



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

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The *Blacksad* Graphic Novels

reviewed by Carl

I'm not especially a devotee of graphic novels; but every now and then I run across one that I *really* like. It just happened again. It was during one of my recent forays into Big Planet Comics that I ran across *Blacksad: A Silent Hell* by Juan Díaz Canales and Juanjo Guarnido (Dark Horse Novels, 2012). I was instantly a big fan. I quickly ordered their other two graphic novels through Amazon.com: *Blacksad* (2010) and *Blacksad: Amarillo* (2014).

As I've repeatedly said to anyone who'll listen, I'm also a big fan of *noir* fiction: ambiguously moral private investigators cracking wise while working their way through deadly situations. So the *Blacksad* stories are right up my (dark) alley. "But wait, wait, wait!" I can hear you objecting. "What does *Blacksad* have to do with F&SF?" Ah, I forgot to tell you – the *Blacksad* stories are not only *noir* fiction; they're also anthropomorphic (*i.e.* "furry") fiction.

The title character, John Blacksad, is a really cool private investigator: sometimes he's got more

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Nov. 6-8, 2015

Make your plans and your reservations now!
Check out Progress Report # 1 at the following address:

<http://www.lambdascifi.org/club/Bentcon-Gaylaxicon-2015-PR1.pdf>



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. The next book discussion will be held on April 23, 2015.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

April 23 – *Blood Oranges*, by Kathleen Tierney, aka Caitlin Kiernan (moderator: Krista).

May 28 – *Something More Than Night*, by Ian Tregillis (mod.: Rob).

June 25 – *City of Stairs*, by Robert Jackson Bennett (moderator: Claire).

July 23 – *Ms. Marvel – No Normal* (graphic novel) (moderator: Rob).

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<<<<< April 2015 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, April 12th**. The meeting will 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?

Page 2: Minutes of the March LSF Meeting.

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Blacksad Reviews

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curiosity than is good for him; he constantly risks his life (lives?) to solve crimes; and he's (what else?) a cat. And a black cat, at that! (Although he looks kind'a puma-ish to me.) He lives in a world very much like our own, except that it's inhabited by anthropomorphic mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds. To quote Jim Steranko's Introduction: "In *Blacksad*'s world, the characters are generally unconcerned about their zoological differences; they are cast for their natures and personalities... It's no accident that, down to the last bit player, they've all been visually crafted to reflect their intrinsic qualities—which might just qualify as overt symbolism. Or simple typecasting."

And the artwork? Wow! It's magnificent! I can't help but compare *Blacksad* to other favorites from what I think of as the "European tradition" of graphic novels: Hugo Pratt's *Corto Maltese*, Jim Holdaway's *Modesty Blaise*, Albert Uderzo's *Asterix the Gaul*, and Hergé's *Tintin*. In fact, I'd probably have bought the *Blacksad* graphic novels just for the artwork – but, fortunately, they're also well writ-ten. They're all great examples of the type of *noir* fiction I enjoy so much.

Blacksad (the first of the Dark Horse novels) contains three "short stories". In "Somewhere Within the Shadows", a glamorous young starlet – a former client of Blacksad's – has been brutally murdered; and when the police can't find any leads, John checks out the seamier sides of the city to find her killer. In "Arctic Nation", Blacksad investigates a youngster's disappearance, which leads to clashes with a "white" supremacist organization. "Red Soul", on the other hand, finds Blacksad getting mixed up with militant leftists and possible foreign espionage (definite reflections of the "Red Scare" in our own history).

Minutes of the March

LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Rob informed us that Capital Pride has raised its festival booth cost to \$325 for a nonprofit organization "with no sales". (Last year the rate was \$275.)

Carl, Peter and Rob are the liaisons with Bent-Con for LSF and the Network. (For more information, see the Con Calendar on page 1 or page 4 of this newsletter.)

Peter advised everyone that LSF might host an LGBT fan panel at this year's Awesome Con.

Film news: *Chappie* has received horrible reviews. Gay actor Ezra Miller will portray the Flash in the upcoming film. David said that there will be an "Inhumans" movie, which may focus upon the royal family (with characters like Black Bolt). Peter asked everyone to name the summer movie they think they will like the best – tons to choose from. (*Jurassic World?* *Avengers II?* *Mad Max?* *Poltergeist?* *San Andreas?* *Minions?* *Fantastic Four?* *Ant Man?*)

Rob explained the difference between the Marvel Cinematic Universe and the Sony/Marvel Universe. (Fantastic Four is separate from X-Men, etc.) Spiderman will now become part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe; and Andrew Garfield will no longer portray Spiderman.

TV news: SyFy's *12 Mon-*

The other two graphic novels – *Blacksad: A Silent Hell* and *Blacksad: Amarillo* – each feature a single, longer story. *A Silent Hell* finds John Blacksad down in New Orleans investigating the murder of a down-and-out jazz musician. *Amarillo* is sort of Blacksad's "road trip adventure". He takes a job driving a car to Texas (gotta earn some cash, right?); and he ends up investigating the death of a disagreeable wannabe writer, dodging the FBI and a sleazy lawyer, and visiting his sister – all leading up to a deadly confrontation in a traveling circus.

keys has had mixed reviews. David is eager to watch the upcoming CBS TV series *Supergirl*, starring Melissa Benoist. The character of Jimmy Olsen will be played by a black actor. The 'S' on Supergirl's costume will be similar to the 'S' on Henry Cavill's Superman costume – dark, muted colors.

A Justice League-esque series may be in the works. Rob enjoys both *Arrow* and *Flash*. (It looks like the Reverse Flash killed the Flash's mother.) He also described the three different storyline/themes of the three seasons of *Marvel's Agents of SHIELD*. David described the current season of *Once Upon a Time*, with the three villainesses (Ursula, Cruella, and Malificent); the three actresses will be guests at this year's Awesome Con. A half-hour show based on Jordan's "Wheel of Time" series (called *The Winter Dragon*) has appeared on an obscure channel; David advised that the show contained only the Prologue.

Wess showed everyone a figurine of himself as a *Star Trek* character, created on a 3-D printer. Awesome!

Carl brought out a key lime pie to celebrate LSF's 25th birthday. Meeting attendees sang "Happy Birthday" (off key); and Peter posted a picture of Carl and the birthday pie on Facebook.

Finally, Rob played the 10+ minute fan-created not-for-kids *Power Rangers* short film. *Power Rangers* fan David provided background on the original series. ΛΨΦ

Good stuff! I certainly hope there are more *Blacksad* graphic novels to come!

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Leonard Nimoy 1931 – 2015

Perhaps the obituary written by Matt Roush for *TV Guide* said it best: “It doesn’t seem logical. The man who brought the immortal Mr. Spock to life, transforming what could have been a pointy-eared camp icon into an admired paragon of otherworldly wisdom and, yes, humanity, died February 27 at age 83 of end-stage chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. As Leonard Nimoy lived long, pop culture prospered—as did *Star Trek*, the classic sci-fi series that made him famous.”

Leonard Simon Nimoy was born on March 26, 1931 in Boston’s West End, the son of Yiddish-speaking Orthodox Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union. (Yiddish was his first language.) He began acting at the age of 8 in a neighborhood children’s theater. His first major role was at age 17, as “Ralphie” in an amateur production of Cliff Odets’s *Awake and Sing!* (a drama about an impoverished Jewish family in the Bronx). He later took drama classes at Boston College and the Pasadena Playhouse (where he became a devotee of Stanislavsky’s “Method”). In 1953, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserves, where he spent part of his time with the Army Special Services putting on shows.

Nimoy played the title role in the film *Kid Monk Baroni* (1952), but it didn’t make him a star. In that same year, he first played an alien invader: a

Martian named “Narab” in *Zombies of the Stratosphere* (Republic Pictures) – looking rather like a young Spock-ish character. During the 1950s and early 1960s, Nimoy appeared in dozens of TV shows, including: *Perry Mason*, *Dragnet*, *The Silent Service*, *Sea Hunt*, *The Twilight Zone* (“A Quality of Mercy”), *Highway Patrol*, *Colt .45*, *Wagon Train*, *Bonanza*, *The Rebel*, *Rawhide*, *The Untouchables*, *Combat!*, *Gunsmoke*, *Get Smart*, *The Virginian* (“Man of Violence”, in which he first worked with DeForest Kelley), and *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* (“The Project Strigas Affair”, in which he first worked with William Shatner).

Then came *Star Trek*... the original series (1966-1969); voicework for *Star Trek: The Animated Series* (1973-1974); *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979) and the next five feature films (two of which he directed); two episodes of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*; and (as “Spock Prime”) the J.J. Abrams “reboot” films (2009, 2013) – not to mention his Spock voiceover in *The Big Bang Theory* (2012) and a surprise guest appearance in a 2009 *Saturday Night Live* “Weekend Update” skit (with Zachary Quinto and Chris Pine). He is the originator of both the Vulcan Salute (the hand gesture, based on the blessings of *kohanim*, accompanied by the words “Live long and prosper!”) and the Vulcan Nerve Pinch.



But wait! There’s more! His later non-*Trek* work included a stint on *Mission: Impossible* (1969-1971, as IMF agent “Paris”), two episodes of Rod Serling’s *Night Gallery* (1972, 1973), a murderous doctor on *Columbo* (1973), the made-for-TV movie *A Woman Called Golda* (1982, for which he received an Emmy as best supporting actor), host/narrator for *In Search of...* (late 1970s) and *Ancient Mysteries* (1994-1997), and voicework in Disney’s *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* (2001, “King of Atlantis”) and the feature-film version of *Land of the Lost* (2009, “the Zarn”).

Not to mention his critically-acclaimed stage work, including the title role in the Royal Shakespeare Company’s *Sherlock Holmes* (1975) and the role of Theo van Gogh in *Vincent* (1981, a one-man show, which he also wrote).

And so much more... public service, photography, directing, writing (including *two* autobiographies), and (*ahem*) singing.

Truly, he had a full and productive life. President Obama called Nimoy “a lifelong lover of the arts and humanities, a supporter of the sciences, generous with his talent and his time.” Astronaut Buzz Aldrin called him “a fellow space traveler because he helped make the journey into the final frontier accessible to us all.”

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Data: Ambassador Spock, may I ask a personal question?

Spock: Please.

Data: As you examine your life, do you find you have missed your humanity?

Spock: I have no regrets.

Data: “No regrets”. That is a human expression.

Spock: Yes... Fascinating.

- - - **Star Trek: The Next Generation: “Unification II”** - - -

* * 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, **April 12th, at Peter and Rob's home, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC.** 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



April 24-26, 2015 **RAVENCON 10**. Double Tree by Hilton Richmond Midlothian (Richmond VA). GoH: Allen Steele; Artist GoH: Frank Wu; Special Guest: Lawrence M. Schoen. Membership: \$40 before 4/10/2015; \$45 at the door.

Info at: <http://www.ravencon.com>

May 22-25, 2015 **BALTICON 49**. Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). GoH: Jo Walton; Artist GoH: Charles Vess. Membership: \$60 thru 4/15; \$65 thereafter. On-line registration thru the convention website.

Website: <http://www.balticon.org/>

May 29-31, 2015 **AWESOME CON 2015**. Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington, DC). Guests include: George Takei ("Mr. Sulu"), John Rhys-Davies ("Gimli the Dwarf"), and Sean Astin ("Sam Gamgee"). Weekend membership: \$75 after 1/1/2015 (daily rates available). On-line registration thru the convention website.

Website: <http://www.awesome-con.com/washington-dc/>

June 19-21, 2015 **CAPITAL CON DC 2015**. "A new science fiction/fantasy convention for the Washington DC area." Washington Court Hotel on Capitol Hill (Washington DC). Media GoH: Doug Jones ("Abe Sapien" in *Hellboy* and *Hellboy 2*). Author GoH: Sherrilyn Kenyon. Artist GoH: Ruth Sanderson. More info as it becomes available.

Website: <http://www.capitalcon.org/>

Oct. 9-11 **CAPCLAVE 2015**. Hilton Washington DC North/Gaithersburg (Gaithersburg MD). Guests include: Gorden Van Gelder (Editor, *F&SF Magazine*); Alastair Reynolds (*Revelation Space*). Membership: \$50 thru 5/31/2015.

Website: www.capclave.org

Nov. 6-8, 2015 **BENT-CON/GAYLAXICON 2015**. Los Angeles Marriott Burbank Airport Hotel and Convention Center (Burbank, CA). Membership: \$60 weekend rate. More info as it becomes available.

Website: <http://bent-con.org/>

See Progress Report # 1 at the following web address:

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Gaylaxicon

