



# Lambda Sci-Fi

## DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 370 – January 2021

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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.

Before the COVID-19 shut-down orders, the LSF Book Discussion Group usually met 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. Now, book discussions are held virtually (same "4th Thursday" schedule). The next book discussion will be held on January 28 (via Zoom).

Here are the details for the next several discussions:

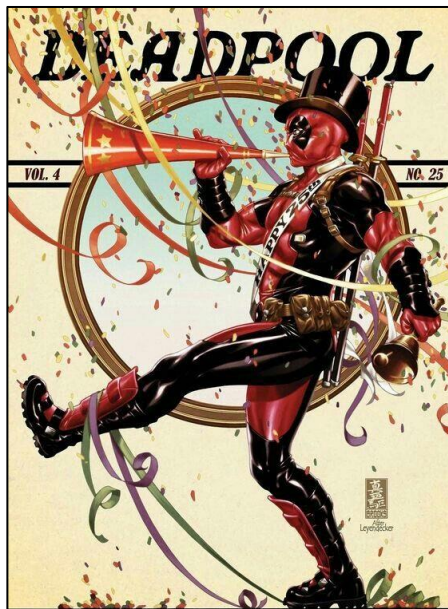
**Jan. 28, 2021** – *Circe* by Madeline Miller (moderator: Konrad).

**Feb. 25, 2021** – *The Glass Hotel* by Emily St. John Mandel (moderator: Zena).

**March 25, 2021** – *Enter the Aardvark* by Jessica Anthony (mod: Konrad).

**April 22, 2021** – *They Both Die at the End*, by Adam Silvera (mod: Ben/Rob?).

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### Happy New Year to Everyone at LSF!

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Alfred Tennyson  
*In Memoriam*, CVI (1850)

quoted in *A New Dictionary of Quotations*  
selected/edited by H.L. Mencken  
(Borzoi Books/Knopf, 2001)

### Status of the LSF 2021 Book Exchange?



One of the items discussed at the December 2020 LSF (on-line) meeting was what to do about the annual LSF Book Exchange that is traditionally held during the January LSF meeting.

LSF has held a Book Exchange at every January meeting for the past 30-something years; but with the advent of COVID-19, all LSF meetings have been held virtually via Zoom. This raises questions of how to hold the Book Exchange.

Wess made the following suggestion: hold the 2021 LSF Book Exchange at the first 2021 face-to-face LSF meeting (which possibly won't occur until June or July 2021). That way, the Book Exchange would be a wonderful way to celebrate our ability to get together face-to-face again.

Everybody agreed that Wess had come up with a great idea; and his suggestion was adopted. Stay tuned for future announcements regarding the status of the re-scheduled 2021 LSF Book Exchange!

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### << January 2021 LSF Meeting TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY >>

Due to Coronavirus concerns, we plan to hold the January 10th LSF meeting virtually. Anyone who would like to participate can contact Rob for virtual meeting information at [robatesdc@gmail.com](mailto:robatesdc@gmail.com). Hope to "see" you there!



### What's Inside?

Page 2: David Prowse (obituary); Jan Morris (obituary).

Page 3: Minutes of the December LSF Meeting; *Hayabusa2* Returns Samples.

Page 4: Information About LSF & Con Calendar



**David Prowse**  
1935 – 2020

David Prowse – bodybuilder, weightlifter, and character actor – died of COVID-19 at a hospital in London on November 28<sup>th</sup>; he was 85 years old. He had announced his retirement from all public appearances and events in October 2016, attributing the decision to ill health and the wishes of his family.

The six-foot-six Prowse was, of course, world famous as the body that filled Darth Vader’s armor in the original *Star Wars* trilogy. But he had a number of other F&SF connections. He portrayed Julian (Frank Alexander’s body-guard) in *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), where he was first noticed by George Lucas. He portrayed Frankenstein’s monster three times: *Casino Royale* (1967), *The Horror of Frankenstein* (1970), and *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* (1974). Among many other roles, Prowse appeared as a Minotaur in the *Doctor Who* serial *The Time Monster* (1972), as “the Creature” in the *Space: 1999* episode “The Beta Cloud” (1976), and as the Black Knight in *Jabberwocky* (1977). He helped to train Christopher Reeve for the title role in *Superman* (1978); and he trained Carey Elwes for his role as Westley in *The Princess Bride* (1987).

In the United Kingdom, Prowse was well known as the Green Cross Code Man, a superhero invented to promote a pedestrian safety campaign for children. Public service films featuring Prowse were shown from 1975 to 1990. In recognition of his services to charity and to promote general road safety, Prowse was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 2000. Prowse reprised his role as the Green Cross Code Man in a couple of 2014 commercials, at the age of 80.



**Jan Morris**  
1926 – 2020

Jan Morris was a Welsh historian, author of over 40 books, and a “historian of places”. (During an interview in 2016, she told Michael Palin that she did not like to be described as a travel writer, because her books are about people and places, not about movement and journeys.) She was known particularly for the *Pax Britannica* trilogy (a history of the British Empire) and for portraits of such cities as Venice, Trieste, Hong Kong, and New York City. She published under her birth name until 1972, when she had gender reassignment surgery, transitioning from male to female.

During the closing stages of WWII, Morris served in the 9<sup>th</sup> Queen’s Royal Lancers and was posted to the Free Territory of Trieste in 1945 during the joint British-US occupation. Morris had a distinguished career as a newspaper reporter. As a reporter for *The Times*, Morris was the only journalist to accompany Edmund Hillary during the 1953 British Mount Everest expedition, which made the first ascent of the mountain. As a reporter for the *Manchester Guardian* during the Suez Crisis in 1956, Morris produced the first “irrefutable proof” of collusion between France and Israel in the invasion of Egyptian territory. In 1961, Morris reported on the trial of captured Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann.

Morris married Elizabeth Tuckniss in 1949. They had five children and lived together in the village of Llanystumdwy (North Wales) for over 50 years (until Morris’s death). Morris began transitioning to life as a woman in 1964. She traveled to Morocco in 1972 to undergo sex reassignment surgery, because doctors in Britain refused to allow the procedure unless Morris and Tuckniss divorced,

which Morris was not prepared to do at the time. They were forced to divorce later because same-sex marriages were not recognized in the U.K.; but they remained together and were legally reunited in 2008 when they formally entered into a civil partnership. Morris detailed her transition in *Conundrum* (1974), her first book under the name Jan Morris; it was one of the first autobiographies to discuss a personal gender reassignment.

Morris had a long and distinguished literary career. She wrote numerous books about her travels around the world and other subjects. In 1961, she was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature; and in 1999 she was made a Companion of the British Empire. (Despite being a Welsh nationalist republican, she accepted the CBE “out of polite respect”.)

Morris wrote only two novels, both of them F&SF-related. *Last Letters from Hav* (1985) is an “imagined travelogue and political thriller” – it was short-listed for the Booker Prize. The follow-up novel *Hav of the Myrmidons* was published together with *Last Letters* in 2006 (under the title *Hav*) and was short-listed for the 2007 Arthur C. Clarke Award. (*Hav* was the subject of the LSF Book Discussion Group in August 2012.) At her request, Morris’s final work – *Allegorizings* – is scheduled to be published posthumously.

Jan and Elizabeth have specified that their joint headstone will read: “Here are two friends, at the end of one life.”



**Elizabeth & Jan**

## Minutes of the December LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

There was discussion about the traditional LSF book exchange that occurs at the January LSF meetings. Rob described how the process works at in-person meetings. Wess suggested postponing the January 2021 book exchange until the first live in-person LSF meeting. Everyone seemed to like the idea.

Bob and Rob displayed their Grogu animatronics (based on the so-called “Baby Yoda” from *The Mandalorian*).

**Movie News:** Peter and Rob had limited favorable comments to make about the movie *Tenet* and its handling of multiple-timelines. Film director Dennis Villeneuve is upset with the Warner Brothers announcement that its 2021 movies will be released simultaneously between theaters and streaming without consulting the film-makers. Disney announced a huge “to do” list of genre material. For *Star Wars*, Disney announced an Ahsoka Tano series; *Star Wars: Andor*, *Star Wars: Bad Batch*; a Lando Calrissian film; and *Rogue Squadron*. For other F&SF material: *Limitless* (with Chris Hemsworth); a live-action *Pinocchio*; *Peter Pan and Wendy*. On the Marvel side: *Fantastic Four*; *Black Panther II* (without T’Challa); *Wanda Vision*; a *Loki* series; *She Hulk*; *Moon Knight*; *Secret Invasion*; *Captain Marvel II*. A second trailer for *Wanda Vision* has been released. *Soul*, Pixar’s first film to feature an African American protagonist, is to be livestreamed.

**TV News:** The fourth season of *The Expanse* premieres this week; *The Mandalorian* has one episode left in the current season; and *Star Trek: Discovery* also has one more episode left in the current season. Ben likes the nonbinary gender character Adira Tal on *Star Trek: Discovery*. Did you know that *Star Trek: Next Generation* actor Michael Dorn did voice acting in the animated TV show *Captain Simian & the Space Monkeys*? A *True Blood* reboot is in early development at HBO. A new mini-series of *The Stand* starts this week on CBS All Access. Current Walking Dead spin-offs include:

(continued on page 4)

## Hayabusa2 Returns Asteroid Samples to Earth

info passed along by Carl

The Japanese spacecraft *Hayabusa2* successfully completed its mission on December 5th by returning asteroid samples to Earth. The samples were dropped by parachute in a special container at a location in the Outback of southern Australia and retrieved the same day for secure transport to labs of the Japanese Space Agency (JAXA).

*Hayabusa2* (Japanese for “Peregrine falcon 2”) is the successor to the *Hayabusa* mission that returned the first-ever asteroid samples in June 2010. *Hayabusa2* was launched on December 3, 2014; and it reached asteroid 162173 Ryugu on June 27, 2018. *Hayabusa2* surveyed Ryugu for a year and a half before taking samples.

Ryugu is a “primitive” carbonaceous asteroid, of a type thought to preserve the most pristine, untainted materials in the Solar System. It’s a mixture of minerals, ice, and organic compounds that interact with each other. Studying the Ryugu samples is expected to add to our knowledge of the origin and evolution of the Solar System’s inner planets – in particular, the origin of water and organic compounds on Earth.



Artist's rendition of *Hayabusa2* firing its ion thrusters

*Hayabusa2* is equipped with improved ion engines, guidance and navigation technology, and attitude control systems. It carries multiple science payloads for remote sensing, sampling, and four small rovers to investigate the asteroid surface and analyze the environmental and geological context of the samples collected. Its Mobile Asteroid Surface Scout (MASCOT) collected data on the asteroid’s surface structure and mineralogical composition, thermal behavior, and magnetic properties. MASCOT successfully landed and performed its surface mission in October 2018. It was discovered that C-type asteroids like Ryugu consist of more porous material than previously thought. Another discovery was that Ryugu consists of two different almost black types of rock with little internal cohesion.

The first surface sampling was completed on February 22, 2019. It obtained a “substantial amount of topsoil”, so the second surface sampling was postponed and eventually cancelled (to decrease the risks to the mission). A second sample was collected from “pristine” material dislodged from beneath the surface by a “kinetic penetrator” (*i.e.* a bullet) fired from a distance of 300 meters. All samples were stored in separate sealed containers inside the sample return capsule (SRC).

*Hayabusa2* left Ryugu in November 2019 to begin its year-long journey back to Earth

With the successful retrieval of the sample capsule on December 6th, *Hayabusa2* will use its remaining 66 pounds of xenon propellant (from the initial 146 pounds) to extend its service life and fly out to explore new targets – other asteroids and exoplanets and possibly a Venus flyby.

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David Prowse as the Green Cross Code Man (refer to the article on page 2)

**\*\* 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. Newsletter submissions are always welcome.

Meetings are usually held on the second Sunday of each month at a private residence. Due to Coronavirus concerns, the Lambda Sci-Fi meeting for Sunday, January 10th, will be held virtually. We'll keep you informed of the status of future meetings.

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 (with help from Bob Angell)

April 16-18, 2021 **RAVENCON 15**. Virginia Crossings Tapestry Collection by Hilton (Glen Allen, VA – just north of Richmond). Guests of Honor: Terry Brooks (Author), Rhiannon's Lark (Music). Membership: \$40 before 3/27/2021; \$50 at the door. Website: <https://www.ravencon.com/>

July 9-11, 2021 **SHORE LEAVE 42** (rescheduled from July 2020). Delta Hotels Marriott Baltimore Hunt Valley (Hunt Valley MD). Actor GoH: Denis Lawson (*Star Wars* "Wedge Antilles"); Brandon Routh (Superman & The Atom); Robert Duncan McNeill (Lt. Tom Paris); Brent Spiner (Data); Alex Kingston (River Song). Membership: \$105 for the weekend (\$120 at the door); daily rates available. Printable registration forms & on-line registration available through the Registration Page. Website: <https://www.shore-leave.com/info/update-2020-04-25.htm>

**December LSF Minutes**

continued from page 3

*Walking Dead: World Beyond* ("the first generation to come-of-age in the apocalypse"); plus an unnamed spinoff starring the characters of Darryl and Carol scheduled to launch in 2023.

**Book News:** Carl enjoyed Elizabeth Hand's latest "Cass Neary" novel *The Book of Lamps and Banners*; he described its "borderline Lovecraftian" elements (such as the Necronomicon-like occult book of the title). Teresa is reading Leigh Bardugo's *The Six of Crows*, which is to be made into a Netflix series. She is also reading a new graphic novel version of *Dune*.

**Other News:** Rob described a video game called *Cyberpunk 2077*, in which male characters get to select their penis size. The video game *Jedi: Fallen Order* was also mentioned. Carl cited the passing of Jan Morris, author of *Hav*, which the LSF book club discussed back in 2012. There was an animated discus-

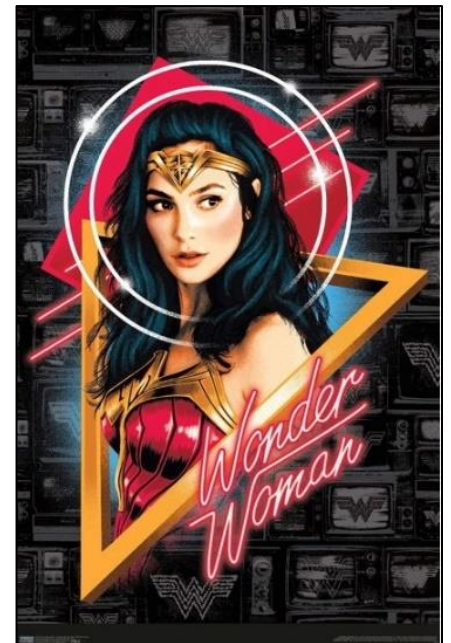
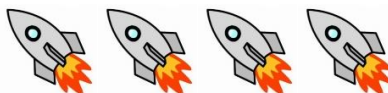
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sion about Hallmark and Lifetime Channels' gay-themed Christmas movies (non-genre). David discussed Elliott Page's coming out as transgendered; Netflix has gone back and changed the credits of his prior movies.

Peter said that he and Rob are looking forward to hosting monthly in-person LSF gaming parties once the COVID-19 crisis has ended.

Rob reminded everyone about the next four LSF book discussions: *Circe* by Madeline Miller (Jan 2021); *The Glass Hotel* by Emily St. John Mandel (Feb 2021); *Enter the Aardvark* by Jessica Anthony (March 2021); and *They Both Die at the End* by Adam Silvera (April 2021).

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**HAPPY NEW  
YEAR  
FROM 1984!**