



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 352 – July 2019

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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. The next book discussion will be held on July 25.

Here are the details for the next several discussions:

July 25 – *Abbott* by Saladin Ahmed (graphic novel (moderator: Rob G.)).

Aug. 22 – *A Spectral Hue* by Craig Laurance Gidney (moderator: Rob G.).

Sept. 26 – *All Systems Red* by Martha Wells (moderator: Greg).

Oct. 24 – *The Ballad of Black Tom* by Victor Lavalle and "The Horror at Red Hook" by H.P. Lovecraft (mod.: Carl). **ΛΨΦ**



Gaylaxicon 2019
from Don Kaiser, Chair
www.gaylaxicon.org



Gaylaxicon is returning to Minnesota on October 18-20, 2019; and we would like you to join us! We are once again at the DoubleTree Minneapolis Park Place and once again have two ballrooms for three tracks of programming, an art show, and a dealer's room. Gaming will again be in the Season Suites and will be open throughout the con and stocked with lots of games for you to enjoy throughout the convention.

We have a great lineup of Guests of Honor: Gregory Maguire (author of several dozen crossover books for adults and children; his best-known work is *Wicked*); Yoon Ha Lee (writer and game designer whose debut novel, *Ninefox Gambit*, won the Locus Award for best first novel and was a finalist for the Hugo, Nebula, and Clarke awards); Matt Baum (writer, podcaster, and video-maker whose work focuses on queer culture, geeks, and all things strange and wonderful); Michael Dahl (author of many books for young readers, including the bestselling *Bedtime for Batman* and

Be A Star, Wonder Woman picture books); and Samantha R. Crossland (fashion designer and costumer, author and illustrator of *Steampunk and Cosplay Fashion Design and Illustration*).

We also have a long list of additional professional authors and artists, both local and not, who are attending the convention and I hope that you will also have a chance to talk with them during the convention.

Our fabulous con suite will be filled with good food, hot and cold beverages and conversation, as well as the annual Chocolate Symposium.

Registration for the convention is available at our web site. Hotel rooms are also available linked from our web site.

We are looking forward to seeing you all and please be sure to spread the word about what a great convention Gaylaxicon is.



<<<<< July 2019 LSF Meeting >>>>>

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

What's Inside?

Page 2: *The Very Best of Caitlin R. Kiernan* (book review).

Page 3: Fu-Manchu and James Bond.

Page 4: Information About LSF: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar.

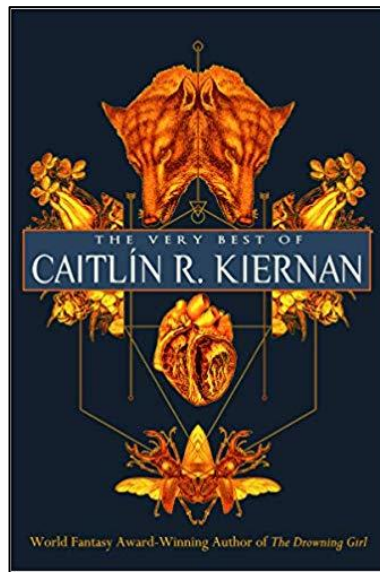
**The Very Best of
Caitlin R. Kiernan**
(Tachyon Publications, 2019)
a short review by Carl

I'm a big fan of Caitlin Kiernan. I can always count on her to provide a dark and disturbing read. Imagine my delight when I ran across her most recent collection of short fiction: *The Very Best of Caitlin R. Kiernan*. "Very best" is a pretty big claim, says I; but I must admit that this is a pretty darn good selection of 20 stories written between 2003 and 2017! Sure, there are some I liked better than others; but I think it's fair to say that there isn't a "clunker" in the bunch! I was also delighted to discover that I had already read only two of the stories in the collection (for example: "The Mermaid of the Concrete Ocean" previously appeared as part of Kiernan's 2012 novel *The Drowning Girl*) – lots'a new Kiernan thrills'n'chills for me to experience! Oh, and there's significant "queer content" in almost every story, too.

Decisions, decisions, decisions. How to choose which stories to tell you about without going through every single story in the collection?

The opening story, "Andromeda Among the Stones" (2003), is a grim little Lovecraftian tale about a young girl in 1914 coastal California who shoulders her family's horrifying responsibilities to "hold the line" and guard against "the Ninth Wave". Another story – "Houses Under the Sea" (2006) – is another Lovecraftian tale that takes place in California: sort of a combination of Jim Jones, the Heaven's Gate cult, and H.P. Lovecraft's Deep Ones. Another story, "Tidal Forces" (2011), only gradually sucked me in – mayhap "suckered me in" would be more accurate. It began as a curiously weird story about a lesbian couple, one of whom develops a small hole which gradually increases in size and is apparently bottomless. And suddenly we're back in Lovecraft Territory – the name of the Lovecraftian deity is never mentioned, but no fan of HPL can fail to recognize the references.

One of my absolute favorites in this collection is a wild science fiction tale with the title "Bradbury Weather" (2005). It takes place on a near-future Mars only populated by women. (Appar-



ently, there's something about Mars that is inimical to Y-chromosomes.) Some years after their less-than-amicable breakup, a woman abandons her job and heads into the great Martian wastelands in search of her former lover. As if all this isn't difficult enough, it seems that her former lover has gotten involved with a secretive (and parasitic) cult known as "the Fenrir". The result is an intriguing tale that combines (in my opinion) the best aspects of such writers as Leigh Brackett, H.P. Lovecraft, and Kim Stanley Robinson.

My other "big favorite" in this collection is one I'd read before: "The Maltese Unicorn" (2011). This really cool story was previously included in the anthology *Supernatural Noir* (edited by Ellen Datlow, Dark Horse Books). As you can probably guess from the title, the story is a variation on Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* – but Kiernan has added a dark supernatural storyline; and "the dingus" (to use Sam Spade's term) in this case has some pretty salacious (and deadly) uses. And then there's the Queer angle: as with all good *noir* stories, there's a *femme fatale*; and the fact that the hard-boiled private eye is also a woman adds a fascinating angle to things. It's one joy of a story; and I certainly didn't mind re-reading it.

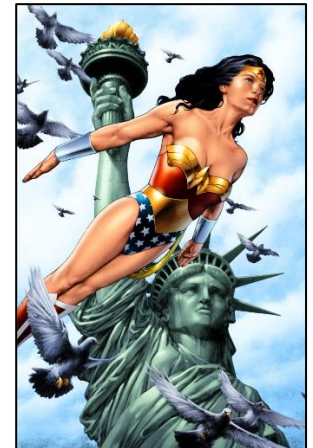
As I said, there are plenty of other stories to choose from in *The Very Best of Caitlin R. Kiernan*; I'm quite sure you'll find some favorites of your own in there, too.

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"Super" Fourth of July Wishes



to everybody at



Lambda Sci-Fi!



Fu-Manchu and James Bond

by Carl



I started reading Sax Rohmer's "Dr. Fu-Manchu" novels when I was in my late teens. The Devil Doctor was, in fact, my introduction to the concept of the charismatic villain; I encountered Fu-Manchu long before discovering Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Professor Moriarty or Jules Verne's Captain Nemo or even John Milton's Satan (from *Paradise Lost*). I really enjoyed reading all those Fu-Manchu adventures (Pyramid Books paperback editions). Yes, Fu-Manchu was out to destroy Western civilization, and Rohmer's novels pandered to blatantly racist "Yellow Peril" fears. But I couldn't help having a sneaking admiration for Fu-Manchu. He was more than human – he was almost a force of nature; he was a murderous and deadly foe, but he had a code of honor and always kept his word – and, when his latest plans were foiled by Sir Denis Nayland Smith (as they inevitably were), he never resorted to petty revenge. (I sometimes think he could have coined Arnold Schwarzenegger's famous catchphrase: "I'll be back!" You could always count on his return.)

Imagine my joy, then, when I recently discovered *The Wrath of Fu-Manchu and Other Stories* (Titan Books, 2016), which includes four Fu-Manchu stories that I don't remember ever having read. It was the collection's title story – "The Wrath of Fu-Manchu" (1952) – that started me thinking again about connections between Fu-Manchu and James Bond.

Before going any further, however, I must admit that I've never actually read any of Ian Fleming's "James Bond" novels – Lord knows I tried, but I just couldn't handle Fleming's writing style. I've always been mystified that JFK was a big fan of Fleming's novels – personally, I just don't get it. At any rate, whatever knowledge I have of James Bond's exploits has pretty much come from the mo-

vie franchise, with a little Wikipedia research thrown in for good measure. So, having said that...

When I saw the first "James Bond" film – *Dr. No* (1962), starring Sean Connery – I was immediately struck with similarities to Sax Rohmer's *The Island of Fu Manchu* (1941). In the film, Dr. No (former Chinese *tong* member, now a top operative of SPECTRE) is electronically shooting down US satellites from his secret base on a Caribbean island. In *The Island of Fu Manchu*, the Devil Doctor (leader of a worldwide secret society called the Si Fan) launches super-weapons from his secret base on Haiti to sink US shipping attempting to use the Suez Canal. Coincidence? I think not. I later found out that Fleming enjoyed reading Rohmer's novels and that Fu-Manchu was, in fact, the inspiration for the Dr. No character. (FYI: In Fleming's 1957 novel, Dr. No was actually working with the Russians.)



And, now that I think of it, there's also a connection between *The Island of Fu Manchu* and another of the "Bond" films: *Live and Let Die* (1973). Dr. Fu-Manchu uses a voodoo cult as a cover for his secret operations on Haiti. In the "Bond" film, the corrupt dictator Dr. Kananga (aka "Mr. Big") uses a voodoo cult to hide his drug-growing operations on the fictional island of San Monique. Connections, connections... (FYI: No drugs and no Dr. Kananga in Fleming's 1954 novel; and "Mr. Big" smuggles gold to finance SMERSH, Soviet counterintelligence.)

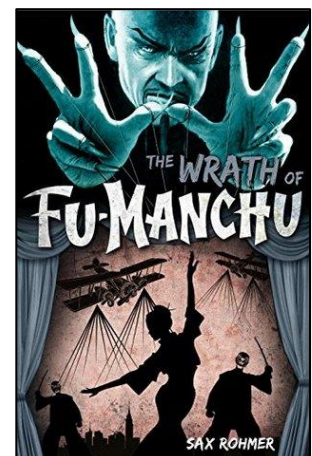
But, as I said earlier, it was my recent reading of "The Wrath of Fu-Manchu" (1952) that got me to once again think about the Fu-Manchu/James Bond connection. In "Wrath", the sinister Fu-Manchu is blackmailing the US Government: If the US doesn't agree to help bring down the Communist govern-

ment in China, Fu-Manchu will use a new super-science weapon to destroy the US gold depository at Fort Knox. Does this sound kind'a familiar? In the 1964 film *Goldfinger*, Auric Goldfinger plans to blow up Fort Knox with an atomic device and thus take over the world gold market (with the help of Communist Chinese troops). Variations, but I can definitely see the influence of Sax Rohmer's story. (FYI: There are actually fewer connections in the original 1958 Fleming novel: Goldfinger only plans to *steal* the gold from Fort Knox, supported by US gangsters.)



Oh, before I finish, just one more connection to note: Ian Fleming's James Bond and Sax Rohmer's Sir Denis Nayland Smith (chief nemesis of Fu-Manchu) are both British agents – Bond from MI6; Smith from CID. (That's only natural, I suppose, since both Rohmer and Fleming were Brits.) Both Bond and Smith oppose the forces of international evil that seek to destroy the West. OK, so Sir Denis isn't the amoral womanizer that Bond is; but, then, their creators each imbued their works with their own societal outlooks.

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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, **July 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

July 4-7, 2019 **NASFiC 2019/WESTERCON 72/1632 MINICON**. Davis Conference Center & Hilton Garden Inn (Layton UT). Guests include: Laurell K. Hamilton, David Weber, John & Bjo Trimble, Jim Butcher, Eric Flint, Vincent Villafranca (artist & designer of the new World Fantasy Award). Membership: \$70 thru 03/31/2019 ("pricing might change after that"). On-line registration at: registration@spikecon.org Website: <https://www.spikecon.org/>

July 12-14, 2019 **SHORE LEAVE 41** (a fan-run media SF convention). Hunt Valley Inn/Delta Marriott (Hunt Valley MD). Guests: Michael Shanks (*Stargate*); Lexa Doig (*Stargate: SG-1, Andromeda*); Anson Mount (*Star Trek Discovery, Inhumans*); Nichelle Nichols (*Star Trek*); John Glover (*Shazam!, Smallville*); Ethan Peck (*Star Trek Discovery*); and more. Membership: \$95 for the weekend; per-day memberships available (deadline for registration = 7/15/2019) thereafter, registration limited to 1,500; at-the-door memberships will be higher. Website: <http://www.shore-leave.com> E-mail: information@shore-leave.com

August 15-19, 2019 **DUBLIN 2019: AN IRISH WORLDCON**. Convention Center Dublin (Dublin, Ireland). Guests of Honor include: Jocelyn Bell Burnell, Diane Duane, Steve Jackson, Ian McDonald. Current membership pricing and on-line registration: <https://dublin2019.com/join-us/> Website: www.dublin2019.com For general inquiries: info@dublin2019.com

August 16-18, 2019 **CONNEXIONS 2019** ("Slash, the Final Frontier" – a media convention for slash). Holiday Inn (Arlington VA). For more information, visit their website: www.connexionssouth.com

Aug. 30 – Sept. 2, 2019 (Labor Day Weekend) **TCEP 26** ("Gaming A to Z"). Hampton Inn & Suites (Washington-Dulles Airport, Sterling VA). Membership: \$40 (25% discount if you register by 7/31/2019). On-line registration available at: <https://tcep-barkingmad.org> (their website).

October 18-20, 2019 **GAYLAXICON 2019**. Doubletree Hotel by Hilton Minneapolis-Park Place (Minneapolis MN). Membership: \$65 (ends 10/1/2019). On-line registration via EventBrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gaylaxicon-2019-registration-51438596226> Homepage: <https://www.facebook.com/MNGaylaxicon/>

October 18-20, 2019 **CAPCLAVE 2019**. Hilton Washington DC/Rockville (Rockville MD). Guests of Honor: Martha Wells, Robert J. Sawyer. Membership: \$60 through July 31; \$65 from Aug. 1 thru Sept. 30; \$70 at the door. Make checks payable to "CAPCLAVE" and send to: Capclave 2019 Registration c/o San Scheiner, 1518 North Edison Street, Arlington VA 22205-2638. Website: www.capclave.org For information: info@capclave.org

Nov. 1-3, 2019 **ANIME USA 2019** ("Of Otaku, By Otaku, For Otaku"). Washington Marriott Wardman Park (Washington DC). Guests: various voice actors and others. Pre-registration: \$70 for the weekend (daily rates available). Website: www.animeusa.org Registration site: animeusaregistration.org

Nov. 8-10, 2019 **PHILCON 2019**. Crown Plaza Hotel (Cherry Hill NJ). Guests: Tim Pratt (Principal Speaker), Stephanie Pui-Mun Law (Artist GoH). Membership: \$45 through 5/31/2019 (will go up after that). On-line registration. Website: www.philcon.org Facebook: www.Facebook.com/Philcon.PSFS