



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 405 – December 2023

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LSF New Year's Eve Gaming Party and Potluck! announced by Peter & Rob



Come join Lambda Sci-Fi as we ring out the old year and ring in the new year with an afternoon and evening of gaming.

Date: Sunday, Dec. 31, 2023

Time: The doors will open at 1:30 PM. At midnight, we'll all ring in and toast the New Year with champagne, sparkling wine, and/or sparkling cider.

Where: Rob & Peter's home – 1425 "S" St NW, Washington, DC 20009-4181

What to Bring: Your favorite table game or two or three (cards, board, etc.). And it's a potluck meal, so bring something to eat: appetizers (veggies, chips, etc.), main course item (enough to serve at least 4-5 people), dessert, and/or non-alcoholic drinks (both regular and diet).

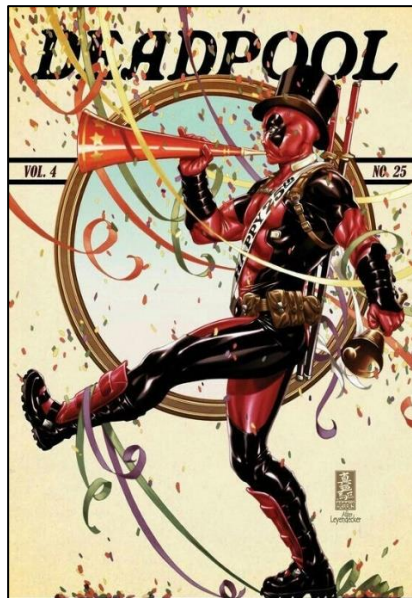


For the New Year's toast, it's OK to bring some sparkling wine or cider (champagne, if you're feeling generous). The hosts request that no one drink alcohol during the party other than at midnight.

For more information, send e-mail to: peter@lambdascifi.org

Directions and Parking Suggestions: <https://www.lambdascifi.org/peterrob/>

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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 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 December 7th. **All attendees MUST be fully vaccinated.**

Here are the details for the next couple of discussions:

Dec. 7 (combined Nov./Dec.) – *The Expert System's Brother*, by Adrian Tchaikovsky (moderator: Andy).

Jan. 25, 2024 – *A Haunting on the Hill*, by Elizabeth Hand (moderator: Carl).



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***** December 10, 2023 Meeting *****

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, December 10th**. The meeting will be held at Peter and Rob's home, **1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. The meeting will begin at 1:30 PM followed by gaming at 3:00 PM. Hope to see you there!



What's Inside?

Page 2: Annual LSF Gift Exchange at Jan. 14th Meeting; Minutes of the November LSF Meeting; Synchro-Vox.

Page 3: Strange Tales, Part 2 (reviews).

Page 4: Info About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar.

Annual LSF Gift Exchange at Jan. 14th Meeting



It's coming up on that time of year again – time for the *thirty-third* annual book (*et al*) exchange at the monthly LSF meeting to be held on January 14, 2024!

All LSF members – and visitors, guests, attendees, etc. – are invited to participate in this “blind exchange.” (*Remember: You MUST be fully vaccinated to attend this meeting.*)

In case you've never participated in one of these before (or in case you've forgotten), here's how it works:

(1) Go out and purchase a copy of your “favorite” science-fiction, fantasy, or horror book. (*NOTE: Over the years, LSF has expanded the concept of “book” to include comics, graphic novels, videotapes, “books on tape,” etc. If you want – or if you're*

feeling particularly wealthy – you can even make it *several* favorite books or whatever.) New or used, it makes no difference, as long as it's one of your favorites!

(2) Insert a piece of paper (or bookmark) with your name on it. That's so whoever eventually ends up with the item will know who it's from and will get to know a little about you – at least to know what one of your “favorites” is.

(3) Wrap up the exchange item, but don't put any identifying marks or anything on the wrapped package to say who it's from. That's to make sure it's a “blind” exchange – *i.e.*, no one is supposed to know who it's from at first. (And, by the way, all of that leftover Holiday wrapping paper should come in handy here!)

(4) At the meeting, add your wrapped exchange item to the pile with all the others; and you'll be assigned a number. (Only one exchange item – *i.e.*, one package – per person, please!)

(5) When your number is called, you pick one of the packages from the pile. And when you open it up, you'll find out who it's from. See how easy?

I can hardly wait to see what shows up *this* year!

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Synchro-Vox info passed along by Carl

At the October LSF meeting, we somehow got into a brief discussion of the “Synchro-Vox” lip-animation technique and even watched excerpts from *Clutch Cargo* and *Space Angel*, a couple of animated series (1959 to 1963) that used Synchro-Vox. Everyone at the meeting seemed to agree that this animation technique looks “creepy” or “disturbing.”

Purely coincidentally, I recently ran across Synchro-Vox again.

I was reading *Genius Animated: The Cartoon Art of Alex Toth*. Toth is one of my favorite artists and was the artist-designer responsible for much of Hanna-Barbera's “Super Saturday Morning” extravaganza during the 1960s and 1970s (including many of my favorites, such as *Jonny Quest*, *Space Ghost*, and *The Herculoids*).

Ah, fond memories of my misspent youth! What I *didn't* know was that Toth was also an artist-designer for Cambria Studios and worked on *Clutch Cargo* and *Space Angel*. And *Genius Animated* included some additional info about Synchro-Vox:

“It was [Edwin] Gillette—using experience gained from a degree in film and a handful of War-years reels produced for the U.S. government—who had experimented with split-beam images of live-action mouths projected onto otherwise static cartoon drawings of faces. These composites resulted in characters who more closely mimicked the appearance of speech than did their animated competitors. Gillette patented his technique, calling it ‘Synchro-Vox’ ... Twenty-first century animation techniques have turned Synchro-Vox in-to an oddity that briefly blipped, then faded from the pop culture radar screen.”

If you're interested in watching

Minutes of the November LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Rob reviewed LSF's successful D&D introduction workshop. Hats off to our kind DMs Rob and Alex!

Movie News

Both Teresa and Rob were delighted with *The Marvels*. Rob said that the character of Ms. Marvel/Kamala Khan stole the show! Rob reminisced about the 1999 action-comedy *Mystery Men*, about superheroes with unimpressive powers. To be released in 2024: *Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire*, which follows on the 2021 *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*.

Television News

Do you know about *Deadboy Detectives*, a supernatural duo that are part of DC Comics' Vertigo imprint? *Deadboy Detectives* appeared in HBO Max's *Doom Patrol* series. Rob unenthusiastically described the low-budget six-episode series *Tales of the Tardis*, a *Doctor Who* spinoff. It was noted that Netflix will be picking up *Star Trek: Prodigy*. Teresa reported that the Apple+ alternate history series *For All Mankind* is returning.

Upcoming LSF Events

The next two LSF book discussions: *The Expert System's Brother* by Adrian Tchaikovsky (Dec. 7th); *A Haunting on the Hill* by Elizabeth Hand (Jan. 25th)

LSF New Year's Party: Dec. 31st (see announcement on page 1).

LSF Annual Book(ish) Exchange: Jan. 14th LSF Meeting. (See the announcement on this page.) ΛΨΦ

a complete *Clutch Cargo* or *Space Angel* episode, here are a couple of YouTube links:

Clutch Cargo episode:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4>

[FBIvTzcsUk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4)

Space Angel episode:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z>

[vLpWmwuyt0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z)

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Clutch Cargo
Space Angel



Strange Tales, Part 2

reviews by Carl

I generally enjoy reading “weird” or “creepy” or “scary” books in honor of the season of Halloween and *Día de los Muertos*. This October was no exception. Here are short reviews of a couple more of the books I’ve read.

The Uncensored Picture of Dorian Gray

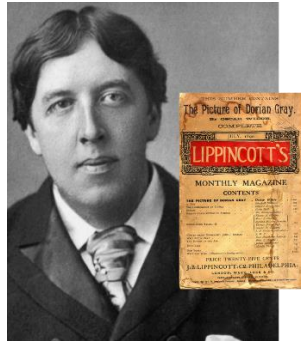
by Oscar Wilde

(The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011)

You’re probably at least a little familiar with the general outline of this classic work of dark fantasy: Dorian Gray, a young, attractive, aristocratic aesthete, is somehow granted his fervent wish to never age and never lose his youthful beauty – instead his new portrait will suffer the ravages of time and circumstance in his place. After hiding the portrait away in the attic of his London townhouse, Gray launches into a lifestyle filled with sensory excess and debauchery. Among other things, he mentally abuses a young woman and drives her to suicide, murders a former friend, and then blackmails another acquaintance into disposing of the victim’s body. He eventually confronts his horribly disfigured portrait and suffers a hideous fate. OK, so it’s not “horrific” in the modern sense of the term; but it’s definitely “dark fantasy” and it’s widely considered a classic of Gothic literature.

I first read Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* quite a few years ago. “So, why read it again?” you ask. Well, first off, I quite enjoy reading the works of Oscar Wilde; I get a kick out of his wit and wry humor. (For example: ‘...the one charm of marriage is that it makes a life of deception necessary to both parties.’) More importantly, as soon as I learned about this version, I had to rush right out and find a copy because of the word “*Uncensored*” in the title. If you have read *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, then what you have read was undoubtedly a ver-

sion of what was originally published in *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine* in 1890 – and *that* version was not the version originally submitted by Oscar Wilde.



Wilde sent the *only* copy of his typescript (which included about 3,000 words of hand-written additions) to the J.B. Lippincott Company for publication in *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine*. J.B. Stoddart, the magazine’s relatively liberal-minded editor, was alarmed by the story and consulted a handful of advisors to determine whether (and how) the novel might be published. The result was that some 500 words were excised from the story before it was published in the July 1890 issue of *Lippincott’s Monthly*. Wilde probably didn’t find out about the edits until he opened his personal copy of the magazine.

Despite the editorial deletions, the story was immediately controversial and widely disparaged. The British press described it as “vulgar,” “unclean,” “poisonous,” “discreditable,” and “a sham” (now recognized as coded terms for homosexuality, a word that didn’t enter the English language until 1892). Some distributors removed copies of that issue of the magazine from their stands. And the (censored) *Lippincott’s* version was even cited by the prosecution in Wilde’s 1895 trials, particularly the homoerotic and emotional relations between the three main male characters and its suggestions of the potentially corruptive nature of interpersonal influence. The judge was outraged by the excerpts entered as evidence. Wilde was convicted of “gross indecency” (Victorian legalese for “homosexuality”) and sentenced to two years of hard labor in prison. Wilde’s reputation, marriage, and life were

ruined; and he died in Paris in 1900, following three years of disgrace and exile.

The Uncensored Picture of Dorian Gray follows Wilde’s hand-annotated typescript as originally presented to the Lippincott Company. (Editor Stoddart kept possession of the original typescript until long after Wilde’s death.) A word of caution: Don’t pick up a copy expecting to find sexually explicit content; but the textual implications and allusions are inescapable for any modern reader. The General Introduction to this edition includes an informative review of Wilde’s life, works, sexual relationships, and legal difficulties; and a Textual Introduction provides more detailed information about the novel and its many versions. If you’re an Oscar Wilde fan – like me – I think this version of a classic work of dark fiction is a “must have” for your library.

Now let’s transition from a dark Victorian fantasy to a collection of more modern horror stories...

In a Lonely Place

by Karl Edward Wagner

(Valancourt Books, 2023)

I was introduced to the works of Karl Edward Wagner during the 1970s, when I was deeply into sword-and-sorcery fiction. Some of my favorite F&SF stories were Wagner’s dark “Kane the Wanderer” stories, featuring an immortal sorcerer-swordsman. It wasn’t until much later that I learned that Wagner was also a masterful writer of horror stories. Many of his horror stories were winners or nominees for the World Fantasy Award and/or the British Fantasy Award. He also edited DAW’s prestigious *The Year’s Best Horror Stories* from 1980 until 1994, the year of his death.

In a Lonely Place is a reprint of a 1983 collection (long out of print). It includes eight of his best horror stories and an Afterward by Wagner himself. Noted horror writer Ramsey Campbell also wrote a short introductory tribute to Wagner and the stories in this collection. The stories include a wide range of classic horror plotlines. There are a ghost story (well, sort of), an “infestation” story (based on a classic American problem), a surreal “lost race” story, a medical conspiracy story, a *very*

(continued on page 4)

**** 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.

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, **December 10th, at Peter and Rob's home, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC. All attendees MUST be fully vaccinated.** We 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

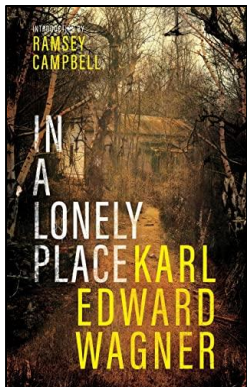
March 22-24, 2024 **OUTLANTACON/GAYLAXICON 2024** ("Atlanta's LGBTQ+ convention for Sci-fi, Pop Culture, Multimedia & Gaming!"). Atlanta Marriott Northeast/Emory Area (Atlanta GA). Weekend membership: \$60 (purchase on-line at the website). Website: <https://outlantacon.org>

May 24-27, 2024 **BALTICON 58**. Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore MD). Guest of Honor: L.E. Modesitt Jr; Music GoH: Rhiannon's Lark; Editor GoH: Sheila Williams; Artist GoH: Omar Rayyan. More info to be announced. Website: <https://www.balticon.org/> E-mail: balticoninfo@balticon.org

Sept. 27-29, 2024 **CAPCLAVE 2024**. Rockville Hilton (Rockville MD). Guests of Honor: Sheree Renee Thomas; Matt Diniman. Membership: \$55 from Jan to May 2024; \$60 from June to July 2024; \$65 from Aug to Sept 2024; \$70 at the door. Website: www.capclave.org Info: info@capclave.org

Strange Tales, Part 2
continued from page 3

weird story about the unseemly side of Hollywood, a grim story inspired by Robert Chambers's classic *The King in Yellow*, and a *doppelganger* (vampire?) story. It also contains "Sticks," which is possibly Wagner's most famous and often-anthologized story, as well as the inspiration for some of the creepy visuals seen in the film *The Blair Witch Project* (Artisan Entertainment, 1999).



I was constantly surprised and delighted with Wagner's ability to take a "typical" horror theme and then twist it into an unexpected shape. On a couple of occasions, I found myself wondering where a story was going – and then WHAM! – a dark and satisfying twist at the end brought it all together. For example, "In the Pines" seemed like a typical haunted-house-and-ghostly-obsession story – with some Lovecraft-like research by the protagonist to see if he could figure out the origins of the haunting – and then, in the final scene, the whole "ghost story" plotline is turned on its head. I didn't see that ending coming.

If you're a fan of Karl Edward Wagner, I think you'll want to add *In a Lonely Place* to your collection. And if you aren't familiar with Wagner's darker work, I think this collection will provide a first-rate and satisfyingly dark introduction.



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Happy Holidays.
lambda Sci-fi!
Here's hoping Sci-fi Santa
somehow finds his way to
your space station!

