



Lambda Sci-fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

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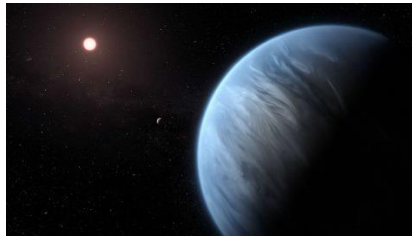
Hycean Planet Discovered?

info passed along by Carl

“What’s a ‘hycean’ planet?” you ask. Yeah, I had to look it up, too. A hycean planet is a hypothetical type of planet that has liquid water oceans under a hydrogen atmosphere. As of 2023, there have been no confirmed hycean planets, but the Kepler Space Telescope has detected a number of candidates. Astronomers are intrigued by the existence of hycean planets because it is believed such worlds would be promising environments to search for evidence of life on exoplanets. Now they might have found one.

The star known as K2-18 (aka EPIC 201912552) is a small red dwarf star located about 124 light-years from Earth (in the constellation Leo). It has two planetary companions. The exoplanet K2-18b was discovered by NASA’s Kepler Space Telescope in 2015. It’s a “super-Earth” (exoplanet with a mass between those of Earth and of Neptune). It orbits within the so-called “habitable zone” of its star; and NASA says it’s currently the only known exoplanet to have both water vapor and temperatures that might support liquid water on a rocky surface.

Data from the Hubble Space



Telescope initially allowed astronomers to determine that the molecular signature of water vapor exists in the atmosphere of K2-18b. More recent observations have detected the presence of hydrogen, helium, methane, and carbon dioxide. The detection of these molecules – and the non-detection of ammonia – is consistent with predictions about hycean planets.

Even though K2-18b lies within the “habitable zone” of K2-18, this doesn’t necessarily mean that the planet can support life. It has a mass 8 times greater than Earth’s, which means significantly higher gravity and an interior likely containing a large mantle of high-pressure ice (like Neptune), but with a thinner hydrogen-rich atmosphere and an ocean surface. And the high level of activity on its nearby red dwarf star exposes the planet to more high-energy radiation, which means that the ocean is possibly too hot to be either habitable or liquid.

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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 on September 26th.

Here are the details for the next several discussions:

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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***** September 8, 2024 Meeting *****

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, September 8th**. 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?

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My 2023 Hugo Best Dramatic Presentation Picks, Long Form and Short Form

by Peter Knapp

I usually write two articles every year for the LSF newsletter: 1) picking my favorite Hugo Best Dramatic Presentation work, Long Form and Short Form, that I nominate, if eligible; and 2) picking the actual nominees that I vote for, if eligible. This year I missed writing the first article, but I'm writing the second article.

2023 was a great year for genre movies and television. I saw a lot of movies (a handful in the theater) and a lot of television. Also, much of it was great, including the excellent theatrical *Godzilla Minus 1* and the captivating *Monarch: Legacy of Monsters* television series with two generations of Russells (Kurt and Wyatt), playing the same character in different points in history, and of course *Godzilla!* If I had nominated works for the Hugos, I would have chosen the following:

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form:

Barbie (A+)
Poor Things (A+)
Godzilla Minus One (A+)
Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves (A)
The Creator (B+)
The Wandering Earth II (B)

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form:

I didn't get as far as choosing which episode(s) from the following excellent TV series to nominate before the actual nominees were announced, so I'm going to skip that exercise for this article.

The Boys Season 4 (A+)
Doctor Who: "The Giggle" (A+)
Doctor Who: "The Star Beast" (A+)
For All Mankind Season 4 (A+)
Monarch: Legacy of Monsters (A+)
Star Trek: Lower Decks Season 4 (A+)
Star Trek: Picard Season 3 (A+)
Star Trek: Strange New Worlds Season 2 (A+)

Here are the actual nominees, in ranked order.

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form

Barbie – One of the most original fantasies of the year, showing Barbie's growth from a happy-go-lucky Barbie to a self-actualized feminist icon. The movie was bright, sunny, and very pink (causing a shortage of pink paint in the real world). Some people criticized the movie as being too woke. My reaction to that criticism is f**k yeah! I loved the movie.

Poor Things – OMG, what an unexpected, wonderful movie. Emma Stone plays Bella Baxter, a young pregnant woman in Victorian London who dies. Willem Dafoe plays Dr. Godwin Baxter, who transplants the unborn baby's brain into her mother's body. Imagine a baby in an adult's body?!? The movie explores Bela's rapid maturation and her growth as a woman in control of her body and her destiny. It was a very strange and often surreal movie, with a strong feminist message.

Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves – I'm D&D adjacent. (Many people in my life play D&D.) While I don't play D&D and am therefore not well versed in D&D lore, I really enjoyed this funny, smart movie that I found very accessible as a non-D&D player. The charming Chris Pine plays Edgin the Bard, and he really did play his lute to try to get out of the ridiculous situations he and his band of adventures found themselves in. It was a really good, really fun movie.

The Wandering Earth II – This Chinese sequel was big, bold, and over the top. It also had a non-western sensibility, which I found refreshing. A great example of space opera.

Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse – The original *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* knocked my socks off. The creative storytelling and amazing animation, with different animation styles for each Spider-Man, made for an excellent movie. The Hugo-nominated sequel, *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*, is equally visually a treat. Alas, the story got overly complicated, and the movie ended abruptly, as it was part one of two. I found that very annoying, especially since the title of the movie didn't indicate it was part one of two.

Nimona – I have not seen this movie, so I can't comment on it.

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form

Doctor Who: "The Giggle" – The third of the 60th anniversary specials. The returning showrunner, Russel T Davies, threw everything into this episode, and it worked. Neil Patrick Harris stars as the Celestial Toymaker, a villain from way back in 1996 during the reign of the first Doctor. David Tennant, playing the 15th incarnation of the Doctor is mortally wounded at the end of the episode, and instead regenerates into the 16th Doctor, played by Ncuti Gatwa, a black, queer Doctor! Ncuti Gatwa plays a happy Doctor, which is refreshing after so many of the modern incarnations of the Doctor have been suffering from PTSD. *Doctor Who* is my all-time favorite, show and this episode ushered in a new era of the show that I love.

Star Trek: Strange New Worlds: "Those Old Scientists" – The animated *Star Trek: Lower Decks* is an animated comedy about four ensigns who work behind the scenes to keep their ship, the *Cerritos*, running, while the command crew gets all the glory. *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* is the closest modern *Star Trek* series to the original *Star Trek*, chronicling the adventures of the *Enterprise* under the command of Captain Kirk's predecessor, Captain Pike. It's a serious take on *Star Trek*, but it has its light moments and comedic episodes. What happens when live action versions of two mem-

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My 2023 Hugo Best Dramatic Presentation Picks, Long Form and Short Form

continued from page 2



bers of the *Cerritos* join the crew of the *Enterprise*. Much comedy and much fun. I really enjoyed this crossover episode.

Loki: “Glorious Purpose” – Marvel TV shows on Disney+ have been hit-or-miss. The *Loki* series was a hit. “Glorious Purpose” concludes the series in a very satisfying way. After appearing in many MCU movies behaving in very destructive ways, Loki evolves into a sympathetic character who believes in fighting for the greater good. His ‘ultimate’ sacrifice to save the multiverse felt authentic and left me with a tear in my eye.

Doctor Who: “Wild Blue Yonder” – The second of the 60th anniversary specials, this was a “locked box” horror story. It was also very straightforward, with no real surprises.

Star Trek: Strange New Worlds: “Subspace Rhapsody” – Every show seems to have a musical episode these days. *Star Trek* is no exception. I enjoyed it, but it did not move me like some of the other episodes from the same season.

The Last of Us: “Long, Long Time” – I have not seen this series, so I can’t comment on it.

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But wait! There’s more!



2024 Hugo Award Trophy

Minutes of the August LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

The 2024 WorldCon is occurring right now in Glasgow, Scotland. LSF members Mike & Ron are attending. Rob mentioned that the Hugo Awards ceremony would be held this afternoon, East coast time. The 2025 WorldCon is slated for Seattle (August 13-17, <https://seattlein2025.org/>). And the 2026 WorldCon is now set for Anaheim CA (August 27-31, 2026, <https://www.lacon.org/>). Two locations are bidding for WorldCon in 2027: Montreal and Tel Aviv.

Derek described the term “wapanese” – a term used to describe a person of non-Japanese descent who is obsessed with Japanese things, including animé and manga. There was much discussion of *One Piece!*, the Japanese manga in which the world is populated by humans and other races such as dwarves. There is a huge media franchise spawning an animé series, feature films, TV specials. The most recent is a live-action Netflix TV series released in 2023.

Derek described the film *Dead-*

pool & Wolverine as “family-friendly, as long as the family is adult males.” He is also watching *The X-Files* and *Farscape*. What’s next?

Rob commented that the 2024 film *Borderlands* (based upon the video game) is horrible. Peter reviewed a list of new genre movies coming up, including: *Alien: Romulus*, *Craven the Hunter*, *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice*, *Venom: Last Dance*, *Wicked* (Part 1), *Moana* Part 2.

Andy finds Apple TV’s series *Severance* series rather disturbing. The premise is that a corporation operates a “severance” program where non-work memories are separated from work-related memories. The first season was released in 2022. The second is set for release in 2025.

Rob reported on the following upcoming LSF events: LSF Gaming Party (Saturday, August 17th); LSF book discussions for August (*DIE* Vol. I & II by Kieron Gillen, Stephanie Hans, et al), September (*When the Angels Left the Old Country* by Sacha Lamb), October (*Camp Damascus* by Chuck Tingle – “not an ass-banging-themed title”), and November/December (*The Terraformers* by Annalee Newitz).

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2023 Best Dramatic Presentations – Winners

by Peter Knapp

So the results are in. My picks for the best dramatic presentations, Long Form and Short Form winners were wrong.

My third-choice pick, *Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves*, won the Hugo for Long Form. That is not surprising, as probably half the Hugo voters play, or have played D&D. It’s also a very good movie. My first two picks, *Barbie* and *Poor Things*, are better movies, but they’re also movies with a feminist message. Not all fanboys are enlightened.



The Short Form Hugo went to the gay episode of *The Last of Us*: “Long, Long Time.” I have been told by many friends, whose opinions I trust, that *The Last of Us* is a great show and that the episode “Long, Long Time” is a stand-out episode. I look forward to seeing the series and this episode in particular in the near future.

BTW, I’ve become a member of both the Seattle Worldcon 2025 (<https://www.seattlein2025.org/>) and the 2026 LAcon V the 84th Worldcon (<https://www.lacon.org/>). Therefore, I will actually be nominating and then voting on the Best Dramatic Presentation Hugos next year and in 2026. :-)

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* * 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, **September 8th, 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

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>

Nov. 22-24, 2024 **PHILCON 2024**. DoubleTree by Hilton (Cherry Hill NJ). Guests: Max Gladstone; Matthew Stewart & Gina Matarazzo, Nghi Vo. On-line registration: <https://reg.philcon.org> For more info: www.philcon.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

August 27-31, 2026 **LACON V**. (2026 World Science Fiction Convention) Anaheim Convention Center, Hilton Anaheim & Anaheim Marriott Hotels (Anaheim CA). Guests of Honor: Barbara Hambly, Ronald D. Moore, Colleen Duran, Dr. Anita Sengupta, Tim Kirk, Geri Sullivan (Fan GoH), Stan Sakai, Ursula Vernon (aka T Kingfisher). Full attending membership: currently \$200 (will go up). For more information & on-line registration: <https://www.lacon.org/>



Other Hugos

info from Carl

As a reminder, there were other Hugo Awards presented for F&SF works that weren't "dramatic presentations" – you know, books and such. Here are just a few of them:

Best Novel: *Some Desperate Glory* by Emily Tesh (Tordotcom, Orbit UK)

Best Novella: *Thornhedge* by T. Kingfisher (Tor, Titan UK)

Best Novelette: "The Year Without Sunshine" by Naomi Kritzer (*Uncanny Magazine*, Nov-Dec 2023)

Best Short Story: "Better Living Through Algorithms" by Naomi Kritzer (*Clarkesworld* May 2023)

Best Series: *Imperial Radch* by Ann Leckie (Orbit US, Orbit UK)

Best Graphic Story or Comic: *Saga*, Vol. 11 written by Brian K. Vaughan, art by Fiona Staples (Image Comics)

Best Related Work: *A City on Mars* by Kelly Weinersmith and Zach Weinersmith (Penguin Press; Particular Books)

Best Game or Interactive Work: *Baldur's Gate 3*, produced by Larian Studios

Best Semiprozine: *Strange Horizons*, by the Strange Horizons Editorial Collective

Best Fanzine: *Nerds of a Feather, Flock Together*, editors Roseanna Pendlebury, Arturo Serrano, Paul Weimer; senior editors Joe Sherry, Adri Joy, G. Brown, Vance Kotrla.

Lodestar Award for Best YA Book: *To Shape a Dragon's Breath* by Moniquill Blackgoose (Del Rey)

For a complete listing of all categories, nominees, and winners of the Hugos awarded on August 11th, go to: [2024 Hugo Awards | The Hugo Award \(thehugoawards.org\)](https://thehugoawards.org)

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