

Short Review: “Tobor the Great” (1954) by Dr. John L. Flynn



Tobor the Great (1954). Dudley Pictures, b/w, 77 min. Director: Lee Sholem. Producer: Richard Goldstone. Screenwriters: Goldstone and Phillip Macdonald. Cast: Charles Drake, Karen Booth, Billy Chapin, Taylor Holmes, Lyle Talbot, and Lew Smith. Created to pilot a rocketship to distant worlds, Tobor befriends a mad doctor's eleven year-old grandson (Chapin), and takes over the role a Collie named Lassie had played in a dozen sappy family films. So, naturally, when the boy and his grandfather (Holmes) are captured by Commie spies, Tobor the Great comes to the rescue, and saves the day. While made on a shoestring budget for a pre-pubescent audience, the movie does raise some surprising questions about technology and science's responsibility to the public. If only Frankenstein had been as thoughtful...he might not have produced as many monsters. As kids, we just thought it was cool to learn that Tobor was robot spelled backwards. Really.

Copyright 2010 by John L. Flynn, Ph.D.