



Lambda Sci-fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 212 – August 2024

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LSF Gaming Party (Saturday, August 17th) announced by Peter & Rob



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

When: Saturday, August 17; 2:00 PM to 11 PM or so.



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

Dinner: For those who are interested, we'll order pizza for dinner. To get in on the pizza order, please bring \$10 in exact change. 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.

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:

<https://www.lambdascifi.org/peterrob>

Questions: Contact Peter at: peter@lambdascifi.org ΛΨΦ

📖 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 on August 22nd.

Here are the details for the next several discussions:

Aug. 22 – *Die*, Vol. 1 & 2 (graphic novel), by Kieron Gillen *et al* (mod: Dan).

Sept. 26 – *When the Angels Left the Old Country*, by Sacha Lamb (mod: Sam).

Oct. 24 – *Camp Damascus*, by Chuck Tingle (moderator: Rob).

Dec. 5 (combined Nov/Dec discussion) – *The Terraformers*, by Annalee Newitz (moderator: Zena).

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We are plain quiet folk and have no use for adventures. Nasty disturbing uncomfortable things! Make you late for dinner! I can't think what anybody sees in them.

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* (1937)

***** August 11, 2024 Meeting *****

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, August 11th**. 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. Hope to see you there!



What's Inside?

Page 2: Alternate Armadas, Part 2 (book reviews); Minutes of the July LSF Meeting.

Page 4: Info About LSF: DC Area Gaylaxians; Con Calendar; New Marvel Cinematic Universe Villains.

Alternate Armadas, Part 2

reviews by Carl

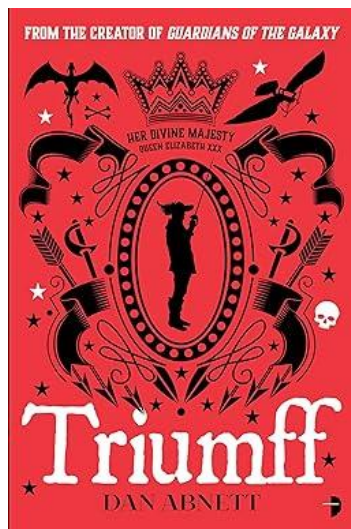
Alternate history stories always include a “point of divergence” from which the flow of our universe’s history has changed in some way. Most often this point of divergence results from either warfare or politics, such as the Confederacy winning the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln surviving (or avoiding) Booth’s attack, Nazi Germany winning WWII, George Armstrong Custer surviving to face a court martial after his defeat at the Little Big Horn, Charles Lindberg being elected President of the United States, etc. Recently, I’ve been reading alternate history novels in which the point of divergence centers on the Spanish Armada sent against Elizabethan England in 1588 by His Most Catholic Majesty, Philip II of Spain.

The first installment of these reviews included Harry Turtledove’s *Ruled Britannia* (2002) and Keith Roberts’s *Pavane* (2011). I really enjoyed them both.

Triumff

by Dan Abnett

(Angry Robot Books, 2020)



I tried to like this one... honest, I did... but I stopped reading it after about one hundred pages. I simply didn’t enjoy it. I’d heard of the author – Abnett has written a LOT of books, including some *Dr. Who*, *Torchwood*, and *Guardians of the Galaxy* spin-offs and a whole slew of *Warhammer* novels – but

Minutes of the July LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Rob displayed his new “Game Day” banner (which he picked up at a recent work-related meeting in Chicago). No one at the meeting has plans to attend Worldcon 2024 in Glasgow, Scotland (next month). Rob mentioned that San Diego Comic Con might be relocating in 2026 because of hotel contract disputes. He also announced an upcoming LSF gaming party set for Saturday August 27th.

Book-related: Karl is listening to Stina Leicht’s *Persephone’s Station* (2021). Rob stated that S.A. Corey’s new non-*Expanse* novel is coming out soon: *Mercy of Gods*. Carl is currently enjoying a huge new Fantasy novel: *Navola* by Paolo Bacigalupi (set in an analog of Renaissance Italy, in which a young man inherits his father’s mercantile empire). Derek is currently reading an historical mystery set in Roman times: *Comedy of Terrors: A Flavia Albia Novel* by Lindsey Davis. Rob discussed Chuck Tingle’s newest novel *Bury Your Gays*. (For a description of the “bury your gays” trope, visit:

<https://screenrant.com/movies-bury-your-gays-trope-explained-history>

Movie-related: Rob announced an upcoming movie outing to see *Deadpool and Wolverine* (July 28th).

TV-related: Peter and Rob discussed the genre-related shows they’re enjoying: *The Boys*, *Gen V*, *Prodigy* (season 2), and *Doctor Who* (“season 1”). Peter is also enjoying the *Jurassic Park* animated series. It was reported that *The House of the Dragon* has been well received. Rob led a short discussion how some viewers could not “connect” with Joss Whedon’s 2009 series *Doll House* because of a storyline based on the fact that her character changed every episode.

Upcoming LSF book discussion titles: (July) *The City We Became* by N.K. Jemisin; (August) *Die*, Vol. 1 & 2, a graphic novel by Kieron Gillen *et al* and artist Stephanie Hans.

Finally, we watched the current trailer for *Captain America: Brave New World*, with Harrison Ford as US President Thaddeus Ross. The movie includes Israeli superheroine Sabra, who has superhuman strength, speed, agility, reflexes, endurance, and stamina.

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I’d never read anything by him. Odds are good I’ll never read another.

In Abnett’s story, there was *no* Spanish Armada and *no* Spanish invasion of England, because in 1575 Queen Elizabeth I married Philip II of Spain. A highly unlikely event. (Why would she marry her late sister’s husband, especially considering her father’s rocky relationship with his Spanish wife? And I’m quite sure her rabidly Protestant advisors would have fought tooth and nail against a marriage to a rabidly Papist groom.) But I figured: “What the heck... let’s see where Abnett goes with it.”

The novel opens in the year 2010 during “the splendid reign” of Queen Elizabeth XXX. The 1575 “mating of eagles” initiated an imperial dynasty that has lasted for centuries. And, as a result, the so-called Anglo-Hispanic Unity is “the longest-lasting and most powerful Empire ever to arise upon this terrestrial stage.” Oh...kay. Over the centuries, political power seems to have strongly shifted from Spain in favor of

the English Queen and her Court.

Here come more implausibilities. The “Arte of Magick” was rediscovered sometime during the Renaissance; and much of European economy and society remain pre-industrial in nature. (For example, the city of London is powered by a huge power plant; but the energy is supplied by some kind of magickal system.) And much of the world is currently *Terra Incognita*. (For example, the island of Madagascar was only discovered in about the year 2000.) The system of world exploration (such as it is) is based upon “Letters of Passage,” whereby the explorer who discovers a new territory is granted the right to claim, explore, and pillage that territory in the name of the Queen.

And here comes a *whopper* of an implausibility... Rupert Triumff, one of the Queen’s courtiers has recently discovered Australia, but he hasn’t revealed anything about its nature or location. Triumff is trying to shield the Australians from his rapacious fellow

(continued on page 3)

Alternate Armadas, Part 2

continued from page 2

Europeans. But if he doesn't register his discovery soon, his Letter of Passage will be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Now, don't think that the Australians are poor, backward brown people. Nay, nay, nay. The Australians rejected magick in favor of technology quite some time ago and have achieved a level a level of development that is comparable to modern day industrialized nations in our timeline. Confused? Yeah, me too!

Oh, and just to add more complications to the plot, there's a cabal of Spanish and English noblemen who are magickally plotting to shift the balance of power from the British Crown to the Spanish.

I couldn't handle any more implausibilities; so I stopped reading it. Mayhap someone else will find *Triumff* to be a whimsical adventure story and an enjoyable read; but not me.

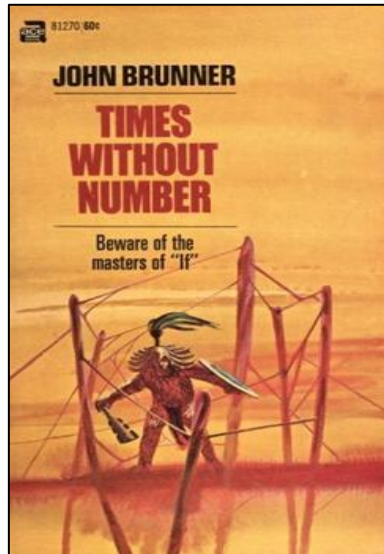
Times Without Number

by John Brunner

(Ace Books, 1969)

John Brunner is a classic F&SF author; and I'm a big fan of several of his works: *Stand on Zanzibar* (1968), *The Traveler in Black* (1971), and *The Sheep Look Up* (1972). But I'd never heard of *Times Without Number* until I started searching for Armada-themed novels. The Ace Books version that I read is a "considerably revised and expanded" version, apparently different from both the novelettes originally printed in magazines and the 1962 novel.

In this universe/timeline, the Spanish Armada successfully invades and conquers England in 1588, aided by a second army from the Spanish Netherlands under the command of a talented military adventurer from the Catholic Scottish House of Stewart. At some (unspecified) later date, Spain leads the conquest of France and the German Protestant states. Unfortunately, with the Spanish armies concentrated in the North, Spain itself is invaded and conquered by the Mediterranean Islamic Kalifate; and Spanish refugees flee to

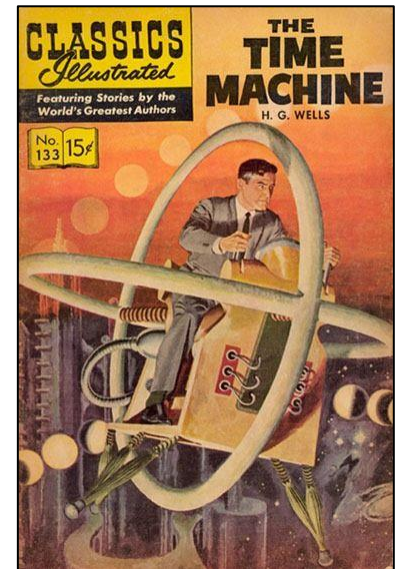


Britain, which becomes the new base of their worldwide empire. In the Western Hemisphere, the Spanish Empire includes Central and South America, but *not* North America. Instead, the Spanish arm and support their Mohawk allies in their conquest of that continent. Oh, and during the mid-1800s, a scientist in Spanish-dominated Italy discovered the secret of time travel. So much for the background of this very short novel...

The action in *Times Without Number* takes place in the years 1988 and 1989, during the reign of His Most Catholic Majesty Philip IX, *Rey y Imperador*. Don Miguel Navarro is a "Licentiate in Ordinary" of the Society of Time. His primary duty is to ensure that history isn't altered and the Spanish empire isn't undone. During the course of the novel, Don Miguel becomes involved in several cases of time violation: from seemingly innocent black market operations involving stolen Aztec artworks, to a full-scale invasion of *Londres* (aka London) by a cross-time army of female warriors, to illegal Russian mining operations in the ancient Californian desert. Who's behind all these incidents? Has someone else stumbled across the secret of time travel? Or is there a secret cabal of time criminals within the Society of Time itself? And can Don Miguel counter all these threats before increasingly serious violations threaten the very existence of the Spanish Empire itself?

I can't say as I'm a big fan of time travel stories; but I kind'a enjoyed

Times Without Number. It involves turning the usual time travel story on its head, in that it takes place in a timeline that isn't ours and that the protagonist's role is to prevent that timeline from being changed. Kind of a cool twist at the end, too. Not my favorite John Brunner novel, but still enjoyable. $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$



"Time travel," Karestly said,
"is the best therapy
known today."

"The Cure" (1946)

by Henry Kuttner and C.L. Moore

Never Do Yesterday What
Should Be Done Tomorrow

"All You Zombies—"
by Robert A. Heinlein

The only workable
time machine ever invented
is the science-fiction story.

Introduction to
Trips in Time (1977)
by Robert Silverberg

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

Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians (LSF) is an organization for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and trans-gendered (LGBT) 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, **August 11th, at Peter and Rob's home, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC.** 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

Aug. 1-4, 2024 **PULPFEST 2024**. "Celebrating Mystery, Adventure, Science Fiction, and More." DoubleTree by Hilton Pittsburgh-Cranberry (Mars PA, 19 miles north of Pittsburgh). Weekend (\$40 if you stay at the DoubleTree, \$50 if you stay elsewhere) and single-day memberships available.

Website: www.PulpFest.com On-line membership via: <https://pulpfest.com/plpfest-paypal/>

Aug. 2-4, 2024 **OTAKON 2024**. "To celebrate Asian pop culture, (anime, manga, music, movies, video games, etc.) and its fandom." Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington DC). Weekend membership: \$85 (daily rates also available). On-line registration. Website: www.otakon.com

Sept. 27-29, 2024 **CAPCLAVE 2024**. Rockville Hilton (Rockville MD). Guests of Honor: Sheree Renee Thomas; Matt Diniman. Membership: \$65 from Aug to Sept 2024; \$70 at the door.

Website: www.capclave.org Info: info@capclave.org

Oct. 11-13, 2024 **CONFABULOUS 2024**. Crowne Plaza Suites MSP Airport/Mall of America, previously Crowne Plaza AiRE (Bloomington MN). A fan-fun LGBTQ+ convention with a relaxed feel (gaming & discussion panels). Full Membership: \$60. Website: <https://confabulous.org>

June 5, 2025 **HANACON**. "Anime, Art, & Asian Pop culture Convention." Silver Spring Civic Building at Veterans Plaza (Silver Spring MD). "Early bird special" membership: \$40 (offer expires 1/1/25).

For more information: www.HanaConAnime.com



New Marvel Cinematic Universe Villians

Cassandra Nova
Deadpool & Wolverine
(Emma Corrin)



Doctor Doom
Fantastic Four: First Steps
Avengers: Doomsday
(Robert Downey Jr.)

