



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 389 – August 2022

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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. The next book discussion will be held **in person on August 25th**. **All attendees MUST be fully vaccinated.**

Here are the details for the next two discussions:

Aug. 25, 2022 – *The Extraordinaries*, by TJ Klune (moderator: Keith)

Sept. 22, 2022 – *A Psalm for the Wild-Built*, by Becky Chambers (moderator: Andy).

Note: The Virtual Book Club also meets (via Zoom) on the same evening as the face-to-face discussion group: same book, same questions, *different* attendees. Look for the Zoom link in the usual book club notice or on the LSF web page.

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To our ConFAB Friends,

Welcome to ConFABulous! Plans are proceeding for our in-person convention after two years of virtual conventions. ConFABulous will be at the Crowne Plaza Suites MSP Airport – Mall of America (formerly the Crowne Plaza Aire), 3 Appletree Square in Bloomington, MN on October 14-16, 2022.

We have expanded our space. We will be offering panels of general interest on speculative fiction, room for board games and video games, a room for role-playing (often with a preceding discussion of the RPG), and of course our ConSuite where you can pick up snacks (as well as our annual Chocolate Symposium on Saturday).

That said, this year there will be some changes for the health and safety of everyone, please check our web page:

<http://confabulous.org/wordpress/covid-19-safety-and-policies/>

for the latest updates and complete details of our Health and Safety policies.

What do you want to see, talk about, and play at ConFABulous? Do you like to discuss your favorite game? What's hot on TV? Upcoming games? Upcoming movies? Upcoming TV? What's the best book you read, or what's the next best book you should read?



What's the best gaming experience: Computer? Console? Board? Nvidia or AMD? Send your panel ideas to:

programming@ConFABulous.org

and let us know what panels you want to be on.

Would you like to run a role-playing game at ConFABulous? Perhaps you would like to play in one? Looking to learn a hot new board game or just play that game that's been sitting in your closet for the past two years? Send your role-playing or board game ideas to:


gaming@ConFABulous.org.

Check out our website:

<http://confabulous.org>

for the latest information on panels, board games, and RPG panels and demonstration games being offered as they become available. While there, register for the convention and book a room at the hotel so you can stay up late for gaming.

We hope to see you at the con on October 14-16, 2022, and remember to bring some chocolate for the Chocolate Symposium!

- Don Kaiser, Con Chair 

***** August 14, 2022 Meeting = IN PERSON!!! *****

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, August 14th**. The meeting will be held at Peter and Rob's home, **1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. **All attendees MUST be fully vaccinated.** The doors open at 1:30 PM and the meeting will begin at 2:00 PM. Hope to see you there!



What's Inside?

Page 2: Minutes of the July 2022 LSF Meeting; My Votes for the 2022 Dramatic Presentation Hugo Awards (Part 2 of 2).

Page 4: Information About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians & Con Calendar; *Name That Movie: Mars Edition*.

Minutes of the July 2022 LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Movie News

Carl took Peter's recommendation and watched Netflix's *Space Sweepers* – a South Korean genre film directed by Jo Sung-hee. Carl says he got a kick out of it. "Meh" is the word used by some people to describe *Thor: Love & Thunder*. There was a discussion of the *Matrix* movies; and Carl says he enjoyed the first one but hated 2 and 3 – and hasn't seen 4.

Television News

Teresa does not like it that the telepathic Andorian engineer on *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* got killed off. Karl says he enjoyed the six-episode Disney+ series *Loki*. Andy is giving AMC's new series *Moonhaven* a try; the first episode was "OK" but subsequent episodes have improved. Karl likes Amazon Prime's series *Outer Range* and says it has a *Twin Peaks* feel. *True Detective* was (is?) an HBO anthology crime drama series that premiered in 2014; each season features a new crime and a new cast of actors. There was general agreement that the first season, with its "Lovecraftian" themes, is very enjoyable and 100% creepy.

Other News

Carl was surprised that he enjoyed Samuel Delaney's 1984 *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand*. (He got it from Andy in the recent LSF Book Exchange.) He also reported that ChesieCon is returning this year but has moved to Hunt Valley, MD. Teresa says she dislikes the 2021 "DC vs. Vampires" series. (Why can't Superman easily identify vampires based upon heartbeats – or lack thereof – or via body temperature?) There was some discussion of the controversies surrounding *Flash* actor Ezra Miller. There was a discussion of the Criterion Collection, a home-video distribution company that focuses on "important classic & contemporary films." And everyone enjoyed the Whisked assorted cookies!

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My Votes for the 2022 Dramatic Presentation Hugo Awards (Part 2 of 2)

by Peter Knapp (with guest
commentary by Rob Gates)

When I qualify to nominate and vote on the Hugos I usually contribute two articles to Ye Old Editor for the LSF newsletter. The articles are for the two Best Dramatic Presentation categories, one for my nominations and later one for my votes. This year I missed the nomination deadline. I plan to vote for the works that were nominated so I can at least contribute one article (in two parts).

Warning: My commentary is full of spoilers, so reader beware!

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form (597 nomination ballots cast)

Prior to the nominations I had watched four of the nominated works and had tried to watch one of them. To be fair to the awards process I watched the one nomination I had missed, *The Green Knight*, and made another attempt to watch *Space Sweepers*. Here is the ranking I gave each of the nominees with some commentary about my decision process.



1. *WandaVision* – I asked Rob to guest write this one, as we've spoken a lot about it, and he articulates my thoughts well.

You'd have to have been in a coma for the last decade to not know

about the financial and creative success of the Marvel Cinematic Universe; so when Disney announced that they would do streaming television shows that were integrated with their movies, there was a lot of excitement and also a lot of curiosity about how they'd use the new (old) medium as part of the MCU. While COVID played havoc with their production and scheduling plans we finally got to see when *WandaVision* premiered in January 2021. To say it was a success would be an understatement.

WandaVision brought the craftsmanship and technical skills of Marvel/Disney together with the type of deep story that being a 9-episode series allowed. And what they created with that combination was an entertaining and moving treatise on grief and love. It certainly didn't hurt that they got incredible performers – Elizabeth Olsen, Paul Bettany, and Kathryn Hahn were all nominated for Primetime Emmy Awards. The show went on to receive an incredible collection of award nominations for its writing, its directing, its music... even a Grammy for an original song... from both popular choice and professional organization awards.

But what made *WandaVision* truly stand out was its creativity and risk-taking. Marvel could have kept doing what works – followed a successful formula – but instead they went all-in on a high-concept, high-risk idea that permeated the first two thirds of the show. Without telling us exactly why or how (and there very definitely was a why and a how), though slowly giving us hints, each episode was crafted in the stereotypical style of American television from a different decade. It could have been a quick gimmick, but the Marvel team was all in on the concept. The stories and dialogue when Wanda and Vision were on screen were written following the pacing and style of the time. The first two episodes were even in black and white and filmed with a live studio audience and with camera work and VFX work typical of that era. The show moved us through the history of television as each episode took place (and as the "real story" of the show started to take over).

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Hugo Dramatic Presentation Awards

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It was a remarkable feat of creativity – but it never overshadowed the emotional core of Wanda’s story. By taking full advantage of what a 9-hour/9-episode television series offers in terms of length and opportunity to stretch and breathe story-wise, Marvel created something that absolutely could not have been done in a theatrical movie. This combination of story, use of medium, and creativity is what made *WandaVision* my favorite of the year.



2. *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* – I have a soft spot in my heart for Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) movies. They are very formulaic and in a lot of ways are very predictable. For me they are cinematic comfort food. *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* did not disappoint. The title character, Shang-Chi (played by Chinese born Canadian Simu Liu), is laying low in San Francisco after running away from his father Wenwu, the head of the Ten Rings criminal organization. Of course, his father tracks him down and forces Shang-Chi to help him find a mythical village. Much drama and martial arts ensue. This 25th MCU film was the first one with a mostly Asian cast. It explores what it means to be family, both biological and logical. Awkwafina plays Shang-Chi’s BFF and is hysterically funny. Michelle Yeoh plays Shang-Chi’s mother and is amazing (as usual). The rest of the cast deliver strong performances. I enjoyed the movie a lot and was moved by Wenwu sacrificing himself to save his son.

3. *Dune* – In anticipation of seeing Denis Villeneuve’s version of *Dune*, I rewatched the David Lynch 1984 version of Frank Herbert’s seminal novel. The David Lynch movie did not



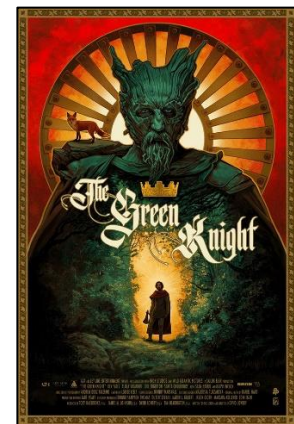
age well, and I did not enjoy it way I did 37 years ago. This new version of the movie, part one of a two-movie recounting of the source material – Frank Herbert’s 1964 novel *Dune* – was *so* much better. I enjoyed it a lot and found it visually rich, with much of the movie actually filmed on location in a real desert instead of on a soundstage. The visual effects, cinematography, and costumes were all well done. The one thing I did not care for was Hans Zimmer’s score – which is ironic, as I enjoy most of that composer’s works.



4. *Space Sweepers* – The first time I tried to watch *Space Sweepers*, a Korean space blockbuster, I gave up as I found it silly and very chaotic. When it was nominated for a Hugo, I gave the movie another chance. Space faring salvagers find a car floating in orbit and discover a child in it. The child turns out to be a robot who contains a weapon of mass destruction. The space sweepers try to ransom the girl and are chased by multiple factions trying to get hold of her. The movie reminded me of *Cowboy Bebop*, which had taken a while for me to warm up to. By the end of *Space Sweepers*, I was glad I had watched the movie, as it had a lot of heart.



5. *Encanto* – This Walt Disney animated musical should have worked for me, as in general I like Disney musicals. I found the premise of a family gifted by their house with magical superpowers and becoming the *de facto* royalty of a rural Columbian town bothersome. That the protagonist, Mirabel Madrigal, did not receive her superpowers and is looked on with pity by the townsfolk was annoying. Halfway through the movie it’s revealed that a missing family member, Bruno, has mental health issues. The family had swept the family secret under the carpet and launched into a big musical number: “We Don’t Talk About Bruno.” I don’t find mental health issues funny, and I found lighthearted treatment of Bruno uncomfortable. The movie left me cold.



6. *The Green Knight* – I found this movie painfully slow and difficult to watch. Written and directed by David Lowery, this movie was based on “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight”, a late 14th-century chivalric romance in Middle English. I was not familiar with either the source material or the author/director. It’s safe to say this is very much an art film. It just didn’t work for me.

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<https://www.thehugoawards.org/hugo-history/2022-hugo-awards/>

