



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044
(202) 232-3141 - Issue # 284 – November 2013
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The LSF Book Discussion Group



If *you're* interested in lively discussions of F&SF books (with an emphasis on elements of interest to the LGBT community), we invite you to join the LSF Book Discussion Group. Each month, we conduct fascinating round-table discussions of works by significant F&SF authors.

The LSF Book Discussion Group usually meets on the 4th Thursday of every month, starting at 7:00 PM, at Peter & Rob's home: 1425 "S" St., NW – for directions or more details, call 202-483-6369. *However, the next book discussion will be a combined Nov./Dec. discussion, held on **December 5th**.*

Here are the details for the next couple of book discussions:

Dec. 5 (combined Nov./Dec. discussion) - *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, by Michael Chabon; moderator: Logan.

Jan. 23, 2014 – *Ghost Spin*, by Chris Moriarty; moderator: Randy K.

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Doctor Who 50th Anniversary Special Viewing Party

updated by Peter Knapp

Come celebrate the 50th Anniversary of *Doctor Who* with the world premiere of "The Day of The Doctor", the 50th Anniversary Special, starring Matt Smith, David Tennant, and William Hurt as The Doctor. In addition to watching the Anniversary Special, we'll be watching other selected *Doctor Who* specials.

Feel free to wear a *Who*-inspired costume or T-shirt. Vote for your favorite costume. The winner will get a small prize.

We'll take a break for dinner. People can either order delivery, or they can go out and forage for food. There are many dining choices along "P", 14th, "T", and "U" Streets NW. For a *Washington Post* dining guide see:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/going-out-guide/wp/2013/08/01/which-14th-street-restaurant-should-you-try-use-our-flowchart/>

When: Saturday, November 23, 2013

Time: 1:00 PM – 11:00 PM

----- *Dr. Who – Dr. Who – Dr. Who – Dr. Who* -----



Where: 1425 "S" St NW, Wash. DC

Directions:

<http://lambdascifi.org/club/PeterRob.html>

Warning: Street parking is almost impossible to find in my neighborhood on the weekends. Take Metro if you can. There is a paid parking lot on the SW corner of 14th & "S" Streets NW; it costs whatever the attendants can get away with. Fixed-price parking is available at the Reeves Center Parking Garage, located on the north side of "U" Street west of 14th St NW.

What to Bring: Munchies or non-alcoholic drinks to share.

(see page 2 for Tentative Schedule for this event)

<<<<< November LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, November 10th**. The meeting will once again be held at Peter and Rob's home, **1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. The business meeting will begin at 1:30 PM and the social meeting at 2:00 PM. Please also bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. Hope to see you there!

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What's Inside?

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Minutes of the October LSF Meeting

taken (such as they are)
by Scott
and supplemented (briefly)
by Carl

[Ed. Note: These minutes aren't especially complete. Scott showed up rather late for the meeting, and Carl supplemented the minutes to the best of his ever-failing memory's ability.]

Carl (and several other LSFers) attended CapClave in Maryland this weekend and noted the huge crowds who showed up to see George R.R. Martin, author of *Game of Thrones* – by far, one of the largest



crowds ever at CapClave. Carl said that the con hotel had no clue about the size of the invasion of George R.R. Martin fans.

Carl also reported the sad news that this November will see the last year of Darkovercon – it's being replaced by Chessiecon in 2014.

DC's AwesomeCon, sched-

uled for April 18-20, 2014, has gathered a long list of guests so far.

AMC's fourth season of *Walking Dead* starts tonight.

Rob was all bubbly about Peter's gift to him of all the Halloween-only boxes of General Foods's "monster cereals." He then proudly showed off some of his collection.

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Doctor Who 50th Anniversary Special Viewing Party

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Tentative Schedule:

(Final order and time to be announced when the broadcast time of the anniversary special is announced.)

2:00 PM – "Time Crash" (8 minutes)

2:45 PM – "The Day of The Doctor" (75 minutes)

5:00 PM – "The Curse of the Fatal Death" (23 minutes)

5:30 PM – Dinner Break

6:30 PM – "The Five Doctors" (90 minutes)

8:30 PM - *An Adventure in Space and Time* – the docudrama, starring David Bradley as William Hartnell, the first Doctor (90 minutes)

If you have any questions, please contact me at:

PeterPKnapp@gmail.com
or call 202-810-4678.

I hope to see you there!

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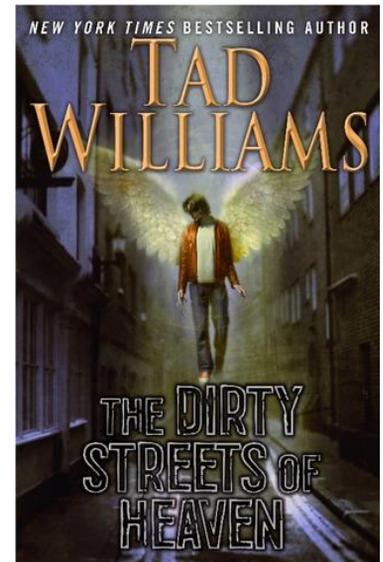
The Dirty Streets of Heaven by Tad Williams

a short review by Carl

Back in the June 2012 issue of the LSF newsletter, I raved about Simon R. Green's "Nightside" novels. I just love the way Green incorporates dark fantasy/horror elements with *noir* themes and motifs – sort'a like Raymond Chandler or Dashiell Hammett mixed with H.P. Lovecraft. (By the way, I'm still lovin' the "Nightside" novels – I'm rationing 'em out one at a time, so they'll last longer.) And now I've found another author who similarly seems to "get it" when it comes to writing "new urban fantasy". Enter Tad Williams, with his "Bobby Dollar" novels.

I've never read any Tad Williams novels before this. He's apparently quite a popular fantasy author, with almost his own half-shelf in my local B&N. He also tends to write *long* novels. (*The Dirty Streets of Heaven*, for instance, weighs in at 441 pages – about twice the length of any of Green's "Nightside" novels.) But if *Dirty Streets* typifies the quality of his writing, I just might give some of his other novels a try.

The Dirty Streets of Heaven takes us into Williams's version of the Eternal Conflict between Heaven and Hell. Bobby Dollar (his "work name") is an angel – angelic name: Doloriel.



In fact, Bobby Dollar is an Advocate: an Earth-based low-level angelic presence inhabiting a human body (whose? don't know) and living in the city of San Judas (a large-ish Bay Area metropolis in the Oakland-San Francisco neck of the woods). When someone dies in San Judas, Bobby (or one of his fellow San Judas-based Advocates) is quickly sent to the scene-of-demise to argue in favor of the deceased's soul before a Heavenly judge. The Opposition, of course, sends a demonic Prosecutor, whose goal is to get that soul consigned to Hell for all his or her past transgressions. Bobby's job isn't a slam-dunk, by any means – try finding something good to say about a drug-dealing wife-beater or a serial child-

(continued on page 3)

The Dirty Streets of Heaven

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rapist – but he’s got a pretty decent win record (even though he thinks some of his clients got off really light when they were only consigned to several centuries in Purgatory).

But don’t jump to the conclusion that Bobby is all sweetness-and-light, harps-and-halos. Bobby has a lot of miles on him; he’s done some Really Bad Sh—t in the service of The Highest. You see, he used to be an Angel of Vengeance in one of Heaven’s Counterstrike Units – and he had some pretty horrific experiences handing out the Lord’s vengeance to humans and demons alike. After one particularly harrowing operation (in which he was gruesomely tortured and killed, albeit temporarily), Bobby got out of the Vengeance game and chose to be re-trained as an Advocate. Even so, more-than-occasionally dealing with the low-lives of San Judas has left Bobby just a tad jaded. In fact, Bobby Dollar comes across as the typical *noir* protagonist: street-savvy, world-weary, not exactly reverential toward authority, a guy who asks questions that his superiors would prefer not to answer. (He also drinks a lot and occasionally even swears – but, hey, cut the guy some slack!)

At any rate, as *The Dirty Streets of Heaven* opens, Bobby Dollar shows up at the scene of a wealthy philanthropist’s suicide, ready to engage in verbal fisticuffs with a particularly nasty Prosecutor named Grasswax. The deceased’s Guardian Angel and its demonic counterpart are there; and so is the Judge, a Principality named Xathanatron. But guess who’s missing? The soul of the deceased! This is unprecedented! How is this possible?! Grave Concern ripples through Heaven



and Hell – and it gets even worse when several more souls subsequently fail to appear for their final judgments. Has Hell found a way to circumvent the rules? Or, as the Powers of Hell contend, is someone in Heaven cheating to deny the Devil his due? Bobby Dollar – and Grasswax, as well – are up for some stern investigations from their superiors.

And then Grasswax turns up dead – really, permanently dead. His remains, such as they are, indicate that he was horrifically tortured in a method only one of Hell’s most imaginative *artistes* could have devised. And rumor has it that before he died, Grasswax apparently confessed to passing a mysterious and powerful “object” to Bobby Dollar. Now a certain Grand Duke of Hell (Eligor the Horseman) has set his operatives – including a pre-Christian creature of the Abyss – on Bobby’s trail to retrieve it. One big problem: Bobby has no idea what or where the “object” is – he just knows that *he* doesn’t have it. (Shades of *The Maltese Falcon*!)

I rather enjoyed *The Dirty Streets of Heaven*. It’s got pretty much all the *noir* elements that I enjoy: urbane, snarky, wisecracking dialog, moments of dark humor, and fast-paced, rock’em-sock’em action. There’s even a

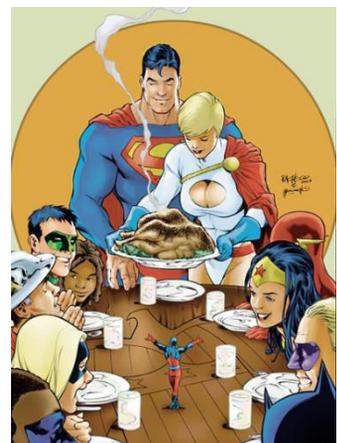
femme fatale – and is she ever “fatale”! And, as I said, Bobby Dollar is the iconic *noir* protagonist. Added to this is Williams’s unique take on Christian mythology: the interplay of angels, demons, and human souls (and a few other characters who don’t fit *any* of those categories) in the gritty streets of San Judas, California. I only have a couple of minor quibbles – a couple of “*deus ex machina*” moments (stop smirking!) that didn’t seem to work for me – but on the whole I found it to be a really enjoyable read.

Happy Hour in Hell, the second “Bobby Dollar” novel, is now out in the bookstores. I’m looking forward to reading it.

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**Happy Thanksgiving
to all you LSFers
out there!!!**



* * INFORMATION ABOUT LAMBDA SCI-FI: DC AREA GAYLAXIANS * *

Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians (LSF) is an organization for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered (GLBT) people, and their friends who are interested in science fiction, fantasy, horror and related genres in all forms (SF/F/H). LSF's primary goals are to have fun, to provide a community, and to:

- promote SF/F/H, with particular attention to materials of interest to GLBT people and their friends;
- provide forums for GLBT people and their friends to share their interest in SF/F/H;
- promote the presence of GLBT elements within SF/F/H and within fandom; and
- promote SF/F/H within the GLBT community.

Annual membership fees are \$10, for which you will receive an e-mailed copy of this monthly newsletter and a membership directory. (Hard copies of the newsletter cost an additional \$15 per year.) Newsletter submissions are always welcome.

Meetings are usually held on the second Sunday of each month at a private residence. The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held on Sunday, **November 10th, at Peter and Rob's home, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC.** The business meeting will begin at 1:30 PM; and the social meeting will begin at 2:00 PM. Please bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. Hope to see you there!

Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians is an affiliate of **the Gaylactic Network**, an international organization for gay people and their friends who are interested in science-fiction and fantasy.



* * Con Calendar * *

by Carl & James



Nov. 29 - Dec. 1, 2013 **DARKOVER GRAND COUNCIL 36.** (A *very* LGBT-friendly convention.) Crowne Plaza Baltimore (Timonium, MD). Author GoH: Rosemary Edghill; Steampunk GoHs: Steampunk Family; Special Guest: Katherine Kurtz; Clam Chowder's Farewell Concert. Membership: \$50 thru 11/1; \$55 thereafter and at the door. Make checks payable to "Armida Council" and send to: Armida Council, PO Box 7203, Silver Spring, MD 20907 Website: www.darkovercon.org

Fbe. 14-16, 2014 **FARPOINT 2014.** Crowne Plaza Baltimore (Timonium, MD). Guests include: Melissa McBride ("Carol Peletier", *The Walking Dead*), Alan Dean Foster, Phil LaMaar. Full guest list available at website. Membership: \$80 weekend pre-registration; daily rates available. Make checks payable to "Farpoint Enterprises" and send to: Farpoint Enterprises, 11709 Troy Ct., Waldorf, MD. Website: www.farpointcon.com

March 14-16, 2014 **FUR THE 'MORE.** (A furry convention. The theme is "Pirates vs. Ninjas".) Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Registration (non-refundable): \$40 on-line; \$45 at the door. Website: <http://www.furthermore.org>

April 18-20, 2014 **AWESOMECON 2014.** Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington, DC). Guests include: Peter Mayhew ("Chewbacca"), Ernie Hudson (*Ghostbusters*), Dirk Benedict ("Starbuck", *Battlestar Galactica*), Nicholas Brendon ("Xander Harris", *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*), David Yost & Walter E. Jones (Blue Ranger & Black Ranger, *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*). Two-day tickets for \$50; one-day tickets for \$30. Tickets available at the convention; you can also order tickets on-line. Website: <http://awesomecondc.com>

April 25-27, 2014 **RAVENCON 2014.** Doubletree by Hilton Richmond Midlothian (Richmond, VA). Author Guest of Honor: Elizabeth Bear. Membership: \$35 until 12/31/2013; \$40 before 4/11/2014; \$45 at the door. More information available online: <http://www.ravencon.com>

May 23-26, 2014 **BALTICON 48.** Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Author GoH: Brandon Sanderson. Artist GoH: Halo Jankowski. Bard/Filk GoH: Kenneth Anders. Membership: \$55 to 2/28/2014; \$60 to 4/30/2014; \$67 at the door. Make checks payable to "Balticon 48" and send to: Balticon 48 Registration, PO Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203-0686 Check website for details about on-line registration. Website: www.balticon.org

GAYLAXICON 2014. Breaking news! Atlanta will be the site for Gaylaxicon 2014! Watch this space for developments.