



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 343 – October 2018

E-MAIL: info@lambdascifi.org

WEBSITE: www.lambdascifi.org

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 October 25.

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

Oct. 25 – *Theory of Bastards* by Audrey Schulman (moderator: Carl).

Dec. 6 (combined Nov./Dec. discussion) – *Leviathan Wakes* by James A. Corey (moderator: Konrad). ΛΨΦ

LSF October Gaming Party

- Saturday, Oct. 27th -
info passed along by Rob



What: It's a gaming party. There's plenty of room for gaming, so please bring your favorite games (cards, board, etc.).

When: Saturday, October 27th; 2:00 PM to 11:00 PM

What to Bring: Bring your favorite table game (or two). Also, please bring munchies and/or soft drinks.

Dinner: For those who are interested, we'll order pizza at 6:30pm. To get in on the pizza order, please bring \$10 in cash and put it in the pizza bucket with your name (it will be visible!). We'll order for as many people who put in money and any excess money will help support LSF's Pride table cost. If you don't want pizza, you can order take-out or go forage for food. There are a lot of food choices in the Midcity (14th and U) Corridor. Also, delivery menus will be available at the party.

Where: Home of Peter and Rob, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC. Their home is in the Midcity (14th and U) neighborhood between Dupont Circle and Logan Circle. Directions (with Metro and parking advice) at: <http://lambdascifi.org/club/PeterRob.html>

Questions: Contact Peter at: PeterPKnapp@gmail.com

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Happy   
  Halloween!

<<<<< September 2018 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, October 14th**. The meeting will be held at Peter and Rob's home, **1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. The meeting will begin at 1:30 and the "group watch" will begin at 3:00 PM. Hope to see you there!



What's Inside?

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Minutes of the September LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

TV News

Rob is watching a new SyFy Channel genre program from Canada called *Killjoys*, about a trio of bounty hunters who remain neutral in conflicts. The season premiere of the new *Doctor Who* is next month; Peter mentioned that there will be a Rosa Parks story this season. He also mentioned that author Michael Chabon is working on *Star Trek: Discovery*.

The Good Place won the Hugo Award. Rob read off the full set of winners from this year's Hugo Awards, with a focus on *The Good Place*'s "Trolley Problem" episode winning Best Dramatic Presentation – Short Form.

Book News

Ryan is reading the *I Am Number Four* book, which he says is better than the *I Am Number Four* movie. David described the "Mary Sue" trope – an irrelevantly over-skilled or over-idealized character.

Other News

Rob attended WashingCon gaming convention yesterday and played seven different games, none of which he had played before. He attended a panel on "Inclusivity in Gaming". He described a game called *Noctis* in which you can't use your vision – players use touch on a board, so it is suitable for those with vision issues.

Karl talked about the idea of having a gaming party off-site.

Rob and Peter announced a Saturday, 10/27/2018, LSF game day, perhaps horror-themed.

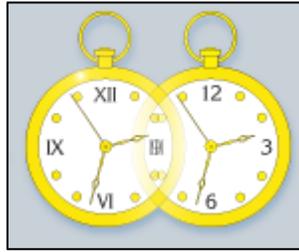
Scott described learning about "shipping" from fantasy author Leigh Bardugo at this year's National Book Festival.

This year's World Fantasy Con is being held in Baltimore. Next year's World Con will be held in Dublin.

David reported that a musical version of *Beetlejuice* will run at the National Theater.

2018 Sidewise Awards

info passed along by Carl



The 2018 Sidewise Awards for Alternate History (for works published in 2017) were announced at Worldcon 76 in San Jose CA the weekend of August 16 through 20.

The Sidewise Awards have been presented annually since 1995 to recognize excellence in alternate historical fiction. The award takes its name from Murray Leinster's 1934 short story "Sidewise in Time", in a which strange storm causes portions of Earth to swap places with their analogs from other timelines.

Here are this year's winners:

- Winner, Short Form: Harry Turtle-dove, "Zigeuner" (*Asimov's*, Sept./Oct. 2017) – What if the Nazis tried to eradicate Gypsies instead of Jews?
- Winner, Long Form: Bryce Zabel, *Once There Was a Way* (Diversion Books, 2017) – What if the Beatles had never broken up?

A complete list of nominees and winners for all years since 1996 can be found at the following website:

<http://www.uchronia.net/>

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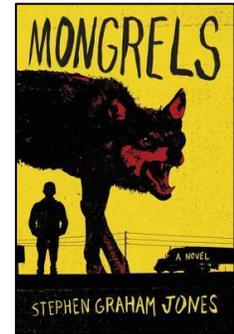
Upcoming LSF Book Discussions: *Prey of Gods* by Nicky Drayden (Sept. 27), *Theory of Bastards* by Audrey Schulman (Oct. 25), *Leviathan Wakes* by James Corey (Dec. 6).

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Dark Fantasies, on a Whim

two reviews by Carl

These short reviews describe two fascinating (and definitely *dark*) stories. Other than that, the only thing they have in common is that I picked them up "on a whim" – oh, and that I enjoyed them both!



Mongrels

by Stephen Graham Jones

(WilliamMorrow/Harper Collins, 2016)

I picked this book up on a whim at Kramer Books in DC; and I'm certainly glad I did. This is a *very* different "werewolf" story. "Different?" you ask. "What can be different about a werewolf story?" You'd be surprised...

This is a novel written by an accomplished Native American author – and the main characters all live the type of life he'd once experienced: waaaay down the social scale; drifters, grifters, poorly-educated itinerant seasonal laborers; always on the move, never able to settle down anywhere (and definitely NOT on "the Rez"). They're also canny, cagy, street-savvy, resourceful, and proud. Certainly doesn't sound like the haunted, upper-class lifestyle of Larry Talbot, as seen in *The Wolf Man* (Universal, 1941) and subsequent movies, does it? Here's some of what Jones says in his fascinating afterword ("Werewolf at the Door"):

The fantasy part of all the werewolf stuff I read growing up, and still read, it was never the claws, the teeth, the hunger. It was that the werewolves were all always so flush.

(continued on next page)

Dark Fantasies

continued from page 2

They never had to think about how they were going to buy this ticket to Istanbul. Their hearts never dropped when they had to trash their third car that month. They were always walking away from these palatial estates, and these jewel-encrusted daggers, and from serious dragon hordes of treasure...

What if the werewolf's just scraping by, though? What if the werewolf's just like us?...

But then I saw Near Dark [Ed. Note: a 1987 "neo-western" vampire film], and I'd already seen The Howling [1981, Embassy Pictures] about as many times as it's possible to watch a stolen VHS, and something clicked over in my head. I knew now that being a fantasy creature wasn't reserved for the Lestats and the Draculas of the world. There could be ordinary monsters, too. There could be check-to-check werewolves. There would have to be, wouldn't there?

So, welcome to the story of an unusual teenaged Native American living in the contemporary American South and Southwest. His small family (Grandpa, Aunt Libby, and her brother Darren) is always on the move, living job-to-job and paycheck-to-paycheck in trailers, shacks, and sometimes even their run-down automobiles – never settling down anywhere for more than a few months, staying just ahead of the law (and the local townfolks) before anyone catches on to what they really are. As a young boy, he learns the family secret from his crippled old grandfather – well, and from the old man's tragic death. Over the course of a decade, we see the growing boy gradually learn more and more from his aunt and uncle: the secret of their lupine lives, their heritage (both familial and "racial"), and the unique, hidden werewolf social structure. All the while, the youngster is haunted by his own uncertain future, wondering when (or possibly if?) his own werewolf nature will manifest itself.

You might have noticed that I never mention "the boy's" name. He's the first-person narrator, and he never lets

his readers know. (There are reasons... but that's a spoiler.) From time to time, however, the story switches to a third-person narrative; and in those chapters the protagonist refers to himself as "the criminal" or "the biologist" or "the mechanic", depending on what's going on in his life at that particular stage.

Jones also provides a really cool explanation of why there are all kinds of werewolves: everything from full man-to-wolf transitions to man-wolves (like Jack Nicholson in *Wolf*, 1994) to "wolf man" hybrids (like Lon Chaney in *The Wolf Man*, 1941).

I found *Mongrels* to be a really satisfying read; it's a well-written, engrossing story told from a very different perspective. (It even got me to hunt up a copy of Jones's short "haunting/ghost" novel, *Mapping the Interior* – but that's another story.) My suggestion: give *Mongrels* a try; I think you'll like it, too.



To Us May Grace Be Given
by L.S. Johnson

(WilliamMorrow/Harper Collins, 2016)

I picked up this little chapbook in the dealer's room at the recent Worldcon in San Jose. I guess the combination of the title and the cover illustration (a line drawing of a goat with a garland of red flowers around its neck) intrigued me. Again, a good choice!

The story takes place in an unspecified time and place – but from internal evidence, I'm guessing it's somewhere in the American West and probably during the later 1800s. Adelaide "Addy" Norton and her widowed Mam are hardscrabble farmers, barely getting by. A land-hungry local rancher has been buying up all the surrounding farms to add to his

spread – either buying them outright at less-than-thrilling prices or waiting until "accidents" fortuitously clear the way for his take-over. Now he's turned his eyes on Addy's small farm; but her Mam has loudly refused to sell – and loudly and specifically cursed the rancher for showing up on her property with his "offer". The rancher and his men leave; but Addy knows it's only a matter of time before there's another late-night "accident". What the rancher doesn't know is that Addy's family has a long history of "dark knowledge". Maybe Addy's Mam isn't as skilled as her late husband; but she knows just enough about arcane "blood rites" to call up "the devil" (well, actually *a* devil of some sort) and hopes to turn it loose on the rancher and his men. What's the old saying about how it's not a good idea to grab a tiger by the tail? Or maybe it's: "Be careful what you wish for – you might get it!"

To Us May Grace Be Given is a gory little admonitory tale – with a surprising ending. It's well-written, and it hints at a fascinating new-and-different dark mythos. It also – possibly – contains LGBTQ content. There's never any undeniable information about Addy's sexuality; but there are a number of hints. Addy ("a mule of a girl") dresses, works, and looks like a boy; in fact, most everybody thinks she *is* a boy. And during a late-night conversation with the (female-appearing) devil, Addy explains how "I haven't been a girl since I was little." And "[the devil's] words made me go hot all over. For a moment I felt all sorts of strange things, things I didn't want to think about." Hmmm.

I really enjoyed *To Us May Grace Be Given*. In fact, I quickly went back and purchased a dark fantasy novella by L.S. Johnson: *Harkworth Hall*. I'm looking forward to reading it – and I'll keep you informed.

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

Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians (LSF) is an organization for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and trans-gendered (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, **October 14th, 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

Oct. 5-7, 2018 **CREATURES, CRIMES & CREATIVITY CON** ("for readers and writers and fans of all genre fiction, including mystery, suspense, romance, thriller, horror, sci-fi, fantasy, and paranormal"). Sheraton Columbia Town Center (Columbia MD). Membership \$245. For more information: www.creaturescrimesandcreativity.com

Nov. 1-4, 2018 **WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION**. Baltimore Renaissance Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore, MD). Guests of Honor: Kaaron Warren, Scott Edelman, Michael J. Walsh. Artist Guest of Honor: Tom Kidd. Special Guest: Aliette de Bodard. Membership: \$200 (current rate; will go up). On-line registration or print out registration form & send to: WFC2018 c/o Baltimore Science Fiction Society, Inc., PO Box 686, Baltimore MD 21203-0686
Website: <http://www.wfc2018.org/>

Nov. 23-25, 2018 **CHESSIECON 2018**. Radisson North Baltimore Hotel (Timonium MD). GoH: Jo Walton; Music GoH: Dr. Mary Crowell. Membership: \$55 until Nov. 1; \$60 at the door (checks payable to "Thanksgiving Science Fiction Society"). To pre-register, print out the registration form & send to: TSFS, Inc., PO Box 83032, Gaithersburg, MD 20883-3032 – or register on-line via PayPal Website: www.chessiecon.org Information: info@chessiecon.org

Feb. 8-10, 2019 **FARPOINT** ("Your FAN-RUN CONVENTION for 26 YEARS!"). Delta Hotel by Marriott (Hunt Valley, MD). Guests: Wallace Shawn, Peter David, Keith RA DeCandido ("more to come!"). Membership: full weekend (3-day) pre-registrtrion: \$85. Website: www.FarpointCon.com

April 5-7, 2019 **RAVENCON 14** (Virginia's Science Fiction & Fantasy Convention of Opportunity). Doubletree by Hilton Williamsburg (Williamsburg VA). Author GoH: Melinda Snodgrass; Music GoH: Library Bards (more to come). Membership: \$35 before 12/31.2018; \$40 until 3/9/2019; \$50 at the door (daily rates available). Membership on-line through the website. Website: <http://www.ravencon.com/>

October 2019 **GAYLAXICON 2019**. Crown Plaza Aire Hotel (Minneapolis MN). During Outlantcon-Gaylaxicon 2018, the Gaylactic Network Board approved the bid by the North Country Gaylaxians to host Gaylaxicon 2019. More details as they become available.

