NY), 2014.

#### PLAYS

- (And director) *Tell Me That You Love Me, Junie Moon* (adaptation of novel by Marjorie Kellogg), produced in Provo, UT, 1969.
- *The Apostate*, produced in Provo, UT, 1970.
- *In Flight*, produced in Provo, UT, 1970.
- *Across Five Summers*, produced in Provo, UT, 1971.
- *Of Gideon*, produced in Provo, UT, 1971.
- *Stone Tables*, produced in Provo, UT, 1973.
- *A Christmas Carol* (adapted from the story by Charles Dickens), produced in Provo, UT, 1974.
- *Father, Mother, Mother, and Mom* (produced in Provo, UT, 1974), published in *Sunstone*, 1978.
- *Liberty Jail*, produced in Provo, UT, 1975.
- *Fresh Courage Take*, produced in Salt Lake City, UT, 1978.
- *Elders and Sisters* (adaptation of novel by Gladys Farmer), produced in American Fork, UT, 1979.
- *Barefoot to Zion* (book and lyrics), music composed by Arlen L. Card, produced in North Salt Lake City, UT, 1997.

Also author, under pseudonym Brian Green, of *Rag Mission*, published in *Ensign*, July, 1977. Author of *Wings* (fragment), produced in 1982.

#### "WOMEN OF GENESIS" SERIES

- *Sarah*, Shadow Mountain (Salt Lake City, UT), 2000.
- *Rebekah*, Shadow Mountain (Salt Lake City, UT), 2001.
- *Rachel and Leah*, Shadow Mountain (Salt Lake City, UT), 2004.

#### "ULTIMATE IRON MAN" GRAPHIC NOVELS



- *Ultimate Iron Man*, Volume 1, Marvel Comics (New York, NY), 2001.
- *Ultimate Iron Man*, Volume 2, Marvel Comics (New York, NY), 2006.
- *Ultimate Iron Man: Ultimate Collection* illustrated by Andy Kubert and Pasqual Ferry, Marvel Comics (New York, NY), 2010.

#### OTHER

- *Listen, Mom and Dad*, Bookcraft (Salt Lake City, UT), 1978.
- *Saintspeak: The Mormon Dictionary*, Signature Books (Midvale, UT), 1981.
- *Ainge*, Signature Books (Midvale, UT), 1982.
- *A Woman of Destiny* (historical novel), Berkley (New York, NY), 1983, published as *Saints*, Tor (New York, NY), 1988.
- *Compute's Guide to IBM PCjr Sound and Graphics*, Compute (Greensboro, NC), 1984.
- *Cardography*, Hypatia Press, 1987.
- *Characters and Viewpoint*, Writer's Digest (Cincinnati, OH), 1988, revised edition, 2010.
- (Author of introduction) Susan D. Smallwood, *You're a Rock, Sister Lewis*, Hatrack River Publications, 1989.
- *How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy* (also see below), Writer's Digest (Cincinnati, OH), 1990.
- *Lost Boys*, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 1992.
- *A Storyteller in Zion: Essays and Speeches*, Bookcraft (Salt Lake City, UT), 1993.
- (Editor, with David C. Dollahite), *Turning Hearts: Short Stories on Family Life*, Bookcraft (Salt Lake City, UT), 1994.
- *How to Write a Million*, Robinson Publishing (Great Britain), 1995.
- *Treasure Box* (novel), HarperCollins (New York, NY), 1996.
- *Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus*, Tor (New York, NY), 1996.
- *Stone Tables* (novel), Deseret Book Co. (Salt Lake City, UT), 1997.
- *Homebody* (novel), HarperCollins (New York, NY), 1998.
- *Enchantment*, Del Rey (New York, NY), 1999.
- *An Open Book* (poetry collection), Subterranean Press/Hatrack River Publications (Burton, MI), 2003.
- *Les to Live by*, Subterranean Press (Burton, MI), 2005.
- (Editor) *Getting Lost: Survival, Baggage, and Starting over in J.J. Abrams' Lost*, BenBella Books (Dallas, TX), 2006.
- (With Amy Berner and Joyce Millman) *The Great Snake Debate: Is Snake Innocent or Guilty?*, Benbella Books (New York, NY), 2007.
- (With Aaron Johnston) *Invasive Procedures*, Tor (New York, NY), 2007.
- *The Writer's Digest Guide to Science Fiction & Fantasy* (contains *How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy* and *The Writer's Complete Fantasy Reference*), Writer's Digest Books (Cincinnati, OH), 2010.
- (With Emily Janice Card) *Laddertop, Book 1*, Tor (New York, NY), 2011.
- (With Emily Janice Card) *Laddertop, Books 1 & 2*, Tor (New York, NY), 2013.

Also author of audio plays for Living Scriptures; coauthor of animated videotapes. Author of regular review columns, including "You Got No Friends in This World," *Science Fiction Review*, 1979-86, "Books to Look For," *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, 1987-94, and "Gameplay," *Compute!*, 1988-89; contributor of columns and editorials to Web sites *Hauvoo* and *Omery American*. Contributor of articles and reviews to periodicals, including *Washington Post Book World*, *Science Fiction Review*, *Destinies*, and *Rhinoceros Times* (Greensboro, NC). Author of works under pseudonyms Frederick Bliss and P.Q. Gump.

Card's manuscripts are housed at Brigham Young University. His books have been translated into Catalan, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovakian, Spanish, and Swedish.

#### Media Adaptions:

*Xenocide* was adapted as an audiobook read by Mark Rolston, Audio Renaissance, 1991; *Seventh Son* was adapted as an audiobook, read by Card, Literate Ear, Inc., 1991; *Maps in a Mirror* was adapted as an audiobook, Dove Audio (Los Angeles, CA), 1999; audiobook productions of most of Card's novels have been acquired by Blackstone Audiobooks (Ashland, OR). Card's short stories "Clap Hands and Sing," "Lifeloop," and "Sepulcher of Songs" were adapted for the stage as *Posing as People* by Scott Brick, Aaron Johnston, and Emily Janice Card respectively, produced 2004; *Ender's Game* was adapted as a feature film by Summit Entertainment, 2013.

#### Sidelights:

Orson Scott Card is the award-winning author of over sixty books of science fiction, fantasy, history, and ghost stories. With the creation of Andrew "Ender" Wiggin, the young genius of *Ender's Game*, Card launched an award-winning career as a science fiction and fantasy writer. Since his debut in the field in 1977, when the short story "Ender's Game" appeared in *Analog* magazine, Card went on to become the first writer to win the genre's top awards, the Nebula and the Hugo, for consecutive novels in a continuing series. These two novels--*Ender's Game* and *Speaker for the Dead*--have been described by *Fantasy Review* contributor Michael R. Collings as "allegorical disquisitions on humanity, morality, salvation, and redemption"--evaluations that many

critics have applied to Card's other works as well. Such thematic concerns, in part influenced by Card's devout Mormonism, are what critics feel set him apart from other writers in the science-fiction field. Beyond the "Ender" series, Card's other projects include creating the American fantasy series "Tales of Alvin Maker"; a retelling of ancient scripture in the "Homecoming" series; contemporary novels with occult and ghost themes such as *Lost Boys*, *Treasure Box*, and *Homebody*; a series with a religious theme, "Women of Genesis," begun with the novels *Sarah* and *Rebekah*; and the recent "Pathfinder" science-fiction series.

In many of his works Card focuses on the moral development of young protagonists whose abilities to act maturely and decisively while in challenging situations often determine the future of their communities. Card, a devout Mormon, is intrigued by the role of the individual in society, and he credits his solid religious background with instilling in him both a strong sense of community and an affinity for storytelling. "I don't want to write about individuals in isolation," he told GraceAnne A. DeCandido and Keith R.A. DeCandido in *Publishers Weekly*. "What I want to write about is people who are committed members of the community and therefore have a network of relationships that define who they are. I think if you're going to write about people, you have to write about storytelling." In his works Card is deeply concerned with his own unresolved moral and philosophical questions as well, and he maintains that science fiction affords him the benefit of exploring these issues against a futuristic and imaginative backdrop. "In some of the best SF, you move into a universe where all moral bells are off, where you have a group of aliens, or humans in an alien setting, who live by different rules because some key aspect of life that we take for granted as human beings has been changed radically," Card noted in the *Publishers Weekly* interview. He added: "After a while we can see ourselves through their eyes and see how bizarre we are. Then you come back and you question everything."

Though a profoundly moral writer, Card dismisses standard black-and-white versions of good and evil. As he told Laura Ciporen, writing for *Publishers Weekly*, such representations are "so boring." Card further explained: "When a character comes upon a case of right and wrong and chooses to do wrong, that shows you he's the kind of jerk who'd do that. My characters wrestle with real moral dilemmas where all the choices have steep prices. If they make the selfish choice, then I show the consequences. I'm not trying to teach that lesson, though it underlies everything I write."

Card was born in Richland, Washington, the son of a teacher father and an administrator mother. Card moved often in his youth, growing up in California, Arizona, and finally Utah. As a teenager, both the theater and science fiction captured Card's attention. At only sixteen, he entered Brigham Young University and three years later saw his first play, *Tell Me That You Love Me*, *Junie Moon*, produced in Provo, Utah. Ten plays and adaptations followed through the seventies, mostly with scriptural or historical themes, but Card's education and writing were put on hold for several years in the early 1970s when Card served as a missionary in Brazil. Returning to Provo, Card founded a theater company and earned his B.A., with honors, in 1975. Thereafter he became an editor at *Ensign* magazine, the official publication of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and also worked for the Brigham Young University Press. There was, however, little money in writing plays. "I was supporting myself on the pathetic wages paid to an editor at a university press--and BYU's wages were even more pathetic than usual," he told the DeCandidos. "I knew there was no hope of paying off my debts through my salary, so I made a serious effort to write fiction as a career."

"All the time that I was a playwright," Card once said, "these science fictional ideas that never showed up in my plays were dancing around in the back of my mind." The genre, he felt, offered him the most expedient way of getting published, since the field thrives on up-and-coming talent and fresh ideas. He also admitted that he chose science fiction because, as he noted, "I knew the genre. While it was never even half my reading, I had read enough to be aware of the possibilities within it. It allowed the possibility of the kind of high drama that I'd been doing with religious plays for the Mormon market." He added: "In order to write the kind of intense romantic drama that I wanted to write, I needed the possibilities that science fiction and fantasy offered."

Hoping to break into the field, Card sent "The Tinker," one of his first short stories, to Ben Bova, then editor of the leading science-fiction magazine *Analog*. Bova rejected the work, though he did not crush the aspirations of its author. "Apparently he [Bova] saw some reason to hope that I might have some talent," Card explained to the DeCandidos. "His rejection letter urged me to submit a real science fiction story, because he liked the way I wrote." The real story became "Ender's Game," which, upon its publication, garnered Card the World Science Fiction Convention's John W. Campbell Award for best new writer.

Though Card was thrilled with his sudden success, he later admitted to a *Publishers Weekly* interviewer that he was "not so stupid as to quit my job." He retained his position as editor for *Ensign* and, in 1978, began composing audio plays for Living Scriptures. He also continued honing his writing skills and released his first book, *Capitol*, during that same year. A collection of short stories, the work follows the fall of the planet Capitol and revolves in part around the drug somec, which induces a state of suspended animation in its user and allows him to live for several thousand years. The collection "demonstrates a fine talent for storytelling and characterization," wrote a contributor *Publishers Weekly*. Card's 1980 novel *Songmaster* generated praise as well. The lyrical tale, set in a futuristic galactic society that reveres those who sing, focuses on Anssat, a "Songbird" who is summoned to serve the emperor. The work encompasses "personal growth and exploration melded into a tale of interplanetary politics and court intrigue," asserted Richard A. Lupoff in *Washington Post Book World*. "*Songmaster* is a first-class job." Some of Card's other early works, however, including *Hot Sleep*, *The Worthing Chronicle* and *A Planet Called Treason*, encountered critical censure for employing standard science fiction elements and for containing what some reviewers considered gratuitous violence. George R.R.

Martin in the *Washington Post Book World* especially criticized Card's 1981 work, *Unaccompanied Sonata and Other Stories*, which he found filled "with death, pain, mutilation, dismemberment, all described in graphic detail." The volume includes such unfortunate characters as a malformed infant who is drowned in a toilet and whose body is sliced to pieces, and a woman whose breasts are chopped off and eaten. Apart from these negative evaluations, the general critical consensus of Card's early works was that they display imagination, intelligence, literary aptitude, and promise. "Card is a young, talented, and ambitious writer," conceded Martin.

In 1985 Card released "Ender's Game." The short story that inspired the novel, Card once pointed out, is "still the most popular and the most reprinted of my stories, and I still have people tell me that they like it better than the novel." Card noted in the same interview: "When I started working on the novel that became *Speaker for the Dead*, a breakthrough for me in that story was realizing that the main character should be Ender Wiggin. That made it a kind of sequel, although its plot had nothing to do with the original plot; it was just using a character." He also remarked: "I told the publisher, Tom Doherty, that I needed to do a novel version of 'Ender's Game' just to set up *Speaker for the Dead*. That's the only reason 'Ender's Game' ever became a novel."

*Ender's Game* concerns the training of Ender Wiggin, a six-year-old genius who is the Earth's only hope for victory over invading "bugger" aliens. While this plot appears to be standard science fiction fare, *New York Times Book Review* contributor Gerald Jonas observed that "Card has shaped this unpromising material into an affecting novel full of surprises that seem inevitable once they are explained." The difference, asserted Jonas and other critics, is in the character of Ender Wiggin, who remains sympathetic despite his acts of violence.

A *Kirkus Reviews* contributor, for example, while noting the plot's inherent weakness, admitted that "the long passages focusing on Ender are nearly always enthralling," and remarked that *Ender's Game* "is altogether a much more solid, mature, and persuasive effort" than the author's previous work. Writing in *Analog*, Tom Easton noted that *Ender's Game* "succeeds because of its stress on the value of empathy," and *Washington Post Book World* contributor Janrae Frank remarked that "Card is a writer of compassion."

Following the success of *Ender's Game*, its sequel, *Speaker for the Dead*, was hailed as "the most powerful work Card has produced" by Michael R. Collings in *Fantasy Review*. "*Speaker* not only completes *Ender's Game* but transcends it," he said, and he noted: "Read in conjunction with *Ender's Game*, *Speaker* demonstrates Card's mastery of character, plot, style, theme, and development." Ender Wiggin, now working as a "Speaker for the Dead," travels the galaxy to interpret the lives of the deceased for their families and neighbors; as he travels, he also searches for a home for the eggs of the lone surviving "hive queen" of the race he destroyed as a child.

"Like [*Ender's Game*], *Speaker* deals with issues of evil and empathy, though not in so polarized a way," observed Tom Easton in his review for *Analog*. Some critics found an extra element of complexity in the "Ender" books. *Washington Post Book World* contributor Janrae Frank, for example, saw "quasi-religious images and themes" in the conclusions of both novels.

With the publication of 1991's *Xenocide*, Card's reputation as an unflinching explorer of both moral and intellectual issues was firmly established. In this novel, Card picks up the story of Ender as he works feverishly with his adopted Lusitanian family to neutralize a deadly virus. Many critics ventured that with *Xenocide*, Card relies more on the scientific ruminations of a multitude of contemplative characters rather than on a plot. "The real action is philosophical: long, passionate debates about ends and means among people who are fully aware that they may be deciding the fate of an entire species, entire worlds," observed Gerald Jonas in the *New York Times Book Review*.

In 1996 Card added to the "Ender" series with *Children of the Mind*. In this novel, Ender is already moving off the stage, playing a relatively minor part in the hectic attempt to avoid destruction of the planet Lusitania by the Starways Congress. Characters who take a more active role in this episode are Peter and Young Valentine, who are copies of Ender's brother and sister, and both products of Ender's mind. Also instrumental in Ender's current bid to save his adopted planet is Jane, a rather irascible Artificial Intelligence who has the uncanny knack of transcending the light-speed barrier. Together these three must roam the galaxy to find a new home for the three races of Lusitania that may all too soon become refugees. Meanwhile, they also try to convince politicians to halt the Starways Congress from destroying the planet. "Card's prose is powerful here," commented a reviewer for *Publishers Weekly*, "as is his consideration of mystical and quasi-religious themes." The same writer went on to wonder whether this book, "billed as the final Ender novel," would in fact be the last the reader hears of Ender or his world. The reviewer wrote: "This story leaves enough mysteries unexplored to justify another entry."

When Card once again approached that same world it was not from Ender's point of view, but from the perspective of a young orphan named Bean. In the first book in the four-part "Hegemon" series, *Ender's Shadow*, he again enters his parallel universe. *Library Journal*'s Jackie Cassada noted that "Card returns to the world of his award-winning *Ender's Game* to tell the story of a child's desperate struggle for recognition and self-worth." The superhuman child in question, Bean, is taken from the streets of Rotterdam and sent to the Battle School to learn to fight the insect-like "bugs." Bean wins selection to the Battle School by his understanding of personal motivation—a skill that kept him alive in the mean streets when he was a starving child. At Battle School he learns how to command fleets for the war with the alien bugs. When he comes into contact with Ender, Bean wants to understand what makes this larger-than-life figure tick. "Thus Bean's story is

twofold," wrote a *Publishers Weekly* contributor: "he learns to be a soldier, and to be human." Through Bean the reader learns about the formation of Ender's Dragon army and also about the last of Ender's games. "Everyone will be struck by the power of Card's children," noted the same reviewer, "always more and less than human, perfect yet struggling, tragic yet hopeful, wondrous and strange." Cassada wrote that Card's "superb storytelling and his genuine insight into the moral dilemmas that lead good people to commit questionable actions" blend together to make the novel a "priority purchase."

Questioned by Laura Ciporen in *Publishers Weekly* about his child protagonists, Card observed that, for children, life is very real. "They don't think of themselves as cute or sweet. I translate their thoughts from the language available to children into the language available to adults." For Card, children are every bit as complex as adults, and in fact their thoughts and fears--because they have fewer of them to compare--can be even more real than those of adults. Card's ability to portray young protagonists sympathetically, without condescension, is part of what makes him a popular writer for adults and juveniles alike.

The "Hegemon" series continues with *Shadow of the Hegemon* and *Shadow Puppets*. With the wars over and Ender off to colonize a new world, the children of the Battle School become increasingly important to those nations wishing to gobble up their neighbors, and Peter Wiggin rises to the position of hegemony, ruler of the Earth government. In *Shadow of the Hegemon*, Bean is second best of the Battle School children and aide to Wiggin; he is wooed for his powers by Wiggin's nemesis, Achilles, an unbalanced genius who wishes to conquer Earth.

In *Shadow Puppets*, Bean is forced to confront his mortality--his body grows too quickly, dooming him to an early death--and with his young wife Petra pregnant, he seeks an antidote against a similar fate for his unborn children. "The complexity and serious treatment of the book's young protagonists will attract many sophisticated YA readers," observed a writer for *Publishers Weekly* in a review of *Shadow of the Hegemon*, and the reviewer further commented that Card's "impeccable prose, fast pacing and political intrigue will appeal to adult fans of spy novels, thrillers and science fiction." *Library Journal* contributor Jackie Cassada dubbed the same novel a "gripping story of children caught up in world-shaking events," while in *Booklist* Sally Estes praised *Shadow Puppets* for Card's ability to maintain "the action, danger, and intrigue levels" of the previous series installments.

In *Shadow of the Giant*, Card continues the "superlative job of dramatically portraying the maturing process of child into adult," as a writer for *Publishers Weekly* put it. The novel focuses on the struggle of Bean and Petra to find their stolen children before Bean's imminent death. At the same time, their Battle School classmates must protect Earth as best they can from an enemy that is not clearly defined. Though the *Publishers Weekly* reviewer felt that Card's political didacticism weakens the story, the writer added that the book's other themes are masterfully and subtly explored. Recommending the book highly, *Library Journal* contributor Jackie Cassada deemed it a "brilliant" addition to the "Ender" saga.

A slighter contribution to the "Ender" books is the novella *A War of Gifts: An Ender Story*. This book uses a Christmas theme to make a point about the importance of tolerance and compassion. The story begins when Zeck Morgan, an unwilling new student at the Battle School because of his pacifist beliefs, exposes a student who violates school rules against religious observation by giving a friend a small gift for Sinterklaas Day. This action sparks an outcry, and Zeck is shunned until Ender Wiggin manages to teach him the true meaning of the holiday. Though critics considered *A War of Gifts* a relatively minor work in the "Ender" opus, the book was generally well-received for its sensitive and timely message. Though the book lacks epic battles and large-scale drama, wrote Matthew L. Moffett in *School Library Journal*, "Card's well-imagined characters take this story to places that are both moving and satisfying." Expressing similar regard for the book, *Kliatt* contributor Paula Rohrlack observed that "Card's psychological acuity is admirable."

*Ender in Exile* recounts the adventures of Ender Wiggin and his sister Valentine after Ender chooses life in exile. At the close of *Ender's Game*, the young protagonist had been told that he could no longer remain on Earth. Refusing the Hegemony's offer that he live at their military training facility, he chose instead to travel to the colonies with his sister. *Ender in Exile* describes the pair's wanderings and the dangers they face as they adapt to a new life.

Jackie Cassada, writing for *Library Journal* termed this novel a "thoughtful take on the life of a young man who has already accomplished his destiny." Similarly, *Horn Book* contributor Jonathan Hunt found it a "welcome addition to the expanding Ender universe," while *School Library Journal* reviewer Charli Osborne called it "a wonderful treat to be devoured whole in a gulp and then returned to later to digest at leisure." Likewise, a *Publishers Weekly* contributor thought that "fans will find this offering illuminating."

Card's storytelling techniques are further displayed in the "Tales of Alvin Maker" series. "This series began as an epic poem I was writing during graduate study at the University of Utah," Card once commented, "when I was heavily influenced by Spenser and playing games with allegory. That epic poem won a prize from the Utah State Institute of Fine Arts, but I realized that there is very little future for an epic poem in terms of reaching an audience and telling a story to real people, so I converted it and expanded it and, I think, deepened and enriched it into something much longer and larger."

The first novel in the "Tales of Alvin Maker" series, *Seventh Son*, "begins what may be a significant recasting in fantasy terms of the tall tale in America," wrote *Washington Post Book World* reviewer John Clute. Set in a

pioneer America where the British Restoration never happened, where the Crown colonies exist alongside the states of Appalachia and New Sweden, and where folk magic is readily believed and practiced, *Seventh Son* follows the childhood of Alvin Miller, who has enormous magical potential because he is the seventh son of a seventh son. While *Fantasy Review* contributor Martha Soukup admitted that "this could easily have been another dull tale of the chosen child groomed to be the defender from evil," she asserted that Card's use of folk magic and vernacular language, along with strongly realized characters, creates in *Seventh Son* "more to care about here than an abstract magical battle."

"Because we know it is a dream of an America we do not deserve to remember, Orson Scott Card's luminous alternate history of the early 19th century continues to chill as it soothes," Clute explained in a review of *Red Prophet*, the second volume of Alvin's story. The novel traces Alvin's kidnapping by renegade Reds employed by "White Murderer" William Henry Harrison, who wishes to precipitate a massacre of the Shaw-Nee tribe. Alvin is rescued by the Red warrior Ta-Kumsaw, however, and learns of Native American ways even as he attempts to prevent the conflict caused by his supposed capture and murder. While *Red Prophet* seems initially less ambitious than its predecessor, covering a period of only one year, a *West Coast Review of Books* contributor commented that, "in that year, Card creates episodes and images that stun with the power of their emotions." Sue Martin, however, believed that the setting was not enough to overcome the plot, which she described in the *Los Angeles Times Book Review* as "yet another tale of Dark versus Light." She conceded, however, that while Alvin "seems almost Christlike" in his ability to heal and bring people together, the allegory is drawn "without the proselytizing." *Booklist* contributor Sally Estes summarized: "Harsher, bleaker, and more mystical than *Seventh Son*," Card's second volume displays his strong historical background, "keen understanding of religious experience, and, most of all, his mastery of the art of storytelling."

In *Prentice Alvin* and *Alvin Journeyman*, Card explores Alvin's life during and following his apprenticeship. In the second volume, Alvin's bad but similarly talented brother Calvin leaves for Europe, hoping to learn the arts of manipulation and domination from Napoleon Bonaparte. Alvin himself is forced to leave Vigor Church after being accused of improprieties by a girl dreaming of his passion. He returns to Hatrack River, his birthplace and the location of his apprenticeship, but has to defend himself in court.

Written with the input of Card's fans via online forums, the story could have descended into mediocrity, as Martin Morse Wooster noted in the *Washington Post Book World*. However, Wooster wrote: "Card appears to have resisted the encroachments of his admirers because *Alvin Journeyman* is a well-written, engaging entertainment."

*Heartfire* and *The Crystal City* continue the Alvin Maker adventures. *Heartfire* sees Alvin traveling to New England during Puritan times with historical friends such as John James Audubon, seeking to put an end to anti-witch laws. In the meantime, Alvin's wife, Peggy, who has the ability to see into the hearts of others, tries to put an end to slavery in the South and to stop Alvin's malevolent brother, Calvin, from destroying her husband.

In *The Crystal City*, Alvin's ability to channel Native American and African magic works to his advantage as he attempts to heal the frontier's ills and create a peaceful utopia he calls the Crystal City. "Card's antebellum settings, dialogue and historical figures seem authentic and thoroughly researched," according to a writer for *Publishers Weekly*, who noted, however, that in *Heartfire* Card "is as occasionally windy and preachy as ever." Jackie Cassada, reviewing the novel in *Library Journal*, wrote that the fifth installment to the "Tales of Alvin Maker" series "exhibits the same homespun charm of its predecessors." Noting that *The Crystal City* "still enchants," a *Publishers Weekly* contributor commented that "a large part of the appeal" of the sixth "Alvin Maker" installment "lies in the book's homegrown characters using their powers for ordinary purposes."

In 1992 Card introduced his "Homecoming" series with *The Memory of Earth*, a novel many critics found to be a mixture of philosophy, futuristic technology, and biblical lore. *The Memory of Earth* opens on the planet Harmony, where for forty million years humans have been controlled by Oversoul, a powerful, global computer programmed to prevent humanity from destroying itself through needless wars.

David E. Jones, in *Tribune Books*, argued that "what Card gives us [in *The Memory of Earth*] is an interaction between supreme intelligence and human mental capability that is at once an intellectual exercise, a Biblical parable and a thoroughly enjoyable piece of storytelling."

Card concludes his "Homecoming" series with the fourth and fifth novels, *Earthfall* and *Earthborn*. In *Earthfall*, the wandering humans return from Harmony to Earth to continue the species when it appears Harmony is about to self-destruct. They meet two new species who have evolved in the absence of humans and must make peace with them. "As in other Card novels, plotting is intricate, characters are multifaceted, and strange creatures coexist with humans," observed Pam Carlson in *Voice of Youth Advocates*.

*Earthborn* focuses on the three groups from *Earthfall* who are speaking a common language but who differ in their habitat. The sky people are able to fly as angels; the earth people, or diggers, are treated as slaves; the returned humans from Harmony are known as the middle people. Gerald Jonas noted in the *New York Times Book Review*: "As in all Mr. Card's novels, the characters spend ... time talking about what they are going to do and why they are going to do it." The reviewer continued: "These long philosophical discussions crackle with tension." While several reviewers appreciated the "Homecoming" series, the concluding volume received mixed reviews.

Card joined forces with a newer science fiction voice, Kathryn H. Kidd, for the publication of *Lovelock* in 1994.

The title shares its name with the central character, a genetically enhanced monkey, who is trained to record the activities of important persons for posterity. Realizing his own servitude and the indifferent neglect of his masters, Lovelock plots his escape.

The work was welcomed by several critics as a solid blending of two talents. "Masterful," commented Maureen F. McHugh in the *Washington Post Book World*, who found the character of Lovelock to be "clearly as nasty and clever as a genetically enhanced capuchin monkey could be expected to be." McHugh continued: "None of Card's previous tellings has possessed the satirical bite we see here, which makes for a welcome change."

Though firmly established as a successful author of science fiction, Card has not limited himself to that genre, publishing throughout his career numerous works of nonfiction, drama, and, most notably, historical fiction. In *A Woman of Destiny* (later published as *Saints*), for example, he returns to the subject of the life of Joseph Smith, first touched upon in *Seventh Son*. *A Woman of Destiny* offers an account of the lives of Smith, the founder of Mormonism, and Dinah Kirkham, a (fictional) English woman who is converted to Mormonism and becomes Smith's wife. When Smith is murdered in 1844, Kirkham escapes with a group of fellow Mormons to Utah, where she becomes a staunch leader as well as one of the wives of Brigham Young, Smith's successor as president of the Mormon Church. *Los Angeles Times Book Review* contributor Kristiana Gregory pronounced *Saints* an "engrossing epic," stressing that Card "is a powerful storyteller."

Card's *Treasure Box* is billed as a mainstream novel, yet it contains elements of the supernatural. Quentin Fears loses his beloved older sister Lizzy as a young boy. However, he continues to confide in her following her death. A millionaire following his sellout of his computer firm, he meets his true love, Madeleine, at a party and marries her. But there are gaps in her background, and when he finally meets his in-laws at a spooky mansion in upstate New York, events unravel following Madeleine's insistence that Quentin open a box supposedly containing her inheritance.

*Homebody* is another mainstream supernatural fantasy, combining elements of spirituality, the occult, and psychological insight in a haunted-house tale. *Homebody* tells the story of Don Lark who, grieving the death of his two-year-old daughter, sets out to renovate the Bellamy House, a grand old Victorian mansion in a terrible state of disrepair. His three elderly neighbors warn him about the house's dark powers, but he goes forward with his project and becomes attached to a squatter who lives there. She is the occult key to the violent history of the house as a brothel and speakeasy.

A writer for *Kirkus Reviews* assessed the novel as a "solid but undistinguished work, not high in either tension or in depth." A *Publishers Weekly* contributor found more to like, writing that the novel has "great potential that shines through its superfluous detail," and describing it as "a powerful tale of healing and redemption that skillfully balances supernatural horrors with spiritual uplift."

*Invasive Procedures*, written with Aaron Johnston, is a thriller with elements of the supernatural. Maverick geneticist Dr. George Galen is working underground on V16, a virus of cloned genes that can be customized to heal individual ailments, and he is using a group of humans with supernatural strength and healing powers as his guinea pigs. When the U.S. Biohazard Agency decides to investigate the series of bizarre deaths that ensue, Galen manages to make investigator Dr. Frank Hartman one of his research subjects. Hartman then rallies Galen's other victims to join him in an attempt to escape.

The novel, wrote A.J. Wright in *Library Journal*, is a "medical thriller 'ripped from tomorrow's headlines.'" A writer for *Kirkus Reviews*, however, was less favorably impressed, noting the book's "iffy plotting, shaky science and annoying characters who, despite plenty of clues and warnings, do stupid things at critical moments."

Card turns from the realms of the haunted to those of fairy tales with *Enchantment*, a blending of the story of Sleeping Beauty with Russian mythology. Ten-year-old Ivan is both frightened by and attracted to a lovely woman frozen in time in the midst of a Russian forest. A decade later and now an up-and-coming track star, Ivan returns to the forest to set this bewitched woman free. Drawn back into the ninth-century world of his princess, Ivan discovers that his modern-day talents do not stand him in good stead in his desperate battle to defeat the mythical witch Baba Yaga and claim his princess. Ivan takes Princess Katerina back to the modern world for a time, and the pair learns each other's powers before returning to battle the witch. A *Publishers Weekly* contributor commented that Card's "new look at a classic tale is clever ... [due to] adding attractive whimsical twists and cultural confluences to a familiar story."

In *Stone Tables*, Card returns to biblical themes, telling the story of Moses and retelling Exodus in a novel "that exhibits the same profound and compassionate understanding of human nature that marks his best sf and fantasy efforts," according to a contributor to *Publishers Weekly*. Card puts the focus here on the difficult relationship between Moses and his siblings. With *Sarah*, Card inaugurated a new series, "Women of Genesis." In Card's retelling, Sarah is to become a priestess of Asherah until she meets a man named Abram, a mystic and desert wanderer. Sarah realizes that her destiny is tied up with Abram's, and she waits eight years for his return, only to have many more years of a childless marriage test her belief in Abram's God. "Card adds depth, understanding, and human frailty to the woman who became known as Sarah," wrote Melanie C. Duncan in a *Library Journal* review. Duncan wrote the novel "will attract secular readers as well." A reviewer for *Publishers Weekly* maintained that Card's rendering of Sarah as "a wise and virtuous figure who struggles to have the unflinching faith of Abraham," and that his portrait of biblical life and times creates a "playfully speculative novel" that "succeeds in bringing Sarah's oft-overlooked character into vivid relief." The series

continues with the novels *Rebekah* and *Rachel and Leah*.

Card's stand-alone novel *Magic Street*, which drew highly favorable reviews, tells the story of Mack Street, an African American boy kidnapped as a newborn and raised by Ceese Tucker, who was only twelve when he discovered the abandoned baby on one of the city's mean streets. Mack is now a young teenager and loner whose special ability to dream other people's deepest wishes into existence comes with a terrible price: if the dreamers get their wish, the dream becomes a nightmare. Mack is introduced to the world of Fairyland via a secret portal visible only to himself. His understanding of fairy creatures serves him well four years later when he becomes the central figure in a battle between good and evil that affects both the fairy and the human worlds.

Ray Olson, writing in *Booklist*, described *Magic Street* as a "suspenseful fantasy thriller that, during the race to the last page, has one mulling over myth, morals, salvation, and will." A writer for *Kirkus Reviews*, however, commented that the novel's themes, despite their interest, "fail to cohere." *Kliatt* contributor Sherry Hoy, on the other hand, hailed the book as a "gem of a story, with authentic black heroes, male and female; it's also an introspective piece about who has ultimate responsibility." The intersection of the fantastic and the mundane, according to a *Publishers Weekly* contributor, "are completely believable, and the characters crackle with personality and attitude."

In a critique of the author's 1990 story collection *Maps in a Mirror: The Short Fiction of Orson Scott Card*, reviewer Easton characterized Card as "an intensely thoughtful, self-conscious, religious, and community-oriented writer." In spite of such critical acclaim and the numerous awards his writing has earned, Card seems to prefer a simpler description of himself; as he told the DeCandidos, "I'm Kristine's husband, Geoffrey and Emily and Charlie's dad, I'm a Mormon, and I'm a science fiction writer, in that order." Replying to a query by Ciporen, writing for *Publishers Weekly* as to why he writes mainly science fiction, Card replied: "The truth is, SF is the most powerful genre available right now. Mainstream literature is so stultifyingly rigid. I don't just want to talk to people who believed everything their English teacher told them. I want to reach people who read books for the sheer pleasure of it, because those are the people who are open to having their lives changed by what they read."

Card also shows his short fiction skills in the large collection from 2008, *Keeper of Dreams*. This gathering includes literary pieces along with science fiction, fantasy, and Mormon tales. In addition to the numerous stories, Card also provides essays on the background and inspirations for these works of fiction. *School Library Journal* contributor Charli Osborne remarked that *Keeper of Dreams* "contains no clunkers." A similar assessment was offered by *Booklist* contributor Roland Green, who noted: "None of these stories shows any diminution in Card's mastery of language, pacing, and characterization." Further praise for the collection came from a *Publishers Weekly* contributor who thought this gathering of twenty-two short stories, novelettes, and novellas is "compelling." According to the reviewer, a number of these pieces deal with themes typical to Card: "morality, salvation and redemption."

A further collection of stories is offered in *Orson Scott Card's InterGalactic Medicine Show*, from Card's online e-zine of the same name. Edited with Edmund R. Schubert, the collection contains seventeen stories, five of which are written by Card and deal with the Ender universe. Each story is accompanied by a full-page illustration.

*Booklist* contributor Roland Green found "Pretty Boy," by Card, the "best" of the Ender stories, dealing with a major enemy of the hero. Bullies, magical cats, and miscalculated magic are topics the other authors—including Aaron Johnson, Brad Beaulieu, and David Lubar—deal within their tales. "On the whole, [Card] and Schubert have selected well," Green noted. A *Publishers Weekly* contributor also had praise for the collection, noting that it "features noteworthy SF and fantasy stories from a bumper crop of talented new authors." Similarly, *Library Journal* contributor Cassada found the work an "attractive collection."

With *Empire*, from 2006, and *Hidden Empire*, from 2009, Card presents a matched pair of cautionary tales about the United States in the near future. In *Empire*, a second Civil War takes place, this time between conservatives and liberals. A progressive administration takes over after the president and vice president are killed in a rocket attack and New York is attacked by huge robotic soldiers. *Entertainment Weekly* contributor Marc Bernardin found the novel a "blistering read," while *Booklist* contributor Ray Olson thought "all the action doesn't obscure the author's message about the dangers of extreme political polarization and the need to reassert moderation and mutual citizenship."

*Hidden Empire* is set a few years after the end of *Empire*. President Averell Torrent faces his first international crisis since taking office: a plague is emanating from Africa and he quarantines the continent. The president also sends in a special operations team to stop genocide in Africa; the team, however, begins to wonder if Torrent is not playing an imperial game to bring the continent under American hegemony. Once again Card blends "high-tech military action, imperial politics, conspiracy, and practical philosophizing," according to *Booklist* writer Olson. A *Kirkus Reviews* contributor termed *Hidden Empire* "a morality lesson for the video-arcade generation." A reviewer writing for *Publishers Weekly* was less positive about the novel, however, feeling that the author mixes "flag-waving, political diatribe and Christian fervor in this bombastic sequel." Cassada, on the other hand, writing for *Library Journal*, termed it a "fast-paced, well-crafted sf thriller."

Card has also written under a variety of pseudonyms. In his 2004 novel *Zanna's Gift: A Life in Christmases*,

authored as Scott Richards, Card creates a tale of love and redemption that carries the reader from the late 1930s to the modern day. Ernie is the oldest son of the Pullman family, and as such bears a good deal of responsibility not only for his younger siblings but also for the entire family's well-being. A saintly youth, he suddenly dies, leaving the family bereaved. His sister Suzanna, or Zanna, is devastated. She has been making a mysterious drawing for Ernie for the upcoming Christmas, and she decides to keep it as a talisman of the dead youth. Each year she brings out the drawing, and it becomes a symbol for the family and its love of Ernie. A *Kirkus Reviews* contributor was unimpressed with *Zanna's Gift*, calling it "confused and morbid." *Library Journal* reviewer Tamara Butler, however, wrote that this "remarkable" novella is a "sure-to-be-classic tale" for Christmas.

Card served as the supervising editor of *The Authorized Ender Companion*. Written by Jake Black, the book provides information on the Enderverse created by Card for the "Ender" series and includes data on characters, technology, and events. Entries are cross-referenced. *Boolist* contributor Sally Estes referred to the book as "minutiae-for-days for deep-dyed fans and a swell resource for students and teachers."

Card's 2010 sci-fi novel, *Pathfinder*, is the first book in the "Pathfinder" series. Thirteen-year-old Rigg works with his father as trapper but is well educated in both the sciences and the humanities. He also learned about his ability as a Pathfinder who can see the paths of all living things. When Rigg's father is dying, he sends his son on a quest to find his sister in the capital city. Helping Rigg is his friend, Umbo, who can change the movement of time. Each chapter begins with a few brief passages about another story concerning humans traveling from Earth to form a new colony in space.

"An epic in the best sense, and not simply because the twin stories stretch across centuries," wrote a *Publishers Weekly* contributor. Debbie Carton, writing for *Booklist*, noted that the author "does not shy away from full and fascinating discussions of the paradoxical worlds he has created."

Card inaugurates another series with *The Lost Gate*. Published in 2011, the first book in the "Mither Mages" series introduces readers to Danny North, whose family is made up of mages exiled from another world. Long considered a "drekka" for his lack of magical powers, Danny eventually comes to recognize his abilities as a Gate Mage who can create entrances to various worlds. Realizing that his life is in danger for having magical abilities long forbidden, Danny goes into hiding while planning to create the first Great Gate in many centuries.

A *Publishers Weekly* contributor wrote that "this ambitious tale is well crafted, highly detailed, and pleasantly accessible." Jackie Cassada, writing for *Library Journal*, remarked that the author "demonstrates his ability to create youthful protagonists whose coming-of-age resonates with depth and meaning."

In his 2011 novella, *Hamlet's Father* Card provides a prequel to William Shakespeare's play. The story follows Hamlet as a youth and upon his return to Elsinore after his schooling. A *Publishers Weekly* contributor wrote that this "Hamlet is more calculating, less dark, and almost completely isolated."

Card has also written a series of graphic novels featuring the superhero Iron Man. In the *Ultimate Iron Man: Ultimate Collection*, illustrated by Andy Kubert and Pasqual Ferry, Card reimagines the tale of Iron Man, following him from his youth to fighting nefarious government forces within the United States. M. Grandon Robbins noted in *Xpress Reviews* that the tale "offers enough action and intrigue to satisfy a broad spectrum of readers."

The second installment of the "Pathfinder" series, *Ruins*, sees Card expand on its predecessor, and furnish readers with rich details about the world of Garden and the characters who inhabit it. As *Ruins* begins, Rigg Sessamakesh has passed through the Wall, leading a band of loyal companions into an unknown universe beyond that has gone unseen by his timorous countrymen for eons. Having escaped their native wallfold, Rigg and his companions learn that they are not alone on Garden; they find that there are nineteen wallfolds on the planet, each one inhabited by humans whose isolation has caused them to evolve in a variety of ways. As Rigg and his followers explore the world beyond the Wall they find the ruins of a long-forgotten but advanced human civilization. They begin to question whether Garden is their true home and soon enough learn of a distant planet, Earth, which was the cradle of the human species. Dodging the native humans of different wallfolds, Rigg and his band eventually learn that Garden is in danger of attack and imminent destruction. Their earthling ancestors have sent a fleet of warships known as Destroyers to exterminate the humans on Garden. As *Ruins* nears its conclusion, Rigg must find a way to save the people of Garden from the predations of their distant human ancestors.

Reviewers commended Card for his uncommonly intricate and thoughtful addition to the ever-growing young-adult fiction canon. A reviewer assessing *Ruins* for the *King of the Nerds* Web site argued that Card's talents as a world-builder sets him apart from his peers. The reviewer suggested that "Card should definitely be complimented on his creation of the world in *Ruins* and his twisting implementation of causality remains integral to the story and, if anything, grows even more complex as new mysteries and new characters are revealed." Other critics agreed with this assessment. Jonathan Hunt, who evaluated *Ruins* for *Horn Book* magazine, called the novel "cerebral and suspenseful" and added that "this tale provocatively explores and examines the human condition."

The second novel of the "Mither Mages" series picks up soon after its predecessor, *The Lost Gate*, leaves off. As *The Gate Thief* begins, the Gatemage Danny North is acknowledged to be the most powerful wizard on Earth. He has captured most of Loki's gates--wormholes that link places separated by vast distances--and



created the Great Gate: a portal allowing people to pass back and forth between Earth and Westil. Danny's newfound power is both a blessing and a curse. Having subdued the nefarious Loki, Danny is tasked with the unenviable assignment of maintaining the fragile, fraying peace between the clans of Mither Mages. The Mither Mages were once regarded as gods--such was their magical potency in times long past. The families are not nearly as powerful as they once were, but each is aware that their powers can be restored through the construction of a new Great Gate. Consequently, they are permanently scheming to build another one of these infernal devices. In a misguided effort to placate all of the Mither Mage clans, Danny agrees to help them regain their diminished powers. This prompts the intervention of the mages who closed the Great Gates in the first place, and invites the attentions of a dangerous being with designs on humanity. *The Gate Thief* explores Danny's growing maturity and his new awareness of the power and responsibility that inhere in his new identity.

*The Gate Thief* was warmly received by critics and was regarded as a complex, intellectual, and unusually ingenious work of science fiction and fantasy. David Pitt, a *Booklist* contributor, noted that the novel "boasts defined characters and a highly imaginative story." Similarly, a *California Bookwatch* contributor deemed it a worthy entry in "an evolving saga, packed with twists and turns and exquisite tension." Reviewers noted that *The Gate Thief* was a brooding work of young-adult fiction, weighted with moral complexity and populated by remarkably threatening villains. Rachel Brutsch, writing for the *Deseret News*, remarked that "While the story is gripping, it becomes very dark."

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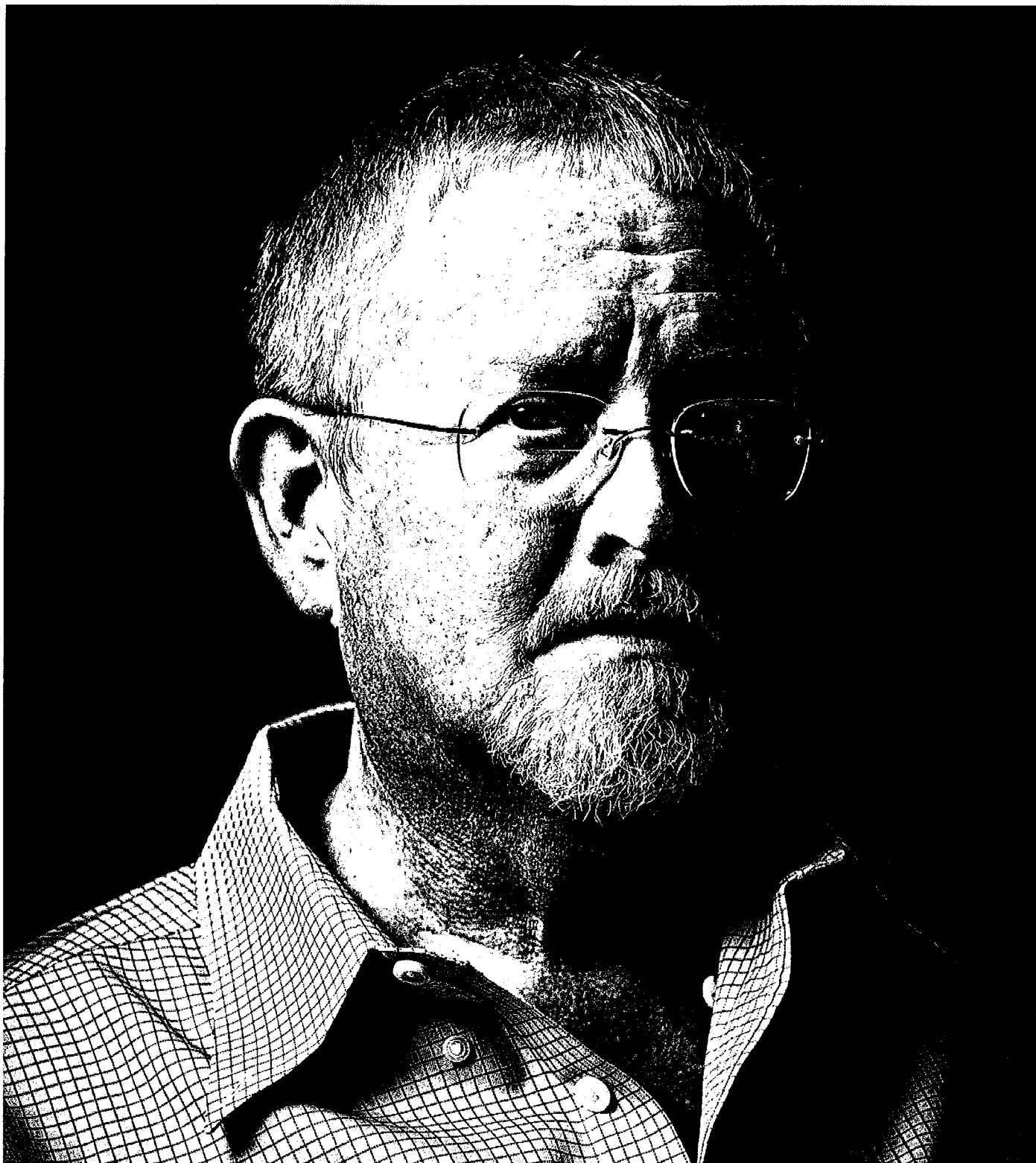
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# ORSON SCOTT CARD TALKS *ENDER'S GAME* IN RARE INTERVIEW



 Terry Manier

In *Ender's Game*, the Nebula Award-winning 1985 novel by Orson Scott Card, a 6-year-old boy is taken from his family on Earth to an orbital military academy to be molded into a soldier for a looming extraterrestrial war. For Ender, a misfit genius

among some of the world's scariest adolescent prodigies, surviving the other cadets is a violent affair in itself—from maiming fellow students in the shower to orchestrating zero-gravity battles.

This month, the classic book comes to the big screen after decades in development purgatory—including at least half a dozen scripts rejected and the studio rights changing hands. Warner Bros.' rights expired. OddLot Entertainment stepped in and partnered with Summit (a division of Lionsgate) to produce the movie. *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* director Gavin Hood was chosen to write and direct. Asa Butterfield (*Hugo*) was cast as Ender and Harrison Ford as Colonel Graff. But then *Ender's Game* stumbled again: Last summer, activists called for the movie's boycott, angered by Card's intolerant views on homosexuality. (Card has campaigned against gay marriage for many years.)

A lifelong Mormon and a hyperbolic political columnist, Card has written religio-political essays that at times suggest things like, say, overthrowing the US government. Yet paradoxically, what we got from him in *Ender's Game* was a deeply humanist story of the perils of war and prejudice, a tale so moving we turned the pages of the book until they fell out. WIRED grabbed a rare audience with the author, now 62 (and having written about as many novels and recovered from a stroke in 2011), to talk about the saga behind the movie that will also, hopefully, transcend his politics.

**WIRED:** Of all your work over the past three decades, why has *Ender* endured so well?

**ORSON SCOTT CARD:** If I knew, I would do it again. I don't, but I have some ideas.

What works with *Ender's Game* is Ender's community-building. There's a disparate group of kids who could be rivals, and he's able to bind them together through his personal service to them, through his loyalty, his trustworthiness. They know he'll never waste them, that he's not exploiting them for his own gain.

I certainly was not conscious of it as I was writing him—I'm not much of a follower, and I'm not a good team player—and yet I created the kind of guy that *I* would follow.

**How many scripts did you end up writing before Hollywood picked it up?**

Starting from the beginning, starting over again with a whole new concept, I did it about six times. So believe me, I am more sick of *Ender's Game* than anybody.

**What was so hard about it?**

As it's written, *Ender's Game* is unadaptable. The book takes place entirely inside Ender's head. If you don't know what Ender is thinking, he's just an incredibly violent little kid and not terribly interesting. You have to find ways to externalize what he's thinking. But he can't be the kind of person who explains himself to other people. That would weaken him.

With all my scripts, if you had read *Ender's Game* you would say, wow, he nailed it. But if you hadn't read the book, then you would have no idea what all the fuss was about.

I finally wrote a script that worked for people who had never read the book, and it was a buddy-movie approach—bringing the character of Bean, Ender's friend and sidekick, to the front and making him a foil, somebody Ender can talk to as an equal. That was proof of concept.

Screenwriter-director Gavin Hood, however, went with Petra (a female classmate who becomes one of Ender's lieutenants) as a major character. Those were his decisions to make.

**Why were you so adamant that Ender be played by an actual child, rather than a teenager?**

If he's older, puberty has hit, so it would be tempting to try to give him a love interest. But that is not the version that is being used, for which I'm deeply grateful. Maybe the people at Lionsgate have understood that turning this into a teen romance movie would really kill the story.

And yet they ended up with an older kid, not a 6-year-old, right?

Well, the stuff these kids were required to do—they're flying on wires—in order to keep the budget within line, they had to work with older kids. So though there are things that I wish had gone a different way in the abstract, given the realities of Hollywood, I couldn't be happier.

**How did they end up shooting the iconic, omnidirectional battleroom scenes?**

It was a wild combination of wire work and computer graphics. It follows the rules of physics, though there was a little bit of a problem early on: The computer graphics people did not understand that in zero g, when two things collide there's no such thing as a glancing blow. At least one of the objects will go into a spin. That's all been fixed.

**Were there other challenges with the battleroom?**

There were two. One, it's a lot of people moving around on the screen. It's the Quidditch problem: The games were great on paper, terrible when you're watching them.

Two, there's a problem in computer graphics that people are well aware of, which is that walking never looks real. Nobody's managed to solve it yet, and that means all impacts against the walls, for example, look fake, fake, fake. It can't be done with computer graphics, and yet we couldn't take it up and film in space. So how do you reconcile that?

Well, they brought in Cirque du Soleil performers, superb athletes and dancers, and they got them to teach the kids how to do the wire work with a very cleverly designed frame that allowed them free movement in every direction. The kids suffered. The skills they had to acquire in order to play these parts and the esprit de corps were really analogous to Battle School.

**Gibson didn't anticipate cell phones when he wrote *Neuromancer*. What do you look back to the 1985 novel and shake your head about?**

The most obvious thing that I got wrong is that in the original draft of *Ender's Game*, I have them get into a shuttle and say that there was never an accident in the history of the shuttle program. Well, that was true when I wrote it. One of the most trivial things about the *Challenger* explosion was that I then had to go in and revise that statement in the novel.

People give me a lot of credit for having predicted the Internet. If you look at the first copyright date, I wasn't really predicting. However, my one prediction was that as soon as the web became open to the public, networks would become politically important. It took a while before they were, but that one I got right.



 Photofest

**You've gotten a lot of criticism on the web for your personal and political views about gay marriage. How do you feel about the backlash?**

I hope that people will realize that they are not getting a true picture of me from these comments, and they're certainly not getting anything to do with *Ender's Game*, which was written long ago and has nothing whatsoever to do with gay marriage. I'll just trust the audience to decide for themselves what the movie actually is, not what other people are saying about me.

**But you've got to address that there's controversy around your views ...**

I issued an official statement. That's really all I have to say about it.

**Much of your work is edgy for Mormons, yet the fact that you're a Mormon is edgy for a lot of other people. What's it like being in the middle?**

In a way, being a Mormon prepares you to deal with science fiction, because we live simultaneously in two very different cultures. The result is that we all know what it's like to be strangers in a strange land. It's not just a coincidence that there are so

many effective Mormon science fiction writers. We don't regard being an alien as an alien experience. But it also means that we're not surprised when people don't understand what we're saying or what we think. It's easy to misinterpret us. I understand it. So, you know, I don't get upset by that.

### **How's life been since your stroke?**

If you're going to have a stroke, have the one I had. Exercise is harder now; I tend to lurch a little bit to the left. If that stroke had been a fatal one, I would have left my wife to pay back some pretty big advances on books, so I'm working my way through the existing contracts as quickly as I can. If another one carries me off, I'm intending not to leave my family in debt. That's a very practical thing. Then there's "Wow, I'm going to die." But that, actually, I went through when one of our five children died at birth in 1997, and then again when our 17-year-old son died of cerebral palsy in 2000. We had already faced the fact that people we loved could die. That was really my wake-up call.

### **This is a terrible segue to my next question ...**

That's fine.

### **... but after the movie happens—it's been 28 years in the making—is *Ender's Game* finally over for you?**

No, I still have a sequel that I'm working on. In terms of film, *Ender's Game* is actually the beginning, not the end. No one will touch anything else of mine until they see how *Ender's Game* does. Unless the film absolutely tanks, which I'm not expecting, then the floodgates could open. I have probably a dozen books that are much, much more doable on film than *Ender's Game*.

But, you know, whether that happens or not, my career is in books. There I have an unlimited special effects budget. And I can cast however I want.